PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER'S APOCALYPTIC FORTITUDE

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the

University of North Texas in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Suzanne Lynn Burris, B.F.A.

Denton, Texas

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This thesis examines Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Fortitude, 1560, a print from the Seven Virtues series. Fortitude stands out as an anomaly within the cycle because it contains several allusions to the Book of Revelation. The linkage of Fortitude to the writings of St. John is important because it challenges previous iconographic and iconological analyses of the composition. Analysis of Fortitude's compositional elements is provided, along with an examination of the virtue tradition. Additionally, an exploration of sixteenth-century apocalypticism is included, as well as an examination of the artistic influences that may have inspired Bruegel. This thesis concludes that Fortitude's apocalyptic allusions do not seem unusual for an artist familiar with St. John's prophecies, influenced by Hieronymus Bosch, and living in an age of apocalypticism.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Between 1558 and 1560 the Antwerp publisher Hieronymus Cock commissioned Pieter Bruegel the Elder to design two series of prints, the Seven Deadly Vices and the Seven Virtues. These two series of prints are the most complete extant cycles created by the artist and thus provide an invaluable source to explore a thematic work by Bruegel. This thesis examines Fortitude, 1560, a print from the Seven Virtues series (Fig. 1).

Bruegel's Fortitude is the most unusual and turbulent composition in the entire cycle of the Seven Virtues series. It is an apocalyptic battleground filled with the fury and clamor of war between good and evil. Only Fortitude in the Seven Virtues series contains monstrous demons, scenes of battle, soldiers assisted by angels, and a central allegorical figure with wings. In addition to these distinctions, Fortitude also stands out as an anomaly within the cycle of virtues because it contains several symbolic allusions to the Book of Revelation. Although the other six virtue compositions can be linked to biblical passages, none but Fortitude can be associated with the apocalyptic prophecies of St. John. In both Bruegel's original drawing, located at the Boymans Museum, Rotterdam, and in the nearly identical engraved version, Fortitude has many cryptic elements that are direct reflections of passages in the biblical text. Previously overlooked by most historians, these elements, such as the tetramorphic banners bearing the symbols of the four evangelists, the twenty-four halo forms likely representing the twenty-four

elders present at the Last Judgment, or the chained devil, are all described by St. John. This linkage of Fortitude to the Book of Revelation is important because it challenges previous iconographic descriptions of the composition. Additionally, the connection of Fortitude to the writings of St. John necessitates a re-examination of the work within the context of sixteenth-century apocalypticism.

Among Bruegel's Antwerp contemporaries and patrons, a widespread interest in the prophecies of St. John generated an eager market for apocalyptic art and literature. In addition, the populace feared the coming of the end of the world. This pervasive fear, heightened by social, political, and religious strife, stemmed from a variety of elements. These elements, such as cosmic events, famines, plagues, and other calamities, occurred frequently at the beginning of the sixteenth century and helped bring about fears of an impending Apocalypse. Besides the apocalyptic signs that pointed to the end of the world, religious leaders, like Martin Luther, immeasurably affected sixteenth-century concepts of the coming of the Last Judgment. "For Luther, Christ stood poised to return, to deliver his own, and to deal the final blow to a corrupt world."[1] Works which dealt with the virtues and vices, the quest for salvation, and the second coming of Christ reflected the concerns of an age fraught with thoughts of the end of the world.

In the midst of this apocalypticism, Bruegel was commissioned by Hieronymus Cock to produce drawings for a series of prints centered on the seven deadly sins or vices. The immense popularity of the Seven Deadly Vices, published as engravings in 1558 by

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[1]Robin Bruce Bainton, Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism In the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 3.

Cock's Antwerp firm Aux Quatre Vents, spurred a second series in 1559-1560.[2] This second series, which centered on the virtues, was quite similar in composition to the earlier Seven Deadly Vices series. For example, each sheet in both series has an allegorical female in the central foreground surrounded by examples of virtuous or sinful behavior.

As the precursor to the Seven Virtues series, the Seven Deadly Vices were composed of seven sheets and were likely engraved by Pieter van der Heyden.[3] Each sheet in this earlier series represents one of the seven deadly sins. Based on theological tradition, the sins consist of avarice, envy, lust, pride, gluttony, sloth, and anger. Placed amid a fantastic landscape, the vice personified by a female figure is surrounded by examples of the sin and its consequences.[4] The allegorical female, placed in the central foreground, is also accompanied by a beast and inanimate objects that represent the sin. For example, the personified vice in Gluttony sits atop a pig near a table with food, dishes, and drinking jugs (Fig. 2). Surrounded by examples of gluttonous activities, the allegorical female in Gluttony is encouraged to participate in sinful behavior by a caped demon who tilts her drinking jug even higher in the air. The strange creatures in Gluttony, as well as the demons in the other Vices prints, are echoed in Fortitude, with its battle between soldiers and monsters. Unlike the other virtue compositions, Fortitude

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[2]Walter S. Gibson, Bruegel (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1977), 58.

[3]Ebria Feinblatt, Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Exhibition of Prints and Drawings Los Angeles County Museum (Los Angeles: The Plantin Press, 1961), 33.

[4]Gibson, 45.

contains such hellish imagery, thus showing the influence of earlier artists like Hieronymus Bosch and Albrecht Durer. The horrific, often apocalyptic imagery of these other northern artists can be detected in the Seven Deadly Vices and surprisingly in Fortitude.

Throughout his career, Bruegel was greatly inspired by the surreal imagery of Bosch. Although Bosch had died in 1516, the artist's popularity was still quite strong when Bruegel began his career. Public desire for Bosch images was so immense that Hieronymus Cock published an engraving, drawn by Bruegel, entitled Big Fish Eat the Little Fish, 1556, and attributed it is as an original design by Bosch.[5] The public's fascination with Boschian imagery, as well as with apocalyptic works, stemmed from the pervasive social phenomenon known as apocalypticism. In essence, apocalypticism refers to the coming of the end of the world, the return of Christ as judge of mankind, and the advent of a new era for the blessed.

Based on theological writings, numerical calculations, mystical associations, and a variety of other factors, apocalyptic predictions and images fed the desire of the public. In Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe, A.G. Dickens states,

> Amid all nations and social groups there flourished a host of irrational forces: a preoccupation with diabolic agencies, witchcraft and sortilege, a curious blend of eschatological expectancy with a dread of universal dissolution. Disease, insecurity, and the shortness of life not only urged men to thoughts of salvation but made them listen eagerly to apocalyptic teachings and yearn for sudden changes which would usher in an age of

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[5]Ibid.

gold.[6]

This popular preoccupation with apocalypticism, as well as the manifestation of Bosch's style can be found in any of the sheets in the Seven Deadly Vices and in Fortitude, with its apocalyptic symbols and Boschian demons.

In addition to Bosch-like motifs in Fortitude, Bruegel was also likely aware of Albrecht Durer's imagery, such as the popular Apocalypse series of 1498. Besides Durer, other German artists, such as Heinrich Aldegrever and Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder, might have also influenced Bruegel. These influential artists produced apocalyptic images and cycles on the virtues and vices.

Not long after Aldegrever's series on the virtues and vices was published in 1552, Bruegel received his commission from Cock. Following the success of the Seven Deadly Vices, Bruegel embarked upon creating drawings for the Seven Virtues. Once again, the personified female figure is located in the central foreground and flanked by examples of the virtue. However, excepting Fortitude, the series does not contain the fantastic Boschian imagery found in the Seven Deadly Vices. Likely engraved by Philippe Galle, the series consists of the three theological virtues--faith, hope, and charity--as well as the four cardinal virtues--justice, prudence, fortitude, and temperance.[7] Bruegel's depiction of each virtue, like the vices, stemmed from a very complex and varied tradition which dates back to the early Middle Ages. Yet, the artist deviated from traditional

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[6]A.G. Dickens, Reformation and Society in Sixteenth-Century Europe (London: Thames and Hudson, 1966), 48.

[7]H. Arthur Klein, Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), 213.

representations of the virtue fortitude. Thus, Fortitude requires an iconological and iconographical re-examination.

Although Bruegel incorporated several traditional attributes and symbols associated with the virtue fortitude, certain compositional elements can be linked to the prophecies of St. John. In order to understand Bruegel's deviation from past representations it is necessary to examine similarities in inspiration, attributes, and symbolism in other works. For example, the militant aspect of Bruegel's depiction of Fortitude, with her warrior's tunic, is previously found in a thirteenth-century stone relief from Notre Dame de Paris (Fig. 3). The stone relief depicts a female allegorical figure of the virtue fortitude in chain mail carrying a sword and shield. Similarily, Bruegel's depiction of the virtue fortitude as a robed woman standing on a press or vise is clearly reflected in many French fifteenth-century manuscripts. For example, a French manuscript miniature from the Livre des quatre vertus depicted fortitude as a robed woman standing on a wine press and grasping a dragon by its neck (Fig. 4). These similarities, including the militant aspect, attributes, and personified female figures, were traditional depictions by the time Bruegel received his commission in the late 1550s.

In addition to past artistic antecedents, Bruegel may have also been aware of literary sources. Many scholars have noted similarities between Bruegel's series on the virtues and vices and literary works, such as Prudentius' allegorical battles between the virtues and vices in Psychomachia, theological writings, like Isidore of Seville's treatise De conflictu vitiorum et virtutum, and, in Bruegel's era, Erasmus' Enchiridion Militas Christiani. Both Bruegel's works and the literary texts centered on the aspects of sin and

virtue.[8] Thus, Bruegel inherited a vast quantity of sources which may have directly or indirectly influenced his interpretation of the vices and virtues.

The prophecies of St. John cannot be overlooked in the analysis of Fortitude. The conclusion that Bruegel alluded to elements in the Book of Revelation can be found by dissecting the composition. Perhaps the strongest allusion found in Fortitude can be seen in the four banners of the citadel in the central middle ground. Overlooked by art historians, the fortress' banners have images of winged creatures that represent the tetramorph. Thus, the flags act as a linchpin in determining the meaning of the composition. By this reinterpretation, certain questions are raised that need to be answered both iconographically and iconologically. For example, why would Bruegel include references to the prophecies of St. John in this particular virtue, and would the average sixteenth-century person grasp the apocalyptic connotations? In addition, how do the objects in the composition represent the virtue as well as an apocalyptic vision? These questions can be answered by examining traditional representations of the virtue, determining Bruegel's alterations, and analyzing Fortitude within the context of apocalypticism in the sixteenth century.

Statement of the Problem

This thesis analyzes Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Fortitude and its relationship to apocalypticism in the sixteenth century.

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[8]Jennifer O'Reilly, Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 150.

Methodology

This research is based on a thorough examination of each element in the composition of Fortitude. The methodology of this thesis is similar to Erwin Panofsky's iconographic and iconological approach in Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance. In addition, this methodological approach can be found in Emile Male's important iconological texts, such as The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century or Religious Art in France. In emulation of the methodology utilized by Panofsky and Male, I have analyzed Bruegel's work closely in order to determine what subjects, events, or symbols are depicted. By investigating these elements, I have attempted to ascertain the truest meaning of the symbols in relation to the whole composition. In addition, I have also endeavored to establish a correlative relationship between Fortitude's apocalyptic connotations and the pervasive apocalypticism of sixteenth-century European society.

This iconographical and iconological methodology requires an examination of artistic antecedents and contemporary apocalyptic images. Among some of the primary sources, I have viewed an original drawing by Bruegel for the virtue Temperance during an exhibition of works on loan to the Kimbell Art Museum in 1990. This allowed me the opportunity to view Bruegel's techniques and his interest in minute details for the series on the virtues. In addition, I have examined several works, such as Luther's Bible, 1535, and Albrecht Durer's St. John's Vision of the Seven Candlesticks from the Apocalypse series of 1498, located at Southern Methodist University's Bridwell Library, Dallas, Texas. The examination of Luther's Bible and Durer's apocalyptic print provides some

contemporaneous literary and artistic interpretations of the Book of Revelation. Secondary sources have included texts, such as Charles de Tolnay's The Drawings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and H. Arthur Klein's Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder. Because of the nature of my methodology, there is no need to see the original drawing or print since the images in the above mentioned texts have provided adequate reproductions of Fortitude.

Through the study of important contemporary literature, I have attempted to establish a relationship between Fortitude and the apocalypticism in the aftermath of the Lutheran Reformation. Primary sources have included some translated passages from the writings of Martin Luther, Prudentius, Erasmus, Dirck Coornhert, Sebastian Franck, and St. John. Among the secondary sources, I have examined Robin Bruce Barnes' Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation. In addition, I have investigated Marjorie Reeves' Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future, as well as Roland H. Bainton's Reformation of the Sixteenth-Century. Other sources, such as Albert Deblaere's article "Bruegel and the Religious Problems of his Time" and Margaret Sullivan's article "Bruegel's Proverbs: Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance" have provided a background for the study of apocalypticism in the age of Bruegel.

Review of the Literature

Although a great deal of literature has been written about Pieter Bruegel the Elder, most of the scholarly publications have consisted of monographic studies. With regard to Fortitude, most scholars have dealt with Bruegel's work in a somewhat contradictory,

often erratic, manner. For example, Walter Gibson's Bruegel takes a rather cursory approach to Fortitude. Although Gibson's text is designed as a monographic study, with a special interest in understanding Bruegel's works in relation to the artist's society, the scholar mentions Fortitude in a single sentence. Despite his adequate examination of most of the prints in the virtues and vices series, Gibson merely describes the print as a battle between the symbolic beasts of vice and men and women.

In contrast to Gibson's text and its emphasis on understanding Bruegel within his social milieu, H. Arthur Klein's Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder is dedicated to the examination of Bruegel's graphic productions. Among the sixty-three engravings and one woodcut, Klein has included each sheet from the Seven Deadly Vices and Seven Virtues series. The scholar, following an illuminating introduction, views Fortitude as a battleground between the forces of virtue and the beasts of vice. Although Klein includes a more detailed examination of symbolic elements, as well as a translation of the text beneath the figurative elements, he does not attempt to connect the work to the prophecies of St. John.

Charles de Tolnay's seminal study entitled The Drawings of Pieter Bruegel the Elder provides an excellent source of information as well as a critical catalogue. He carefully examines Fortitude by dissecting the composition. However, de Tolnay does not mention the tetramorphic banners of the citadel. Instead of apocalyptic connotations, de Tolnay describes the print as a contradiction between the active struggle of the combatants and the calm demeanor of the central allegorical figure restraining a demon.

Echoing de Tolnay's postulation that Fortitude illustrates a paradox, Irving L.

Zupnick posits in "Appearance and Reality in Bruegel's Virtues" that Bruegel was inspired by Erasmus' Enchiridion Militas Christiani. Zupnick proposes that Bruegel's Fortitude, with its violent battle, appears to show the virtue in action. However, the scholar notes that this violent scene was meant as a commentary to illustrate the contradiction of the action against the Erasmian concept of restrained, virtuous fortitude.

In The Fantasy of Pieter Brueghel, Adriaan J. Barnouw investigates the artist's works, his possible philosophical beliefs, such as the world as a scene of folly, and his interest in representing contemporary events, popular proverbs, and the activities of peasants. Although Barnouw believes that Bruegel knew the scriptures intimately and that many compositions can be explained with the aid of a biblical text, he does not analyze Fortitude in accordance with any biblical passage. Barnouw's examination of Fortitude merely reiterates a traditional description of the composition. Thus, Barnouw describes the battle scene, the attributes of the personified virtue, and the Latin passage attached to the scene. Once again, the banners are overlooked and no apocalyptic connotations are described by the scholar.

Ebria Feinblatt's commentary in Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Exhibition of Prints and Drawings, Los Angeles County Museum includes a variety of traditional interpretations about the source of Bruegel's inspiration for Fortitude. In Feinblatt's introduction, the scholar examines Bosch's influence, Bruegel's possible attitudes about the folly of mankind, and the contemporary literature, such as the writings of the moral philosopher Dirck Coornhert, which may have influenced the artist. Drawing upon the extensive analysis of C.G. Stridbeck's Bruegelstudien of 1956, Feinblatt echoes the

traditional interpretation of Fortitude. She proposes that the Seven Virtues were inspired by fifteenth-century manuscripts and the biblical interpretations of Dirck Coornhert. Although Feinblatt describes Fortitude's fortress as a symbol of faith, she does not explore the role of the tetramorphic banners or any other compositional allusions to the prophecies of St. John.

Finally, Nina Serebrennikov's dissertation entitled Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Series of 'Virtues' and 'Vices' is the most comprehensive source on the artist's works. She proposes that the Virtues series was intended to be viewed in a specific order, like a frieze or tapestry, with Fortitude placed in the first position. In addition, she describes the tetramorphic banners, the winged demon trampled by the virtue fortitude, the citadel as a castle of virtue, the banner of Christ held aloft by the mounted soldiers, and the animal symbols of the seven deadly sins. However, she does not associate any of the elements with the prophecies of St. John. Nor does she describe the twenty-four halo forms as representing the twenty-four elders of the Last Judgment or the subtle juxtaposition of a pastoral living landscape with a decimated gloomy battlefield. Thus, tending to echo past descriptions of the composition, Serebrennikov's analysis of Fortitude does not account for any apocalyptic connotations.

Despite the quantity of literature devoted to the study of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and his works, very few scholars have attempted to examine Fortitude beyond describing the composition. Although some scholars have explored the symbolism and attributes found in Fortitude, most postulate that Bruegel's sources of inspiration stemmed from traditional representations, contemporary literature, and Erasmian humanist conceptions

of the virtue. Yet, the composition, with its tetramorphic banners and various other elements alluding to the Book of Revelation, must be re-examined in an iconographical and iconological manner. In addition, this re-examination must include an exploration of the pervasive apocalypticism of sixteenth-century European society.

CHAPTER 2

APOCALYPTIC ALLUSIONS IN FORTITUDE

Bruegel's interpretation of the virtue fortitude is a unique and rather enigmatic amalgamation of elements. The work is a strange combination of artistic antecedents, Boschian motifs, and apocalyptic allusions. By carefully examining the composition of Fortitude, one can conclude that Bruegel incorporated several elements from the Book of Revelation. Perhaps the strongest allusion found in Fortitude can be seen in the four banners of the citadel in the central middle ground. Neglected by most historians in their respective analyses of Fortitude, the fortress' banners have images of winged creatures. These winged creatures represent the tetramorph. The four zoomorphic figures symbolize the four evangelists of the New Testament. Mentioned in the Book of Revelation, the symbols correspond with the gospel writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Within the composition of Fortitude, if read from left to right from the observer's perspective, St. John's winged eagle symbol is located in the far left portion of the citadel, St. Luke's winged ox symbol follows, the winged man symbol of St. Matthew is next, and the winged lion symbol of St. Mark is located in the far right portion of the structure. Bruegel's inclusion of the tetramorph is quite significant because the imagery has traditionally been associated with the Second Coming of Christ and the Apocalypse.

Since early Christianity, the four evangelist symbols were incorporated in complex pictorial interpretations of the Book of Revelation. For example, a triumphal

arch mosaic in the church of San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome c. 450, included several apocalyptic elements surrounding a Maiestas Domini, a medallion form with Christ in majesty (Fig. 5). The tetramorph, represented by multi-colored winged busts, flank Christ, while below, the twenty-four elders mentioned in the Book of Revelation are placed in two rows on the sides of the arch. The depiction of these zoomorphic symbols was continuously used by artists throughout the Middle Ages in mosaics, frescoes, manuscripts, and church decorations. This tradition was continued in the Renaissance, and artists, like Bruegel, were intimately aware of the imagery as potent apocalyptic symbols.

In addition to the significance of the banners' imagery, the placement of St. John's flag in the far left portion of the citadel may be a subtle allusion to the coming of the apocalyptic signs from the east. Conventional and doctrinal beliefs about the appearance of apocalyptic signs in the east stemmed from biblical passages. For example, St. John states:

> And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.[1]

By analyzing other compositional elements in this completely constructed, or fantasy, landscape, one may infer that the artist created an east to west relationship in the composition and subtly placed St. John's emblem in the east.

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[1]Rev. 7:1-2. (King James version)

For example, the church structure in the left distant background provides one with an additional element that suggests that St. John's banner is placed in the eastern portion of the citadel. This conclusion can be made by drawing a parallel between the tradition of constructing Christian churches along an east to west axis and Bruegel's pictorial representation of a church in the composition of Fortitude. Typically, a church's towered facade was built on the western end while the apse was placed at the eastern end of the structure. By using Bruegel's representation of a church as a compass, the towered facade is located in the west while the apse of the structure is placed in the east. Thus, if one concludes that Bruegel's depiction of the church followed tradition, then St. John's flag is located in the left, or eastern end of the fortress. Symbolically in this fantasy landscape, St. John, author of the Book of Revelation, stands in the east, the directional location of the coming of the Apocalypse.

Like the time period for the emergence of the tetramorph, the tradition of the apocalyptic signs originating from the east dates from early Christianity. Following biblical passages and interpretations by theologians, artists usually placed apocalyptic symbols in the eastern end of churches. Apse decorations, such as a Christ in Majesty, the tetramorph figures, Last Judgment scenes, and bejewelled crosses, followed a complex tradition that stemmed from the Book of Revelation.[2] For example, artists placed a mosaic of a bejewelled cross in the eastern apse of Santa Prudenziana, Rome, c. 400 (Fig. 6). The location of these apse decorations was derived from biblical passages

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[2]James Snyder, Medieval Art: Painting Sculpture Architecture 4th-14th Century (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1989), 61.

that stated that signs, like a bejewelled cross, would rise in the east and herald the coming of the Apocalypse.

Besides the association with apocalyptic tradition, Bruegel's juxtaposition of a pastoral, living landscape on the left in the composition with the decimated, gloomy landscape on the right is an early example of the artist's tendency to create counterbalanced compositions. The left portion of Fortitude contains clear skies, a church, rolling hills populated by grazing sheep, and fully grown trees covered in heavy foliage. In contrast, the right portion of the composition is filled with dark skies, the smoke from fires, a destroyed castle, an otherworldly egg-sphere filled with demons, and possibly gallows at the top of the outer wall of the castle. In all likelihood, the counterbalanced composition was designed to emphasize the east to west relationship of the elements, as well as the dichotomy of good and evil. Thus, the elements of good, like the church or the pastoral landscape, are balanced by the elements of evil, such as the burning castle or demons. This tendency continued throughout his career and can be found in later works like Christ Carrying the Cross, 1564 [3] (Fig. 7). Like Fortitude, the left background in the painting appears more inviting with clear, sunny skies while the right background seems foreboding and gloomy under storm clouds. Equally, a heavily foliated landscape on the left is balanced by a torture wheel and an empty landscape on the right of the composition. Even the directional flow of figures in the painting, like the battle in Fortitude, moves from left to right.

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[3]Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Christ Carrying the Cross, oil on panel, 1564, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

The directional flow in Fortitude is heightened by the action of the figures. "Here is the most agitated and tumultuous of the Virtue compositions. It is a raging battleground of the virtues against the vices; hence, it becomes the only Virtue print infested by diabolical and monstrous creatures."[4] The mounted soldiers emerge from the strange gateway on the left of the citadel and push the demonic forces towards the hellish pits on the right of the composition. Echoing this movement, the foot soldiers in the upper right, aided by angel warriors, clash with more demons and force the evil group back into an otherworldly egg form. Thus, like the qualities of goodness and divinity associated with the left elements of the composition, for example the pastoral landscape and the church, the forces of Fortitude rout the evil soldiers of Satan back towards the decimated landscape on the right with its gallows, torture wheels, gaping pits, and the burning remains of a castle-like structure.

In addition to the juxtaposition of good and evil in the composition, Fortitude may also have several mystical numeric relationships with St. John's prophecies. Besides the four symbols of the evangelists, Bruegel may have included the twenty-four elders mentioned in the Book of Revelation. St. John described his vision of the elders as follows:

> 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

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[4]H. Arthur Klein, Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel The Elder (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), 130.

gold.[5]

Although Bruegel's Fortitude does not feature the twenty-four elders seated on thrones, the composition does include figures that equal in number the elders mentioned in the Book of Revelation. This conclusion can be determined by examining the contents of the citadel.

The citadel contains unusual hemispherical features behind both the outer wall and the inner wall of the structure. These features cannot be viewed as crenellated architectural forms because they are too irregularly spaced and do not exhibit a typical arrangement along the ramparts of a castle. Nor do the hemispherical features conform to a pattern that would be necessary for defensive purposes. If viewed as the upper half of haloes, the forms equal in number the twenty-four elders that are mentioned in the Book of Revelation. Although the elders were often depicted wearing crowns, as exemplified in a Romanesque tympanum at Saint Pierre, Moissac, c. 1115-30, Bruegel's substitution of the crowns with haloes may have been due to two possible factors (Fig. 8). First, the size of the work may have affected the incorporation of minute details, such as the spikes of a crown. The original drawing and subsequent engraving are rather small in scale. This small scale work would necessitate a clarity or simplification of forms to ensure that the intended symbols would not be lost during the process of transfer from the original design to the engraving. Secondly, perhaps the inclusion of haloes instead of crowns may be attributed to artistic license or the preferences of the artist. Despite the deviation of depicting the elders with haloes, Bruegel's unusual semi-hemispherical elements are

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[5]Rev. 4:2-4.

located in the composition and equal the number of elders present at the Last Judgment.

In addition to the twenty-four halo forms, Bruegel may have also depicted the seven angels featured throughout Revelation. Within the citadel, four angels are clearly visible behind the outer wall. Besides these figures, two angels assist the foot soldiers in the upper right middle ground. The seventh and final angel can be identified as the winged personified virtue in the central foreground.

The depiction of the personified virtue as a winged figure or angel is unique in the whole series of prints. Bruegel included the traditional attributes of fortitude, such as the column for steadfastness and an anvil balanced on the head for unflinching endurance.[6] However, the artist placed Fortitude standing atop a demon and holding a chain which renders the monster immobile. Though earlier representations of the virtue depict the figure pulling a miniature dragon from a tower, no pictorial representation currently is found of the personified virtue standing atop a dragon that is chained at the neck. This may represent a passage in the Book of Revelation:

> And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.[7]

Echoing this passage in the Book of Revelation, Bruegel has depicted the female allegorical figure as an angel holding a chain that restrains a winged dragon. This winged

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[6]Klein, 239.

[7]Rev. 20:1-3.

dragon is placed at the precipice of a bottomless pit while other demons are literally being pushed into the gaping hole.

The inclusion of the apocalyptic chained demon in the composition of Fortitude does not seem unusual because Bruegel turned to a similar motif in a slightly later oil painting entitled Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1562 (Fig. 9).[8] In his analysis of that painting in The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe, Otto Benesch noted an apocalyptic creature amid the swirling congested composition. Benesch states, "Finally we discover a huge dragon with the heads of the seven-headed monster of the Apocalypse tumbling down in the center; it has the distinction of being killed by St. Michael himself, the leader of the celestial fighters."[9] Like the demon in Fortitude, Bruegel's subtle allusion to an apocalyptic creature hidden among countless demons in Fall of the Rebel Angels was derived from the Book of Revelation.

Though the artist included many elements that refer to the Apocalypse, like the images of a demon, the Lamb of God, or the elders, one might expect Bruegel to have depicted the figure of Christ or God the Father as an enthroned judge in the composition. In Fortitude, Bruegel does not include an enthroned judge in the composition. The omission of an enthroned judge in this apocalyptic image can be explained by determining a possible source for its compositional arrangement. Yet, it is necessary to examine briefly the tradition of the depiction of an enthroned Christ to appreciate

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[8]Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fall of the Rebel Angels, oil on panel, 1562, Musees Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.

[9]Otto Benesch, The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 89.

Bruegel's departure from previous works and contemporary Last Judgment scenes.

The tradition of the inclusion of an enthroned judge is based on passages in the Bible. For example, artists, like those who created the apse mosaic of San Paolo fuori le mura or the tympanum of Saint Pierre, Moissac, included the typical arrangement of Christ seated on a throne as the judge of mankind (Figs. 5, 8). Most Renaissance artists continued the tradition of incorporating an enthroned Christ in complex representations of the Last Judgment, as Giotto did in his Arena Chapel fresco in Padua (Fig. 10). Even Bruegel followed this tradition and included Christ as judge of mankind in his drawing for an engraving entitled The Last Judgment,1558 (Fig. 11). Yet, the exclusion of an enthroned Christ in an apocalyptic battlefield, like Fortitude, has a precedent in a work possibly created by Hieronymus Bosch. Although scholars are not in agreement about who produced the original work, most conclude that it closely resembles the work of Bosch, a close follower, or possibly even Bruegel himself.[10] Produced by an anonymous engraver in Hieronymus Cock's shop Aux Quatre Vents in 1560, an engraving after a lost Boschian triptych of The Last Judgment does not include the figure of Christ as judge in the central panel (Fig. 12). The central panel, a nightmarish battle between demons and angels struggling with each other for the salvation or damnation of human beings, closely resembles the composition of Fortitude. Equally, the panoramic landscape, the strange battering rams, and the congested battleground in the Boschian triptych is quite similar to Fortitude. Significantly, the engraving was produced the same year that Fortitude was

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[10]Timothy Riggs and Larry Silver, Graven Images: The Rise of Professional Printmakers in Antwerp and Haarlem, 1540-1640 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 106, 117.

created by Bruegel. Therefore, the absence of Christ in Bruegel's apocalyptic Fortitude may directly reflect the similar absence of an enthroned Christ in the central panel of the Boschian triptych.

Although Bruegel has not included an image of an enthroned judge described by St. John in the Book of Revelation, the artist has placed several references to Christ in Fortitude. Within the divine space of the citadel, which is free from any demonic attack, a human figure in the right portion of the structure carries a cross. Certainly, the symbolism of a cross, particularly an image like Bruegel's which resembles a processional cross used in Christian ceremonies, connotes the presence of Christ. The powerful connection between the symbol of the cross and Christ can be illustrated by examining the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam. In the early sixteenth century, Erasmus produced a literary work entitled Enchiridion Militis Christiani. "First published in 1503, it had more than thirty editions within the next twenty years--in French, Dutch, Spanish, German, and English, as well as in the original Latin--and dozens more by the end of the century."[11] The treatise acts as a moral guide-book for a Christian soldier. Erasmus describes how to arm the mind and spirit in order to deal with the difficulties of life and avoid sinfulness.[12] In his contemplation on the cross, Erasmus describes its power thusly:

> Nevertheless, against every kind of adversity or temptation the cross of Christ is by far the one most potent. It is at once an example to the erring, a comfort to the hard-pressed, and armor for those who fight. It is the only defense to be used against the whole assortment of weapons of our most

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[11]Desiderius Erasmus, The Enchiridion of Erasmus, trans. and ed. Raymond Himelick (Indiana University Press, 1963; reprint Indiana University Press, 1970), 11.

[12]Ibid., 14.

wicked enemy.[13]

Certainly, the soldiers in Bruegel's Fortitude are hard-pressed in their battle against demons and fight courageously against an army of evil. Therefore, the potent nature of the symbolism of the cross and its power to aid those who fight is illustrated by its presence in the composition.

In addition to the cross, the pastoral landscape in the left background with sheep grazing on the hillside may also be an allusion to Christ. The inclusion of sheep in a garden-like setting may be linked to the association of Christ as the Lamb of God. Mentioned throughout the Book of Revelation, the image of Christ as the Lamb is described by St. John as follows:

> And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.[14]

Furthermore, St. John describes the Lamb in various other manners in later chapters. For example, St John states in another chapter of Revelation: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."[15]

Besides the cross and lamb elements, the mounted warriors of the central middle ground carry a banner with an image of a crucified Christ. This symbolic image clearly

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[13]Ibid., 171.

[14]Rev. 5:6.

[15]Rev. 14:1.

refers to the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of mankind and the notion that Jesus' death was required for the salvation of Christian believers. Equally, the crucifixion and subsequent resurrection of Christ in Christian theology are necessary steps before the Last Judgment and Christ's return as judge of mankind. Although not as obvious a symbol as the banner with a crucified Christ, the press in the foreground may be another reference to Christ. "The wine press was by the later Middle Ages a frequently illustrated and accepted figure of Christ's own manifestation of Fortitude, Perserverantia (or Patienta)."[16] Thus, Christ's presence may not be in the form of an enthroned judge, but rather His presence may be found in more subtle allusions in the composition.

Besides the suggested allusions to Christ's presence in the apocalyptic composition of Fortitude, Bruegel blatantly depicted all seven beasts symbolizing the seven deadly sins in the immediate foreground. There is the turkey of envy, the ass and slug of sloth, the pig of gluttony, the peacock of pride, the cock of lust, the toad of avarice, and the bear of anger. Thus, Bruegel included the symbolic embodiments of the sins which will spur the wrath of God in his Last Judgment of mankind. Man, in his foolish, sinful ways brings the Apocalypse upon himself in a terrible battle between the forces of good and evil. The inclusion of the symbolic beasts in Fortitude does not seem unusual since many artists, like Hieronymus Bosch, often incorporated beasts of vice or figures participating in sinful behavior in Last Judgment scenes.

For example, in Bosch's Last Judgment several figures are punished in

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[16]Jennifer O'Reilly, Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 122.

accordance with their sins[17] (Fig. 13). "Thus, the avaricious are boiled in the great cauldron just visible beneath one of the buildings in the central panel. Around the corner, a fat glutton is forced to drink from a barrel held by two devils; the source of his dubious refreshment can be seen squatting in the window overhead."[18] In Bosch's apocalyptic triptych, with an enthroned judge and angels trumpeting the end of the world, horrible demons torture humanity. In the central panel of the triptych, Bosch has included many apocalyptic elements, such as a decimated landscape filled with diabolical creatures that attack mankind. Despite the few diminutive figures in the upper left portion of the central panel that represent the saved, Bosch does not include any effective scene of the blessed being welcomed into heaven or any element of optimism associated with the vanquishing of vice or evil. "This is a picture of sinful mankind hardly aware of God's judgment, whether in the form of deluge, fiery holocaust, or eternal damnation."[19] The pessimistic view of the Apocalypse in Bosch's Last Judgment is not echoed in Bruegel's engraving entitled The Last Judgment or in Fortitude. Bruegel's apocalyptic allusions and beasts in Fortitude may have been inspired by the work of Bosch, however, the symbolic beasts of vice may represent a greater optimism about the end of the world.

Significantly the beasts are either dead or in the process of being destroyed by the

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[17]Hieronymus Bosch, Last Judgment, oil on panel, ca. 1500-1505, Akademie der bildenden Kunste, Vienna.

[18]Walter S. Gibson, Hieronymus Bosch (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1993), 56.

[19]Craig Harbison, The Last Judgment in Sixteenth Century Northern Europe: A Study of the Relation Between Art and the Reformation (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), 74.

forces of Fortitude. The destruction of the symbolic beasts of vice in Fortitude implies that sin can be vanquished by the virtue of man. Considering the routing of the forces of evil, the immobolized impotent dragon under Fortitude's feet, and the demise of the beasts of vice, Bruegel's Fortitude is an optimistic view of the nature of man, his virtue, and his ability to overcome evil. This interpretation is in keeping with the optimism associated with the final verses of the Book of Revelation. After the battles of the Apocalypse, a new age, including a new heaven and a new earth, is described by St. John in his writings. An era of peace and harmony is described in many verses of the Book of Revelation. In his vision of the new holy city of Jerusalem, St. John describes some of its architectural details as follows:

> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.[20]

In St. John's vision of this new era, with its city streets made of gold and gates of pearl, the author created an image of harmony for Christian believers. Like the evocation of a new world described by St. John, perhaps Bruegel's positive image was meant to echo St. John's writings and satisfy many beliefs about the end of the world, an everlasting reign of peace for the saved, and a new age of golden triumph for the blessed.

Certainly, St. John's enigmatic prophecies included passages that described terrible wars, diseases, and destruction similar to the battle depicted in Fortitude. However, Bruegel's work cannot be viewed as an encyclopedic version of every element

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[20]Rev. 21: 21-22.

found in the Book of Revelation. Yet, the cumulative elements of the scene seem far too similar to some of St. John's prophecies to be deemed as mere coincidences. Perhaps Bruegel's allusions to the Book of Revelation may be interpreted as an allegorical warning to the careful observer. Yet Bruegel endowed the composition with an emphasis on the vanquishing of vice and the optimistic outcome of the battles waged during the Apocalypse. After the terrible battles of the Last Judgment, St. John envisioned a victorious era of peace and harmony for the blessed. Thus, one may infer that Bruegel's work may have been understood as a positive image by observers. Based on traditional iconography, biblical passages, literature, and mystical numeric relationships, Bruegel's most unusual sheet in the Virtues series may be understood on two levels. In addition to the traditional scholarly interpretations of Fortitude as merely another personified virtue, one may conclude that Bruegel also endowed the image with subtle, potent allusions to the prophecies of St. John and his apocalyptic vision of the end of the world.

CHAPTER 3

THE HERITAGE OF THE VIRTUE TRADITION

In order to appreciate and understand Bruegel's unusual incorporation of apocalyptic allusions in Fortitude, it is necessary to examine the heritage of the virtue in both literary and artistic antecedents, to compare contemporary representations of the virtue by other Renaissance artists, and to consider other works by Bruegel that are also apocalyptic. An excursion into the heritage of the virtue tradition provides one with a basic understanding of the roots of the virtues, how the virtues were differentiated, and what attributes were most often associated with the virtues. In addition, the examination of the virtue tradition allows one to consider previous representations of the virtue fortitude and Bruegel's own pictorial representation in Fortitude. Although manuscript illuminations may have influenced the artist's choices for Fortitude's attributes, Bruegel's inclusion of apocalyptic elements in Fortitude may be derived from the traditional apocalyptic themes found on portal tympana. These sculptural decorations included both the virtues and vices in conjunction with apocalyptic elements, such as the elders or the wise and foolish virgins. The exploration of the virtue tradition, as typified in examining Romanesque portals, is necessary to determine possible motives that inspired Bruegel to allude to the Book of Revelation in Fortitude.

The beginning of the virtue tradition is found in the writings of ancient authors. For example, classical philosophers, such as Aristotle and Cicero were extremely

influential in the definition and division of the virtues. Later, early Christian theologians and intellectuals adopted many of the classical traditions and included many similarities in their respective discourses on the virtues. Furthermore, early church fathers, like St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas, often elaborated on the classical definitions to suit their needs for Christian didactic and devotional literature.

Often, these early literary works, especially in the Middle Ages, were illustrated to bolster and enhance the text on the virtues. These illustrated texts, whether early Christian or medieval, usually share many pictorial similarities, like attributes, in the representation of the virtues. For example, the appearance of the virtues personified as heroic females has been traced back to a second-century Christian work entitled The Shepherd of Hermas and that the conflict motif had been addressed by Tertullian in his vision of the virtues as maiden warriors combating vices in an arena.[1] Thus, Bruegel's female allegorical figure in Fortitude follows a longstanding tradition in which the virtue is personified by a warrior maiden.

Aside from examining previous representations of fortitude, it is also pertinent to explore contemporary interpretations of the virtue by some of Bruegel's peers. The exploration of other works, like the virtue cycles created by Hans Burgkmair the Elder, Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder, or Hans Sebald Beham, enables one to compare similarities and dissimilarities in the representations of fortitude. This comparative analysis effectively illustrates Bruegel's departure from traditional contemporary imagery of the

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[1]Jennifer O'Reilly, Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 13.

virtue fortitude.

An examination of Bruegel's enigmatic combination in Fortitude must begin with the classical past. The most notable philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome, such as Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, and Cicero, often directed their efforts towards understanding the nature of virtue, its origins, and its application in daily life. Additionally, these classical philosophers introduced the notion of subdividing the virtues into distinct classes. For example, Plato's division of virtue into four classes in Phaedo and The Republic is echoed in the work of Aristotle.[2] "In the Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle divides virtue into the moral and intellectual spheres. Fortitude and temperance are within the former, while justice and practical wisdom (or prudence) are included in the latter."[3]

Following the work of Aristotle and Plato, the literature on the virtues by Seneca also contributed to the formulation of the virtue tradition. Seneca's influence is most often noted in examinations of medieval manuscripts. Often, medieval treatises centered on the four virtues are first believed to be derived from the form of the Formula honestae vitae ascribed to Seneca but actually written in the sixth century by Martin of Braga.[4]

In addition to the previously mentioned philosophers, the works of Cicero and Macrobius are greatly devoted to the analysis of virtue. "Both were peculiarly important for the classification and definition of the virtues, that is the great ancient series of the

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[2]Nina Serebrennikov, Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Series of 'Virtues' and 'Vices' (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 133-134.

[3]Ibid., 134.

[4]Rosemond Tuve, Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 62.

cardinal four-discussed with specificity, 'divided', differentiated and characterized, envisaged."[5] The influence of these two philosophers cannot be overlooked since many of their works were illustrated and helped to establish the traditional iconography of the virtues. Furthermore, the Ciceronian and Macrobian treatments of the virtues produced definitions that were readily adopted by Christian theologians and intellectuals.

The elaboration of the virtues by the Roman orator and philosopher Cicero (106 B.C. - 43 B.C.) is best exemplified in the works entitled De inventione and De officis. Cicero's development of a sequential scheme for the virtues--prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance--is echoed in a slightly different order by the Latin writer Macrobius.[6] Beyond the division into a group of four, these philosophers also created subdivisions for each virtue. For example, the virtue fortitude can be understood to have four parts. 'To Cicero, Magnificentia is the first part of Fortitude; the others are Fidentia, Patientia, and Perseverantia."[7] Fortitude, like the other three cardinal virtues, was determined to exhibit certain characteristics. "Cicero defines Fortitude, that double virtue 'by which one (1) undertakes dangerous tasks and (2) endures hardships,' and Magnificence under it as 'the contemplation and execution of great and sublime projects with a certain grandeur and magnificence of imagination.'"[8] Certainly, Bruegel's interpretation of fortitude echoes a Ciceronian definition since the allegorical female and her virtuous soldiers seemingly

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Serebrennikov, 134.

[7]Tuve, Allegorical Imagery, 59.

[8]Ibid.

endure the insurmountable odds of battling demonic forces.

Contributing to the multiple streams of thought on the virtues, Prudentius, a fourth-century Christian Latin poet, produced an allegorical poem that also influenced later medieval treatises on the virtues. Usually illustrated, Prudentius' Psychomachia describes an epic battle with allegorical figures. "Personified by maiden warriors, the Psychomachian Virtues and Vices are locked in epic mortal combat on the battleground which is the soul of man."[9] Although the Psychomachia does not contain all of the cardinal and theological virtues, many illustrated scenes, such as the militant Patientia withstanding the arrows and lances of the vices, influenced later allegorical treatments of the virtues (Fig. 14). Though fortitude is not included in Prudentius' list of virtues, the female warrior figure, the aspect of Patientia, previously defined in Cicero's description as part of fortitude, and the vanquishing of the vices are all echoed in Bruegel's representation of the virtue. Currently, no historical evidence exists to support that Bruegel examined Prudentius' work in particular. However, the popularity in the Middle Ages of its author cannot be denied since at least parts of his works survive in over three hundred manuscripts.[10]

These manuscripts greatly influenced medieval artists and many scholars have noted that Prudentius' Psychomachian imagery can be found throughout Europe, as typified in church decorations, like the ambulatory capital at Notre Dame du Port,

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[9]O'Reilly, 9.

[10]Ibid., 1.

Clermont-Ferrand[11] (Fig. 15). Thus, if Bruegel was not aware of Prudentius' text as the source for Psychomachian imagery, he was likely familiar with its incorporation in sculptural programs for churches. Equally, Prudentius' many references to an epic battle and the necessity to arm oneself spiritually in a difficult world is echoed in Bruegel's Fortitude. Notably, scholars usually acknowledge Prudentius' debt to the writings of St. Paul, with references to the armor of God metaphor in Ephesians.[12] Though it is uncertain whether Bruegel was aware of Prudentius' text, the artist's familiarity with biblical authors, like St. Paul, is more conceivable since sermons and religious commentaries often included his writings.

Like references to the prophecies of St. John in Fortitude, many similarities between Bruegel's pictorial representation of fortitude and the possible influence of St. Paul's commentaries can be detected in the work. "It has been seen that St. Paul was certainly not the originator of the warrior image, but he did produce a highly influential and specifically Christian version of it."[13] In his discussion on constancy and perseverance in the Epistles to Timothy, St. Paul states:

> Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou

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[11]Emile Male, Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography, ed. Harry Bober, trans. Marthiel Mathews (1922; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 25.

[12]Ibid., 23.

[13]Ibid., 23-24.

therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.[14]

Similar to Cicero's subdivided aspect Perseverantia and his definition of Fortitude's ability to endure hardships, St. Paul's descriptions of a virtuous warrior are also echoed in Bruegel's composition. "Constantly, St. Paul urges the Christian to arm himself spiritually against his adversary the Devil with the armor of light, the armor of righteousness, 'for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God.'"[15]

In Bruegel's Fortitude, the artist has incorporated both Ciceronian and early Christian influences in his representation of the virtue, with its battle between the soldiers of Christ and the forces of Satan, its seemingly unshakable allegorical figure trampling a dragon, and its emphasis on fighting off evil despite the odds. Bruegel's representation of fortitude contains many literary references and similarities to the works of classical philosophers, Christian theologians, and many of the compositional elements echo traditional iconography.

"The image of spiritual warfare, which had become current in Early Christian times as a metaphor for martyrdom, developed into a literary topos of widespread application in the Middle Ages."[16] Among the effects of this widespread application, artists and craftsmen were employed to create pictorial representations of the battle between good and evil. This type of imagery often included complex iconographic

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[14]2 Tim: 2: 1-3.

[15]O'Reilly, 24.

[16]Michael Evans, "An Illustrated Fragment of Peraldus's Summa of Vice: Harleian MS 3244," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 45 (1982): 17.

programs that included personifications of the virtues. For example, on a capital at St. Lazare, Autun, Patientia stands atop her defeated enemy who pierces itself with a sword (Fig. 16). The defeat of evil by a virtuous figure, as seen in Bruegel's Fortitude, was also expressed in other forms.

> This image was to receive monumental expression in the archivolt sculptural decorations of Romanesque churches in Saintonge and Poitou. Here the triumphant warrior Virtues trample their defeated shrivelled foes. Frequently they formed part of an extended programme including Apocalyptic elements, such as the Wise and Foolish Virgins or the Elders and the Lamb[17] (Fig. 17).

Thus, Bruegel's Fortitude, like the Romanesque archivolts, contains traditional imagery while incorporating apocalyptic elements.

The sculptural elements of the Romanesque churches were complex iconographic programs that were meant to teach and instill religious ideas about life, the nature of man, and how to achieve eternal salvation. All the elements, such as the lamb or the wise and foolish virgins, were brought together to evoke the idea of the Last Judgment.[18] For example, the lamb symbolized the Lamb of the Apocalypse and the wise and foolish virgins represented a prefiguration of the separation of good from evil on the final day of judgment.[19] "Lastly, the psychomachy itself, the great battle between the Vices and Virtues, is linked with the idea of reward and punishment. In the thirteenth century, the

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[17]O'Reilly, 49.

[18]Male, Religious Art in France: The Twelfth Century, 442.

[19]Ibid.

Vices and Virtues were still represented on portals in scenes of the Last Judgment."[20]

The incorporation of apocalyptic elements in conjunction with personified virtues is exemplified on the west front of Notre Dame, Paris, ca. 1210. Allegorical figures, including Fortitude, sit calmly in framed bas-reliefs holding medallions bearing appropriate symbols which identify the virtue. "They occur in the context of a far more extensive Last Judgment scene than had appeared in the Romanesque 'triumphant Psychomachian' programmes in the Saintonge and Poitou area and form 'a sort of ethical Summa,' as A. Katzenellenbogen has described it."[21] Fortitude, dressed in chain mail, wearing a knightly helmet, brandishing a sword, and holding a medallion inscribed with a lion, is a seated female figure (Fig. 3). The allegorical female, like the other virtues, is placed above her counterpart or enemy. Therefore, the notion of a virtue trampling an enemy, the depiction of a militant female warrior, and the inclusion of military garb and weapons, is once again echoed in an artistic antecedent. Although it is unlikely Bruegel ever viewed the bas-reliefs at Notre Dame de Paris, the continuation of traditional iconography occurred in other churches and manuscripts, such as the famous Somme le roi.

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy and influential manuscripts that helped to perpetuate the iconography of the virtues in the Middle Ages, the Somme le roi was produced in six parts in 1279 for Philippe III, le Hardi, King of France by his confessor,

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

the Dominican Frere Laurent or Lorens.[22] Extremely popular and translated into Provencal, Dutch, Italian, and English, this text was well known, copied, and widely distributed throughout Europe. The fifteen pictures that illustrate it were established at the end of the 1200s and included a set of directions to illuminators so that later copies echoed the original illuminations.[23] In a manuscript illumination of a Somme le roi dated 1294, the four cardinal virtues are placed in trefoil-like compartments (Fig. 18). Fortitude, or Force, a woman dressed in a long robe and crowned, points to a roundel inscribed with a lion in the lower left quadrant of the four compartments.

In addition, Frere Laurent also included a treatise on the aspect of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The illuminations for this second set of virtues nourished by the Gifts contain a personification of the virtue, the opposite of the virtue, and exemplars of virtuous behavior. For example, Frere Laurent's inclusion of the Gift Fortitudo, or Force, has an illumination of the virtue Prouesce, or Prowess (Fig. 19). The female allegorical figure of Prowess, in the upper left compartment, stands upon her vanquished foe, the lion, and bears a medallion with an inscribed lion. Opposite Prowess, her counterpart or enemy, a figure representing the vice sloth sits idle in a field. Below the sloth figure, his counterpart, an active laborer, works in a field. Finally, placed beside the laborer, a figure or exemplar of virtuous behavior represents the battle between David and Goliath in the lower left compartment. Significantly, the attributes and exempla are expected to be

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[22]Rosemond Tuve, "Notes On The Virtues And Vices: Part II," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 27 (1964): 42.

[23]Ibid.

understood without help from the text since they are not in it.[24] Personified virtues, as seen in the Somme le roi or thirteenth-century cathedrals like Notre Dame de Paris, usually bore simple attributes, were understood by everyone, and sufficed throughout the fourteenth century as a means to teach observers about virtue.[25] However, this type of simplistic imagery came to be abandoned by artists and was then strangely modified in later centuries with the addition of new and unusual attributes associated with the virtues.

Scholars have noted that in the fifteenth century, artists abandoned the identifying symbols of the virtues. Most of the traditional attributes, like roundels or medallions with an inscribed beast or symbol for the virtue, were absent in representations of the virtues. In the early and mid-fifteenth century, several miniatures show the virtues nearly devoid of all attributes.[26] For example, in an illumination for the text entitled Saint Augustin of 1469, the virtues cannot be distinguished from each other since they bear no emblems.[27] The unusual absence of symbolic elements in the early fifteenth century is followed by a sudden modification in pictorial representations of the virtues in the late fifteenth century. Differing significantly from previous representations, new figures for the virtues appear

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[24]Ibid., 43.

[25]Emile Male, Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources ed. Harry Bober, trans. Marthiel Mathews (1908; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 285.

[26]Ibid., 287.

[27]This illumination is not reproduced in Emile Male's Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources. It is available in Paris at the Bibliotheque Nationale, ms. fr. 18, fol. 3v. For further examples, see E.J. Hoffmann, Alain Chartier, His Work and Reputation, New York, 1942.

first in the second half of the century in an Aristotle manuscript, then slightly later, circa 1470, in a historical compilation for Jacques d'Armagnac, Duke of Nemours.[28] The appearance of these figures is important since many of their attributes are found in Bruegel's series on the virtues. Like many other artists, Bruegel incorporated elements from this stage in the development of the virtue tradition in his own representations of the virtues.

In the illuminations for the Duke of Nemours' manuscript, Fortitude, personified by a female, stands on a wine press, carries an anvil on her back, and wrenches a small dragon from a miniature tower (Fig. 20). This strange combination of elements seems incomprehensible and quite unlike previous representations of the virtue. "The verses appearing in the miniature itself were written later as an explanation of the pictures, not as their source, which, it seems reasonable to suppose must have been a work in the Macrobian/Ciceronian classical tradition."[29] The development of this new iconography for the virtues has been traced convincingly by the historian Emile Male. By referencing unpublished verses that account for the new symbols, Male postulates that the strange virtue figures did not originate from any specific tradition or from theological writings, but from an individual's fantasy.[30]

Although the place of origin for the new iconography of the virtues is tentatively assigned to the Rouen area, these figures and their attributes were soon familiar to

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[28]Ibid.

[29]O'Reilly, 124.

[30]Male, Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages, 291.

Flemish, Spanish, and Italian artists.[31] In sixteenth-century France and Flanders, Fortitude typically pulls a dragon from a tower, stands on a press, and is crowned by an anvil, whereas in Italy, the virtue usually is armed with a sword and shield, wears a helmet and cuirass, a piece of armor, usually leather, that covers the body from the neck to the waist, and is sometimes accompanied by a broken column.[32] The column attribute, derived from texts that describe the one Samson pulled down on the Philistines, appeared in Italian representations of the virtue as early as the fourteenth century but reached its height of popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[33] Therefore, Bruegel's representation of Fortitude and her attributes is a combination of the French and Italian traditions. One might speculate that Bruegel's combination of elements may have been due to his awareness of both the French and Flemish roots while incorporating symbols that he may have seen during his tour of southern Europe in the early 1550s. In all likelihood, Bruegel's amalgamation of the various roots of the virtues was simply an effort to appeal to the widest possible audience for the print. Bruegel's overall composition, likely derived from his close proximity to a Boschian triptych at Aux Quatre Vents in 1560, his combination of Italian and French/Flemish attributes, and his subtle allusions to the Book of Revelation, made Fortitude a visually rich and complex image that satisfied various collectors and buyers.

In addition to the previously mentioned elements, Bruegel's Fortitude may also be

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[31]Ibid., 293-294.

[32]Ibid., 295-297.

[33]Ibid., 295-296.

associated with a local allegorical figure of a saint. Bruegel's representation of Fortitude is crowned by an anvil, wears a cuirass, holds a column, and stands atop a dragon whose tail is caught in a vise. "It is probably no accident that the attributes of the personification recall those of Saint Dympna, who was invoked against insanity, and whose relics were kept in the church at Gheel in Antwerp Province."[34] Saint Dympna, often depicted in art as dragging away a devil, was a sixth-century figure who fled her Irish homeland due to the unwelcome sexual advances of her pagan father.[35] She lived in Gheel and devoted herself to acts of charity until her father murdered her in the village. A shrine was erected to her and many miraculous cures of lunatics and those possessed by the devil were attributed to Saint Dympna.[36]

The virtue fortitude is associated with courageous acts, such as one's death as the result of one's faith and loyalty to religious beliefs. For example, the death of a religious figure, like Saint Dympna, exemplifies the virtue fortitude and the power of an individual to overcome fear in the face of certain death or defeat.

> Fortitude that does not reach down into the depths of the willingness to die is spoiled at its roots and devoid of effective power. Readiness proves itself in taking risk, and the culminating point of fortitude is the witness of blood. The essential and the highest achievement of fortitude is martyrdom, and readiness for martyrdom is the essential root of all

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[34]Irving L. Zupnick, "Appearance and Reality in Bruegel's Virtues," Actes du XXII Congres International d'Histoire de l'Art (1969), 751.

[35]The Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, comps., The Book of Saints: A Dictionary of Servants of God Canonized by the Catholic Church: Extracted from the Roman & other Martyrologies, 3d ed. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1944), 87.

[36]Ibid.

Christian fortitude.[37]

Although scholars have not determined whether Bruegel found inspiration in the story of Saint Dympna and her martyrdom in the local area, the artist may have been aware of the nature of fortitude and its association with martyrdom. "In the gift of fortitude the Holy Spirit pours into the soul a confidence that overcomes all fear: namely, that He will lead man to eternal life, which is the goal and purpose of all good actions, and the final deliverance from every kind of danger."[38] Though Bruegel's allegorical figure may recall Saint Dympna, most of the artist's contemporaries tended to follow either the French/Flemish tradition or the Italian mode of representation.

For example, the German artist Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder's mid-sixteenth-century series on the virtues emulated French and Flemish antecedents. Similar to a Parisian miniature of Faith, Hope, and Charity, ca. 1500, Vogtherr's Hope exhibits the attributes, such as the anchor and ship, of the French tradition (Figs. 21, 22). Like Vogtherr's version of the virtue hope, Bruegel's Hope, contains more of the traditional symbols found in French works (Fig. 23).

> Indeed, the conventional nature of Bruegel's interpretation of this virtue is clearly demonstrated by the long poem accompanying Vogtherr's woodcut; it is almost exclusively concerned with desires for success and happiness in temporal affairs, many of which were represented by Bruegel.[39]

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[37]Josef Pieper, The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance trans. Daniel F. Coogan, Lawrence E. Lynch, Richard and Clara Winston (Pantheon Books Inc., 1954: New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1965), 117.

[38]Ibid., 138.

[39]Walter S. Gibson, Bruegel (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1977), 59.

In contrast to the compositional elements in Fortitude, Bruegel's conventional format and attributes in Hope may have been derived from traditional works, like Vogtherr's series on the virtues or French/Flemish antecedents.

Unlike the work of Vogtherr, Hans Burgkmair's early sixteenth-century representation of fortitude displays the influence of Italy. From the series entitled The Seven Cardinal Virtues, Burgkmair's personification in Fortitude is dressed in a florid Italianate costume, wears an elaborate helmet, and is accompanied by a broken column (Fig. 24). Typically Italianate in style, Burgkmair's image of the virtue appealed to a growing public desire, especially among the humanists, for Italian-like figures and settings. This desire for allegorical figures in an Italianate style, like the virtues, was also a subject for the artist Hans Sebald Beham.

Beham, another contemporary of Bruegel, produced a series on the virtues. In his small representation entitled Fortitude, Beham included the attributes of the Italian tradition, such as the broken column and the accompanying lion (Fig. 25). Curiously, like Bruegel's allegorical figure in Fortitude, Beham endowed his personification of the virtue with wings. This unusual element is found in all of Beham's personifications, as seen in Temperance (Fig. 26). Though Bruegel may have been aware of Beham's series, his only personification with wings is Fortitude. Beham's figures, with their proportions, Italian attributes and toga-like drapes for clothing, reflected a desire for southern European styles. This public desire for Italianate imagery is also found in the work of Heinrich Aldegrever.

The German artist Aldegrever produced a series on the virtues in the early

sixteenth century. Aldegrever's personification in Fortitude, ca. 1528, is a half-length figure in profile placed against a simple backdrop (Fig. 27). Grasping the broken column attribute typically found in Italian representations of the virtue, Aldegrever's allegory clearly echoes proportions and dress modified to emulate the Italian traditions. Like Aldegrever, other artists, such as Frans Floris, also reflected the taste for the Italian mode of representation.

Floris, a contemporary of Bruegel employed by Hieronymus Cock, also issued a series on the virtues and vices in the same year that Bruegel's virtues series was completed. "Whereas Bruegel shows the enactment of the virtue through a host of tiny figures behind a standing, central foreground personification, Floris isolates his figure in classical dress, together with her animal attribute but animates her pose and gesture"[40] (Fig. 28). Cock realized that his prints appealed to two different clienteles and that by merchandising Bruegel's designs as the opposite of Floris' classicism he increased the marketability of his products.[41] However, what prompted Bruegel to include both northern and southern attributes in Fortitude? Although the answer is uncertain, Fortitude would have been understood on a variety of levels.

The general buyer, one likely to have some familiarity with the virtues and their attributes, would have appreciated Bruegel's Fortitude for its active Boschian composition. For one able to translate the Latin caption beneath the image, likely added

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[40]Timothy Riggs and Larry Silver eds., Graven Images: The Rise of Professional Printmakers in Antwerp and Haarlem, 1540-1640 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 25.

[41]Ibid., 20-21.

under the supervision of Hieronymus Cock, the observer would read the following: "To conquer one's impulses, to restrain anger and the other vices and emotions: this is true fortitude."[42] Furthermore, the satisfaction of recognizing Bruegel's unusual combination of French and Italian elements would have appealed to the learned collector. Though the allegorical figure and her attributes are a combination of French, Flemish, and Italian modes of representation, why did Bruegel endow Fortitude with apocalyptic connotations?

In order to determine Bruegel's departure from traditional and contemporary imagery, one must examine other works by the artist that exhibit apocalyptic symbolism, as well as investigate the apocalypticism of the sixteenth century. Although Fortitude was created near the beginning of Bruegel's career, religious subject matter and scriptural references, such as St. John's prophecies, were often incorporated in other works. Therefore Bruegel's interest in apocalyptic references, as seen in Fortitude, was not without precedent, nor was it abandoned in later works. Although the inclusion of apocalyptic allusions in Fortitude was not unusual for the artist, his choice to create a virtue endowed with potent apocalyptic symbolism is uncommon and requires further investigation.

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[42]H. Arthur Klein, Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), 130.

CHAPTER 4

THE INFLUENCE OF SIXTEENTH-CENTURY APOCALYPTICISM

The supposition that Bruegel's Fortitude exhibits apocalyptic allusions necessitates an investigation beyond a mere reinterpretation of its compositional elements. This investigation must establish the artist's familiarity with religious subject matter, such as St. John's prophecies. By exploring other works by Bruegel that share apocalyptic similarities with Fortitude, like The Last Judgment or the Fall of the Rebel Angels, one can observe that the artist often utilized apocalyptic references as a source of inspiration. Therefore, Fortitude, with its allusions to the Book of Revelation, does not seem unusual for an artist who was familiar with biblical passages and interested in referencing the material in a number of works.

In addition to examining other apocalyptic works by Bruegel and their respective associations to the Last Judgment, it is also pertinent to scrutinize the pervasive apocalypticism of sixteenth-century European society. The exploration of apocalypticism and its widespread influence establishes a relationship between Bruegel's interest in apocalyptic subject matter, his subtle allusions to St. John's prophecies in Fortitude, and the general public's desire for apocalyptic art and literature. Among the artist's educated patrons and peers who may have owned the print, Fortitude, like many other works by Bruegel, may have been interpreted by some observers on two different levels. Some observers may have viewed the work as a complex personified virtue as well as an

allegorical apocalyptic image.

In order to analyze a relationship between Fortitude, with its allegorical personification, and the Second Coming of Christ, it is necessary to establish Bruegel's awareness and use of biblical passages from the Book of Revelation. As a source for artistic inspiration, Bruegel's use of this biblical text is first exhibited in his drawing for the engraving entitled The Last Judgment, 1558 (Fig. 11). Although earlier works, such as The Temptation of St. Anthony, 1556, or Landscape with Jesus Appearing to Apostles at the Sea of Tiberias, 1553, are based on religious stories, Bruegel's The Last Judgment clearly demonstrates the artist's knowledge of the Book of Revelation.

Engraved by van der Heyden, The Last Judgment is a fairly traditional representation of the judgment of mankind. The compositional arrangement of the scene is echoed in the Flemish and Latin inscriptions: "Come, all who're by my Father blessed, to the eternal realm up higher; but down, all you who are accursed, down into everlasting fire!"[1] Christ, seated on a rainbow with his feet placed on a globe, calls forth the righteous with His right hand and condemns sinners to Hell with His left hand. Below Christ, the multitude of humanity are either aided by angels or menaced by demons. The demons, strange hybrid creatures with reptilian, mammalian, and insect-like features, are similar to the horrific figures which populate many of Hieronymus Bosch's works.

Bosch's fantastic demons, as seen in his work entitled Garden of Earthly

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[1]H. Arthur Klein, Graphic Worlds of Peter Bruegel the Elder (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), 154.

Delights, ca. 1510-15, are echoed throughout Bruegel's oeuvre[2] (Fig. 29). Equally, Bosch's apocalyptic landscape elements, such as the fiery decimated land in the right wing, or Hell scene, of the Garden of Earthly Delights, likely provided inspiration for many artists, including Bruegel. Although scholars debate the exact meaning of Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights, the Hell scene is quite similar to many of St. John's visions of an apocalyptic landscape populated by evil figures. Bruegel's work reflects several passages in the Book of Revelation, as well as an incorporation of Boschian figures in the composition. For example, St. John describes the judgment of man as follows:

> And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.[3]

The Boschian composition of The Last Judgment, similar to the arrangement in Fortitude with its Bosch-like creatures and counterbalanced elements, illustrates an apocalyptic precedent in Bruegel's oeuvre. Thus, Bruegel's familiarity with St. John's prophecies is evident prior to the execution of Fortitude.

In a slightly later painting entitled Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1562, Bruegel once again looks to a religious story for artistic inspiration[4] (Fig. 9). The story about the revolt

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[2]Hieronymus Bosch, Garden of Earthly Delights, oil on panel, ca. 1510-15, The Prado, Madrid.

[3]Rev. 20:11-12. (King James version)

[4]Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fall of the Rebel Angels, oil on panel, 1562, Musees Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.

of Satan and his angels and their subsequent fall from Heaven was originally a Jewish legend that eventually became a part of Christian theology.[5] St. Michael, placed in the center of a whirling congested battle scene, is aided by his companions in their efforts to send the forces of evil out of Heaven. In his analysis of this painting in The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe, the historian Otto Benesch noted that Bruegel included an apocalyptic dragon in the composition. Amid the confusing composition, Bruegel included the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse. This element, in conjunction with the battle between St. Michael and the fallen angels, may reflect a passage in the Book of Revelation. St. John described the battle as follows:

> And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.[6]

In addition to the passage describing the battle between St. Michael and Satan, Bruegel also followed the description by St. John of the seven-headed beast very closely.

Falling headlong in the center of the composition, Bruegel's apocalyptic beast is subtly placed under the foot of St. Michael. In the Book of Revelation, St. John states: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name

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[5]Walter S. Gibson, Bruegel (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1977), 99.

[6]Rev. 12:7-9.

of blasphemy."[7] An observer may find it difficult to locate the seven-headed beast in the crowded composition. By locating St. Michael in the center of the painting, one can determine that the beast is turned upside down, its tail curling off to the right of the battling angel's sword, and its heads placed in a semi-circular configuration below the angel. Nearly hidden by the multitude of figures, the beast's heads are located at the end of long serpentine necks. Bruegel's horned beast is not only crowned and seven-headed but also bears the spots of a leopard and the claws of a beast, such as a bear, as described by St. John in a later verse in the Book of Revelation.[8] Bruegel's adherence to the writings of St. John is quite evident in the artist's portrayal of the fall of Lucifer and his angels. Therefore, Bruegel's interest in St. John's writings is found in many drawings, prints, and paintings contemporaneous to Fortitude.

Perhaps the closest to Fortitude in terms of its panoramic composition, the painting entitled The Triumph of Death, c. 1562-1564, is Bruegel's vision of the end of the world as a vast landscape of death and destruction[9] (Fig. 30). As in the case of Fortitude's composition, Bruegel did not include the figure of Christ as judge of mankind in The Triumph of Death.[10] Instead, mankind's demise is the object of the efforts of an army of skeletons and demons. Once again, as in Fortitude, Bruegel incorporated several

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[7]Rev. 13:1.

[8]See Rev. 13: 2 for a further description of the seven-headed beast.

[9]Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Triumph of Death, oil on panel, c.1562-64, The Prado, Madrid.

[10]Gibson, Bruegel, 109.

subtle allusions to the Book of Revelation in The Triumph of Death.

Among some of the possible allusions to the writings of St. John in The Triumph of Death, the skeleton riding an emaciated red horse in the center of the composition may refer to a passage in the Book of Revelation. St. John states, "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."[11] Although the ghastly figure seemingly reaps humanity by brandishing a sickle rather than a sword, Bruegel's inclusion of this weapon may also refer to another passage in the text. Like the skeleton on the red horse who carries the sickle or his companion in the foreground who prepares to harvest the human figures in his pathway, several verses describe angels reaping material from the earth. For example, St. John described similar scenes in the biblical text:

> And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.[12]

Equally, in the left foreground of The Triumph of Death, another skeleton, riding a white horse, rings a bell and holds an hourglass as the gaunt animal pulls a cart full of skeletal human remains. This may also be another subtle allusion to St. John's description of death riding a pale horse in the Book of Revelation. St. John envisioned the figure as follows:

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[11]Rev. 6:4.

[12]Rev. 14:19-20.

> And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.[13]

Certainly, Bruegel's composition in The Triumph of Death, with its ghastly army of skeletons, is quite similar to the descriptions by St. John of a wasteland of destruction and terror brought about by the horsemen of the Apocalypse. The horsemen described by St. John likely inspired Bruegel to include them in his composition for the painting. Equally, the famous woodcut by Albrecht Durer entitled The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 1498, may have also influenced Bruegel (Fig. 31). The skeletal figure in the lower left of Durer's composition bears a resemblance to the horsemen in Bruegel's The Triumph of Death. Likely inspired by a variety of possible influences, Bruegel's painting is a gloomy and horrific vision of the end of mankind.

Most scholars agree that this painting comes closest to the work of Bosch in its apocalyptic power.[14] This conclusion is fitting since both the painting and most of Bosch's apocalyptic works reflect a pessimistic view of mankind and the end of the world. Like Bosch's The Last Judgment or the right wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights, Bruegel's The Triumph of Death is a terrible battleground in which mankind does not vanquish sin or death. Bruegel's painting is equally pessimistic since it does not offer the viewer any positive image that alludes to eternal salvation or the demise of evil.

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[13]Rev. 6:8.

[14]Gibson, Bruegel, 119.

The apocalyptic nature of The Triumph of Death, like Fortitude, reflected a powerful social phenomenon known as apocalypticism. Apocalyptic warnings, such as the references to the Book of Revelation in Fortitude or The Last Judgment, were often found in other images, as well as in numerous literary works. These literary works, often illustrated with apocalyptic images, were widely distributed throughout Europe in the sixteenth century. Theologians, theorists, and mystics of the sixteenth century devoted a great deal of effort toward understanding the signs that preceded the end of the world and the inevitable return of Christ as judge of mankind. The efforts of religious leaders and writers such as Martin Luther, Erasmus, and Sebastian Brant greatly influenced the pervasive societal expectancy of the Last Judgment in Bruegel's era.

In order to understand the marketability and popularity of apocalyptic art in the sixteenth century it is necessary briefly to examine the roots of apocalypticism. The exploration of the history of apocalypticism provides one with a basis to determine the visual imagery, such as compositional elements, that reflected theories about the end of the world. Seeded in the ancient world, apocalyptic stories were incorporated in the oral and literary traditions of the Jewish culture and early Christian sects of the classical past. Perpetuated by apocalyptic texts, theories about the Last Judgment not only reflected religious concerns, but also societal conflicts, such as the struggle for power among leaders. "Much apocalyptic literature was an attempt by groups of literati to make sense of political change or to advance political programs in the light of a strict teleological

view of history."[15] Among the early apocalyptic predictions, authors included references to the collapse of the Roman government, to the barbarian invasions, and to the rise of Islam as indicators of the coming destruction of mankind. These expectant tendencies in literature continued to evolve over time and perpetuated stories about a last world emperor, an Antichrist figure, a chronological scheme for the rise and fall of powerful kingdoms, and theories about the signs that heralded the final hour for mankind.

Among the most influential figures of the early papacy, the late sixth-century pope Gregory I was very interested in the questions surrounding the Apocalypse. "Although Gregory did not compose any works specifically devoted to apocalyptic themes, his letters and sermons are filled with a pronounced conviction, almost an obsession, with the imminence of the End of the world."[16] This apocalyptic obsession not only interested influential popes, but also clerics, reformers, prophets, intellectuals, and theorists. In addition to these religious and academic figures, the common man was also aware of the stories of an impending judgment and the fearful aspect of an apocalyptic destruction.

In the Middle Ages, fervor over the approach of the Apocalypse was evident in the numerous sermons, manuscripts, and artworks which dealt with the theme of the Last Judgment. Plagues, wars, abnormal occurances such as the birth of siamese twins, astrological occurences like comets and eclipses, and the upheavals within the Church, such as the investiture controversy were deemed to be signs that trumpeted the end of the

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[15]Bernard McGinn, Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 41.

[16]Ibid., 62.

world.[17] Among the believers of an imminent judgment, Joachim of Fiore's numerous writings greatly affected medieval and Renaissance thought. "Joachim of Fiore (c. 1135-1202) is not only the most important apocalyptic author of the Middle Ages, but one of the most significant theorists of history in the Western tradition."[18] The Calabrian abbot of Fiore believed history could be interpreted through the Bible as a progressive unfolding of three stages that would eventually culminate in the return of Christ as judge.[19] "His ideas, though frequently misrepresented, became one of the sparks that led to a virtual explosion of eschatological expectation and predictive prophecy in the following centuries."[20]

Aided by the popularity of authors like Joachim of Fiore, the expectant tendencies of the Middle Ages were continued in the early Renaissance. Events such as catastrophes or political struggles seemingly enveloped Renaissance society and provided evidence for an impending judgment. "Plagues, floods, and other natural disasters were regarded as manifestations of the wrath of God and current political events were searched anxiously for signs of the Last Emperor and of Antichrist."[21]

> During the seventy years before the Reformation, Germany served as a mirror in which was reflected both the worst and the best of the late

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[17]Ibid., 94.

[18]Ibid., 126.

[19]Robin Bruce Barnes, Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism In The Wake Of The Lutheran Reformation (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 22.

[20]Ibid., 23.

[21]Walter S. Gibson, Hieronymus Bosch (Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1973), 52.

> medieval world. Widespread corruption in the Church, political weakness in the empire, and social upheaval must be weighed against burgeoning urban development, the stirrings of humanism, and important movements of religious fervor to achieve a balanced picture of the times. Such a background provided an ideal milieu for apocalypticism, and late medieval Germany does not disappoint us here.[22]

Rulers, theologians, theorists, intellectuals, and prophets were greatly interested in determining the signs that heralded the end of the world. "The terrors of the Final Reckoning were intensified by a general sense of its imminence. There had always been prophets who insisted that the world was nearing its end, but the feeling of impending doom grew particularly acute in the late fifteenth century."[23]

Amid this atmosphere, the German Reformer Martin Luther also contributed to the multiple commentaries on the Last Judgment. Although he was initially concerned about the canonical authenticity of the Book of Revelation, Luther insisted that it was the one book that should be illustrated in the early editions of the New Testament.[24] Significantly, Luther's interest in the Apocalypse also included his attempt to discover the Antichrist. "Luther, like the sectaries, believed in the speedy advent of Christ to overthrow his great enemy Antichrist, identified with the pope."[25] Equally, the pervasive expectancy of the age forced the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17) to issue a statement to denounce popular apocalyptic tendencies and warn Catholic priests to avoid overzealous

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[22]McGinn, 270.

[23]Gibson, Hieronymus Bosch, 52

[24]Barnes, 41.

[25]Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1952), 42-44.

attempts to interpret signs, biblical prophecies, and the general decay of society as signaling the end of the world.[26] In order to counter Luther's attacks on the pope, the Church, and the authority of the Catholic leadership of Latin Christendom, many efforts in sermons, literature, and propagandistic prints were directed at Luther to denounce the reformer as the Antichrist. Thus, both the Catholic and Protestant spheres of sixteenth-century Christianity responded to the apocalypticism that permeated society. Though each sphere debated the identity of the Antichrist, the multitude of religious services devoted to the Last Judgment, the enormous number of printed texts and illustrations of apocalyptic theories, and the pervasive pessimism of an age fraught with wars and calamities perpetuated apocalypticism in the later decades of the sixteenth century.

The fascination with apocalyptic signs is exemplified in the work of Sebastian Brant and Albrecht Durer. "In an engraving, Durer recorded for posterity the likeness of an eight-legged pig born in 1496, while Sebastian Brant published woodcuts announcing monstrous births and similar prodigies"[27] (Fig. 32). These events were often determined to be signs that heralded the end of the world and God's disfavor with sinful mankind.[28] In this environment, artists like Durer, Bosch, and Bruegel were commissioned to produce works with apocalyptic themes. Although paintings were created for individual patrons, prints, such as Durer's Apocalypse, 1498, were widely distributed to an eager audience. "The advent of the millenium, the coming of utopian Christianity was

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[26]Ibid., 29.

[27]Gibson, Hieronymus Bosch, 67.

[28]Ibid.

presumed to be preceded by a general holocaust, a cosmic spectacle, matching and of course taking inspiration from the imagery of the biblically canonical Apocalypse."[29] First issued in German and Latin in 1498, Durer's Apocalypse was well received among the populace and artistically fed their prevailing fears associated with the approach of the turn of the century.

The moment of the Last Judgment as envisioned in the Bible and interpreted by theologians was associated with certain years, such as 1500. Thus, artists like Durer were likely influenced by the pervasive expectancy of the age. In Durer's series of woodcuts for the Apocalypse, the artist clearly followed biblical passages. For example, in Durer's sheet entitled St. John before God and the Elders the artist has included many traditional elements, such as the tetramorph and the elders (Fig. 33). In all likelihood, Bruegel was aware of many of Durer's works and may have been inspired by some of his compositions. Though Bruegel was likely familiar with Durer's works, he did not emulate the compositional clarity of the woodcuts. Durer's choice and arrangement of apocalyptic elements and symbols in the Apocalypse enables the viewer to quickly grasp its connotations. However, in Bruegel's Fortitude, the viewer may not as easily discover the apocalyptic allusions in the composition.

Although the general public may not have appreciated the more subtle allusions to the Last Judgment in Bruegel's Fortitude, an astute collector, especially a learned individual with an understanding of the virtue tradition and its antecedents, would have

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[29]Craig Harbison, The Last Judgment in Sixteenth Century Northern Europe: A Study of the Relation Between Art and the Reformation (New York: Garland Publishing, 1976), 65.

discovered some of the allusions to the Book of Revelation. Bruegel's connection between the virtue fortitude and the Apocalypse may have been inspired by a variety of factors.

Though speculative, Bruegel may have been influenced by the Romanesque tradition of associating virtues in a Last Judgment scene or earlier manuscript illuminations. The association of the virtues and apocalyptic elements flourished during the Romanesque period, especially in church decorations. These decorations, such as tympanum archivolts, survived for decades and influenced later sculptural programs that included the vanquishment of the vices by the virtues. Often, the battle between the virtues and vices was included with Last Judgment scenes. In all likelihood, Bruegel must have been familiar with the connection of the virtues and the Apocalypse. Perhaps Bruegel's Fortitude is a combination of the apocalyptic connotations of Romanesque sculptural programs with the attributes of the virtues from the manuscript tradition. Yet, why does the virtue fortitude in Bruegel's series have apocalyptic allusions in particular?

Despite the questions surrounding Bruegel's religious affiliation, one may infer that the artist, like his contemporaries, was knowledgeable of theories about the end of the world. Did Bruegel endow the allegorical scene in Fortitude with apocalyptic elements because of his possible close proximity to a lost Boschian triptych that was likely in the workshop Aux Quatre Vents during the same year of the execution of the print? Bruegel's design for Fortitude was likely executed in 1560 and was one of the last to be finished in the series on the virtues. The similarity in composition between the extant engraving of the Boschian Last Judgment and Bruegel's Fortitude tends to favor

the postulation that Bruegel may have directly appropriated many of the compositional elements of the scene. Thus, Bruegel's earlier designs for the other virtues, such as Hope, were likely made without the aid of the Boschian triptych's composition. Therefore, as possibly the last design for the virtues series, Fortitude was greatly influenced by the likely presence of the Boschian triptych in the workshop Aux Quatre Vents in 1560.

However, unlike the pessimism of the Boschian work, Bruegel endowed his apocalyptic scene with a feeling of optimism and hope since mankind, aided by angels, vanquishes the forces of evil and literally destroys the beasts of vice, or symbolic embodiments of sin in the foreground. In Fortitude, mankind has the power to defeat evil, whether it is in the form of beasts, demons, or even the likeness of the dragon mentioned by St. John in the Book of Revelation. Imbued by the power of the virtue fortitude, strengthened by the presence of Christ, and inspired by the reward of eternal life after the battles of the Apocalypse, the human figures in Fortitude courageously battle evil and act as exemplars of moral strength. Although a sense of optimism permeates Fortitude, Bruegel's allusions to the Apocalypse may have been derived from the traditional association of the virtues with apocalyptic elements, as typified in Romanesque portals.

This connection, between the virtue and the end of the world, was expressed eloquently by Martin Luther during his lectures on the Psalms, ca. 1513-1515. In his discussion on Psalm 119, Martin Luther described the nature of the virtue as follows: "The seventh verse has the gift of strength (fortitudo), as was said, because it is directed against the faintheartedness and fear of men concerning the reproach of the cross and of

judgments."[30] Luther's connection between the virtue fortitude and judgment may be derived from his personal beliefs since no extant document currently explains why this observation was made by the religious leader.

Certainly, during differing stages in the final battles of the Apocalypse, one may postulate that some virtues may be called upon to a higher degree than others. In the heat of battle between good and evil, fortitude imbues the virtuous believer with a great strength and perseverance. Though they are surrounded by demons, the soldiers of Fortitude are steadfast and determined in their efforts to vanquish evil. Echoing Luther's commentary about the nature of fortitude, Bruegel's figures do not seemingly fear the Boschian creatures or the approach of the Last Judgment. Although it is unlikely that Bruegel specifically knew of this passage by Luther, the commentary by the religious leader may have reflected a general association between the virtue, its attributes, and the Last Judgment. Despite the variety of factors that may have inspired Bruegel's design for Fortitude, the apocalyptic allusions in the composition do not seem improbable for an artist familiar with the Book of Revelation, inspired by the work of Bosch, and living in an age of apocalypticism.

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[30]Martin Luther, Luther's Works Volume 11 First Lectures on the Psalms II Psalms 76-126 trans. Herbert J.A. Bouman (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), 444.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Fortitude and developed a link between the work and allusions to the Book of Revelation. As an anomaly within Bruegel's Virtues series, Fortitude contains many compositional elements that have been overlooked in the past. Although several of these components, such as the fortress or tetramorphic banners, have been included in some descriptions of the composition, the connection between Fortitude and the prophetic writings of St. John has not previously been explored by historians. By applying an iconographical and iconological methodology, this work has endeavored to add another level of meaning to Fortitude.

In order to have adequately created a new interpretation of Fortitude, this re-examination necessitated a thorough exploration of the work's compositional elements. Though previous analyses of Fortitude have explained most of the compositional elements, none has attempted to compare the work to the Book of Revelation. By utilizing the tetramorphic banners in the center of the composition, one can create a linch pin with which to build a new understanding of the print and its apocalyptic allusions. Equally, other details, like the semi-hemispherical features of the fortress or the seven angels scattered throughout the composition, directly reflect passages in the Book of Revelation and further support the conclusion that Bruegel alluded to the writings of St. John. This paper has expanded the traditional interpretation of Fortitude and has included

other areas of investigation pertinent to the print.

For example, this work has explored the heritage of the virtue tradition and how Bruegel included many traditional attributes from the past. Incorporating scholarly studies on the virtue tradition, this paper has explained the origins of the virtues, the evolution of the tradition, and the various pictorial representations of the virtues. This exploration, particularly concerned with the virtue fortitude, enables one to consider Bruegel's knowledge of the virtue tradition and his deviation from the typical pictorial representation of the virtue and its attributes. Considering these elements, this thesis has included an examination of the artist's combination of French, Flemish, and Italian influences in Fortitude.

Besides the consideration of the iconography of the virtue fortitude and its associated attributes, this paper has also explored the association of the virtue with the coming of the Apocalypse. This investigation has included previous studies that focused on the tradition of incorporating virtues with Last Judgment elements, as typified in Romanesque tympanums. Although Bruegel was likely aware of the virtue tradition, his inclusion of apocalyptic allusions in Fortitude may have been inspired by a variety of factors. This paper has investigated some of the probable sources for Bruegel's unusual inclusion of apocalyptic elements in Fortitude.

Among the likely sources of artistic inspiration, Bruegel clearly turned to the prophetic writings of St. John. By referencing the Book of Revelation, this thesis has drawn parallels between Fortitude and the biblical text. The artist's familiarity with the Book of Revelation is evident throughout his career, since he often used the subject

matter in a number of works. The supposition that Bruegel alluded to the Apocalypse in Fortitude seems highly likely considering the artist's oeuvre. Equally, this work has also examined the influence of Hieronymus Bosch and his apocalyptic works on Bruegel. Though speculative, the significance of Bruegel's likely proximity to a Boschian triptych at Aux Quatre Vents in 1560 may have inspired the compositional arrangement of Fortitude. The apocalyptic center panel of the triptych, with its demons and battles, is echoed in Fortitude. This emphasis on battles, demons, and an impending judgment of mankind in both the triptych and Fortitude reflected the pervasive apocalypticism of the sixteenth century.

By examining Fortitude within the context of apocalypticism in the age of Bruegel, this paper has investigated a relationship between the work and the pervasive expectancy of the sixteenth century. Notably, like many other artists, such as Hieronymus Bosch or Albrecht Durer, Bruegel may have responded to personal visions of the end of the world. For example, besides the apocalyptic allusions in Fortitude, this paper has also noted the apocalyptic nature of other works by the artist, like The Last Judgment or The Triumph of Death. Although Bruegel may have believed in a number of factors regarding the end of the world, some of his works reflected a societal anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ. This anticipation was echoed not only in art, but also in literature, sermons, and theological treatises. This thesis has endeavored to incorporate the influence of several factors that may have popularized apocalyptic art. For example, the beliefs of leaders like Martin Luther, the mystical notions surrounding strange occurences in the sixteenth century, and the general ideas about the degradation of society, all helped

to perpetuate the popularity of apocalyptic art and literature. Yet, Bruegel's subtle apocalyptic allusions in Fortitude were likely understood on a number of levels.

This investigation has explored the multi-layered nature of Fortitude and how it may have been interpreted in the sixteenth century. Though the general buyer may have enjoyed the Boschian composition, Fortitude, with its attached Latin text and unusual combination of French, Flemish, and Italian attributes, was understood by the learned collector differently. By referencing other complex iconographical programs such as Romanesque portals, this thesis has examined apocalyptic precedents that may have influenced Bruegel's pictorial representation of the virtue fortitude. Bruegel's educated patrons and peers likely understood the virtue tradition and Bruegel's subtle allusions to the prophecies of St. John in Fortitude. Despite the possible interests of sixteenth-century patrons and peers, Bruegel's Fortitude cannot be viewed as merely a personified allegory in the tradition of the virtues. This work has concluded that Fortitude was an unusual and complex print. By expanding the focus of previous descriptions of the print, this paper has provided a new and different understanding of Fortitude as both an amalgamation of the tradition of the virtues and an apocalyptic image of the sixteenth century.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fortitude, 1560.

Fig. 2 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Gluttony, 1559.

Fig. 3 Anonymous, bas-relief, Fortitude, Notre Dame de Paris, ca. 1210.

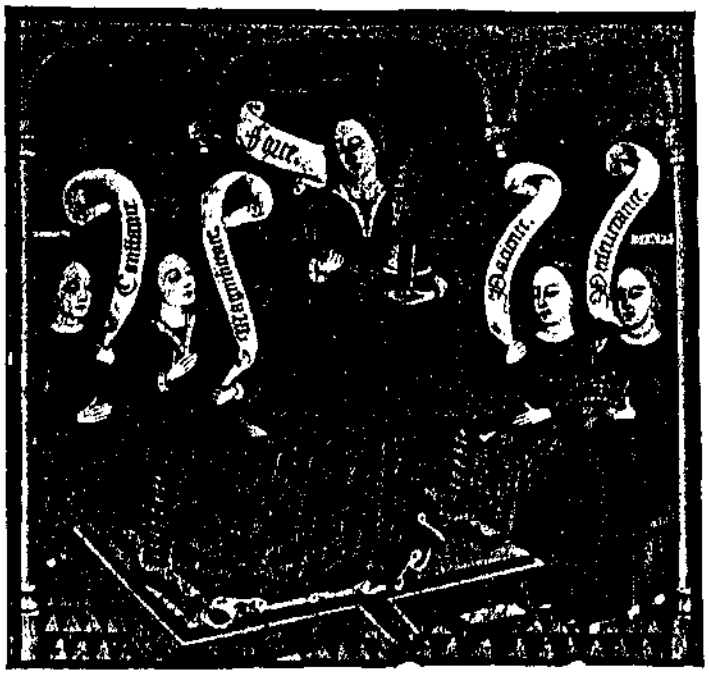

Fig. 4 Anonymous, Fortitude, illumination, Livre des quatre vertus.

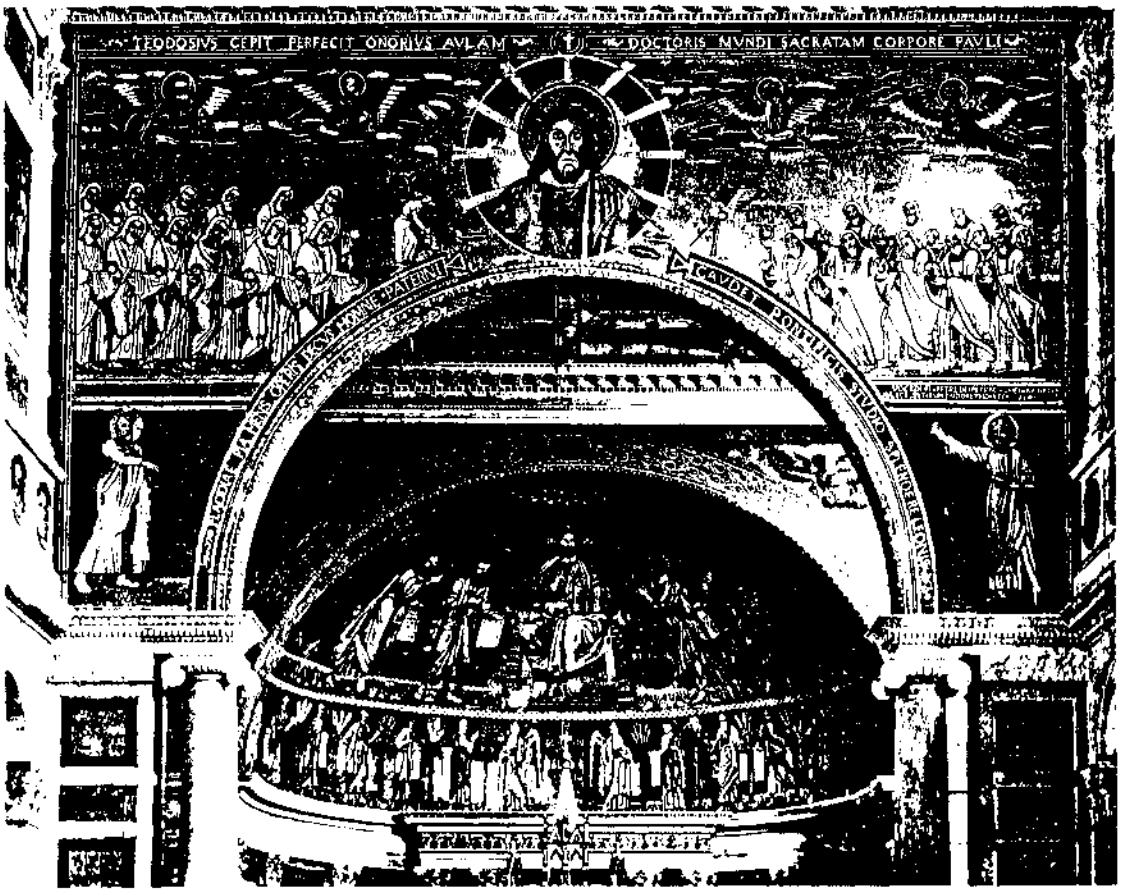

Fig. 5 Anonymous, triumphal arch mosaic, San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome, ca. 450.

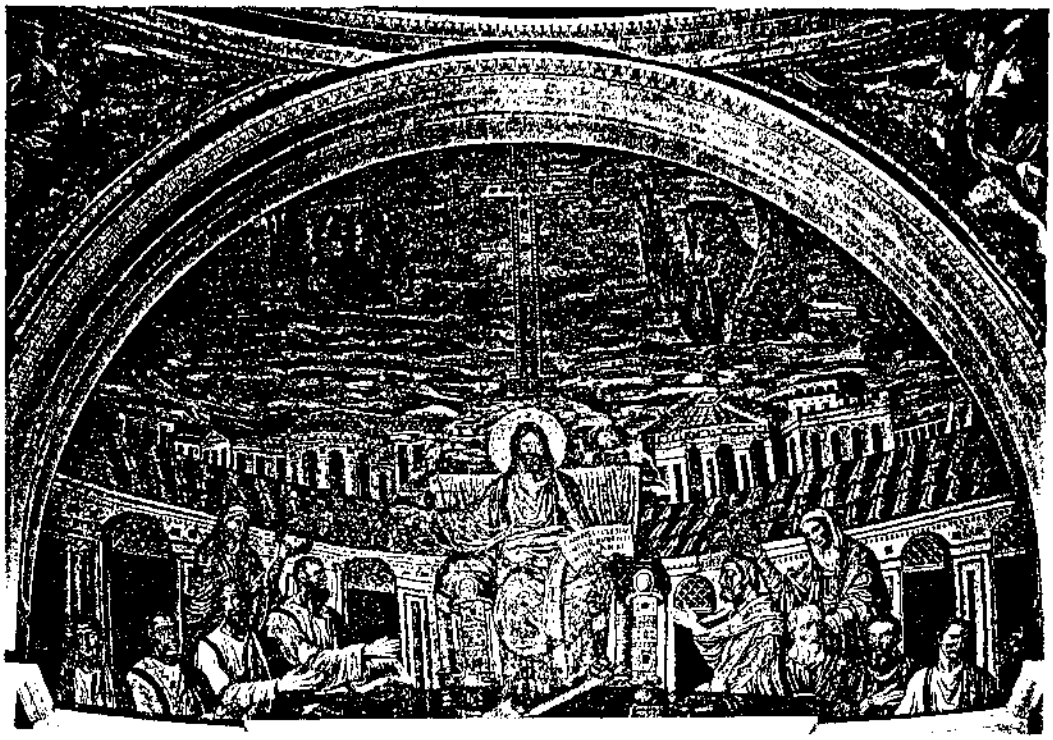

Fig. 6 Anonymous, apse mosaic, Santa Prudenziana, Rome, ca. 400.

Fig. 7 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Christ Carrying the Cross, 1564.

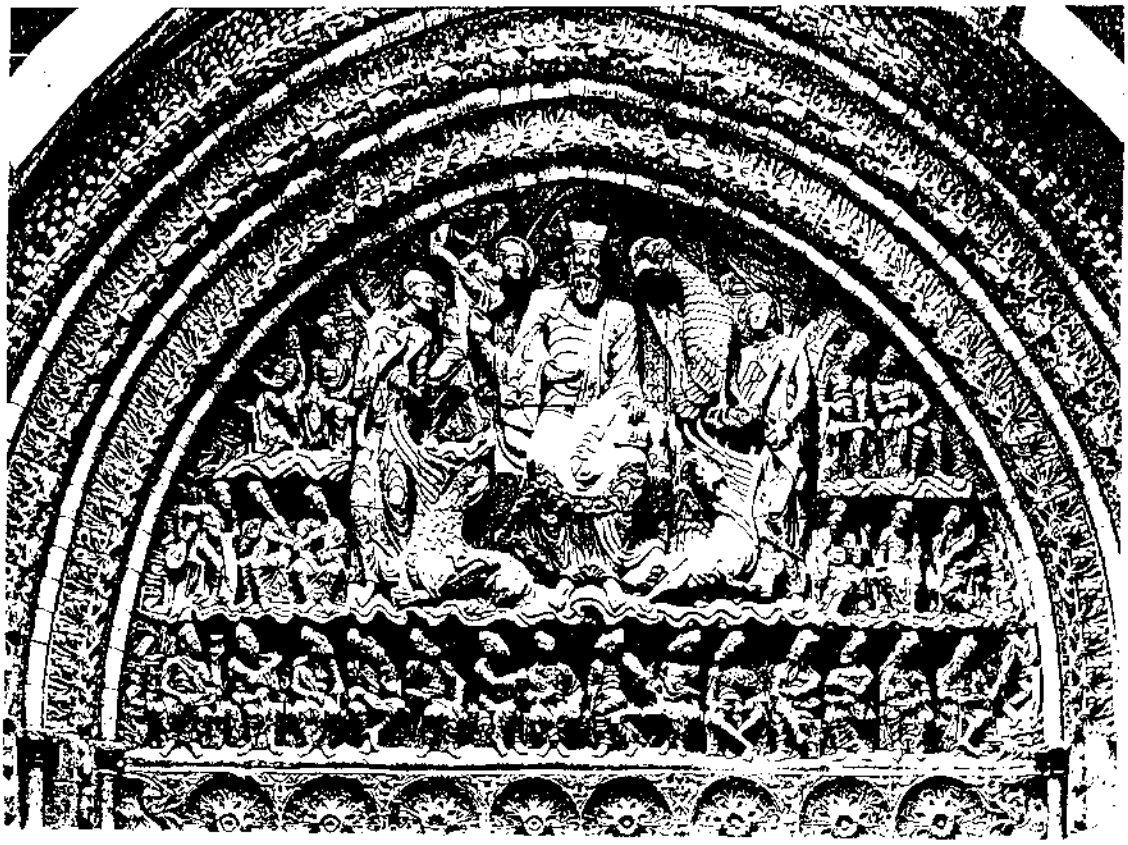

Fig. 8 Anonymous, tympanum, Saint Pierre, Moissac, ca. 1115-30.

Fig. 9 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Fall of the Rebel Angels, 1562.

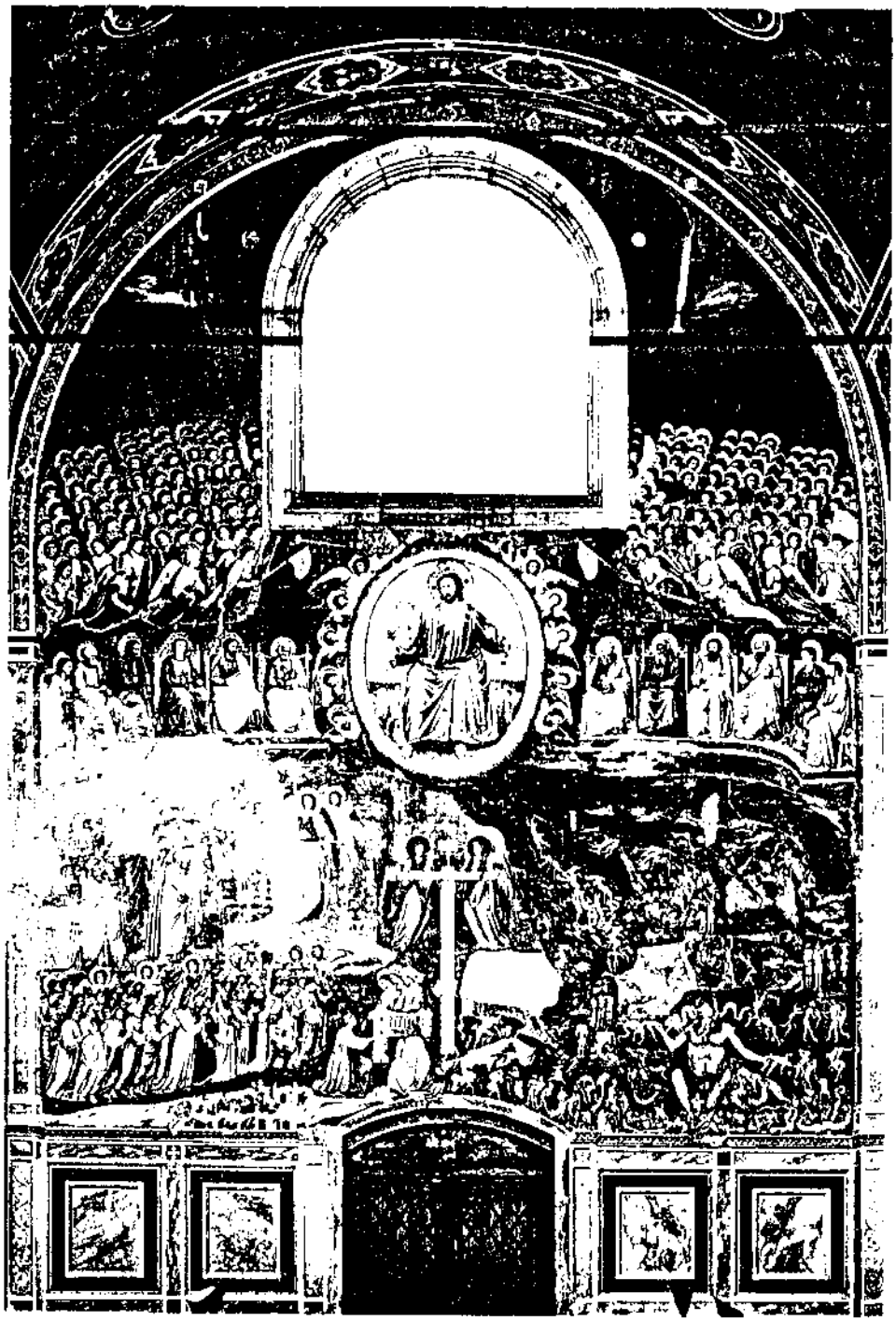

Fig. 10 Giotto di Bondone, Last Judgment, ca. 1305, fresco, Arena Chapel, Padua.

Fig. 11 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, The Last Judgment, 1558.

Fig. 12 Anonymous, after Hieronymus Bosch (?), The Last Judgment, 1560.

Fig. 13 Hieronymus Bosch, Last Judgment, ca. 1500-05.

Fig. 14 Anonymous, militant Patientia, Psychomachia, ninth century.

Fig. 15 Anonymous, capital, Notre Dame du Port Clermont-Ferrand, twelfth century.

Fig. 16 Gislebertus, capital, St. Lazare, Autun, ca. 1120-35.

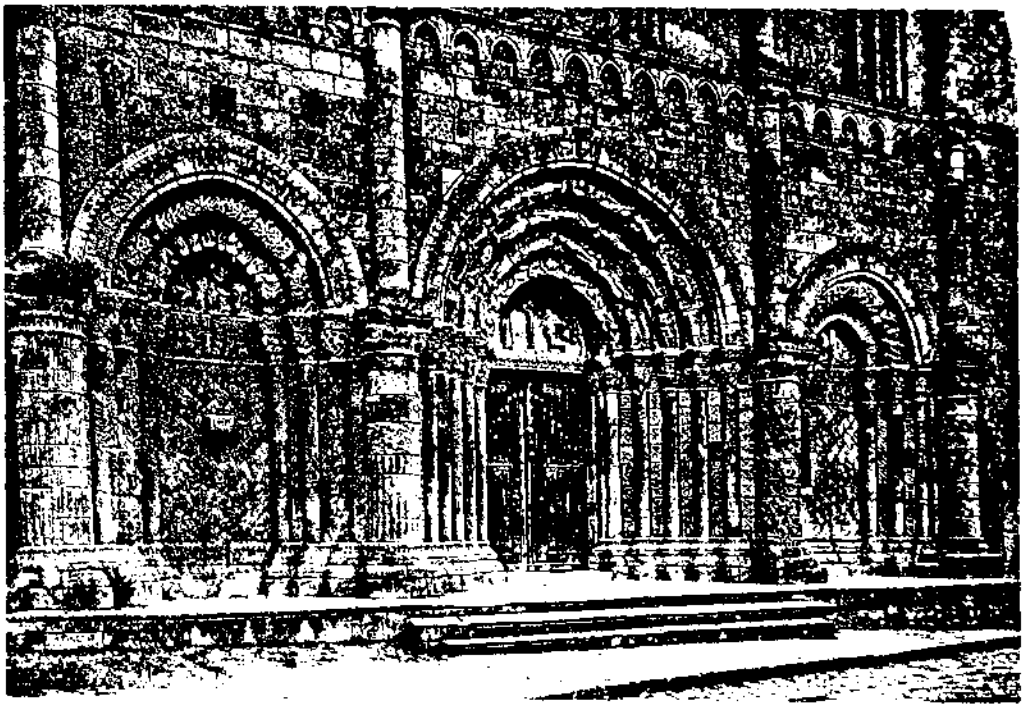

Fig. 17 Anonymous, archivolts, Saint Pierre at Pont-L'Abbe, ca. 1140-70.

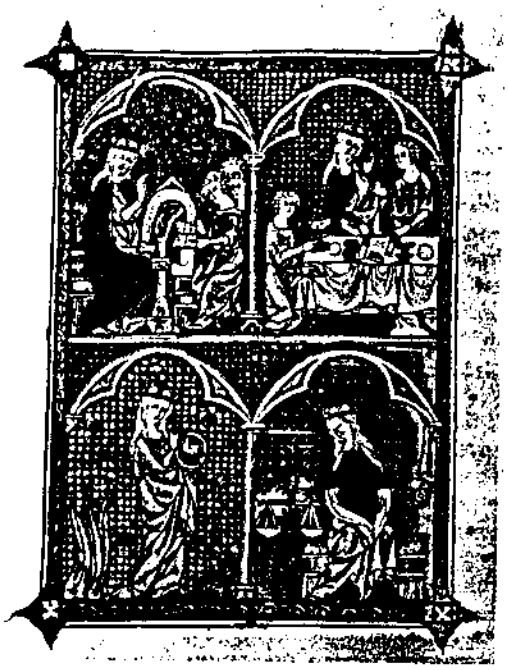

Fig. 18 Anonymous, four cardinal virtues illumination, Somme le roi, 1294.

Fig. 19 Anonymous, Prouesce, or Prowess illumination, Somme le roi, 1294.

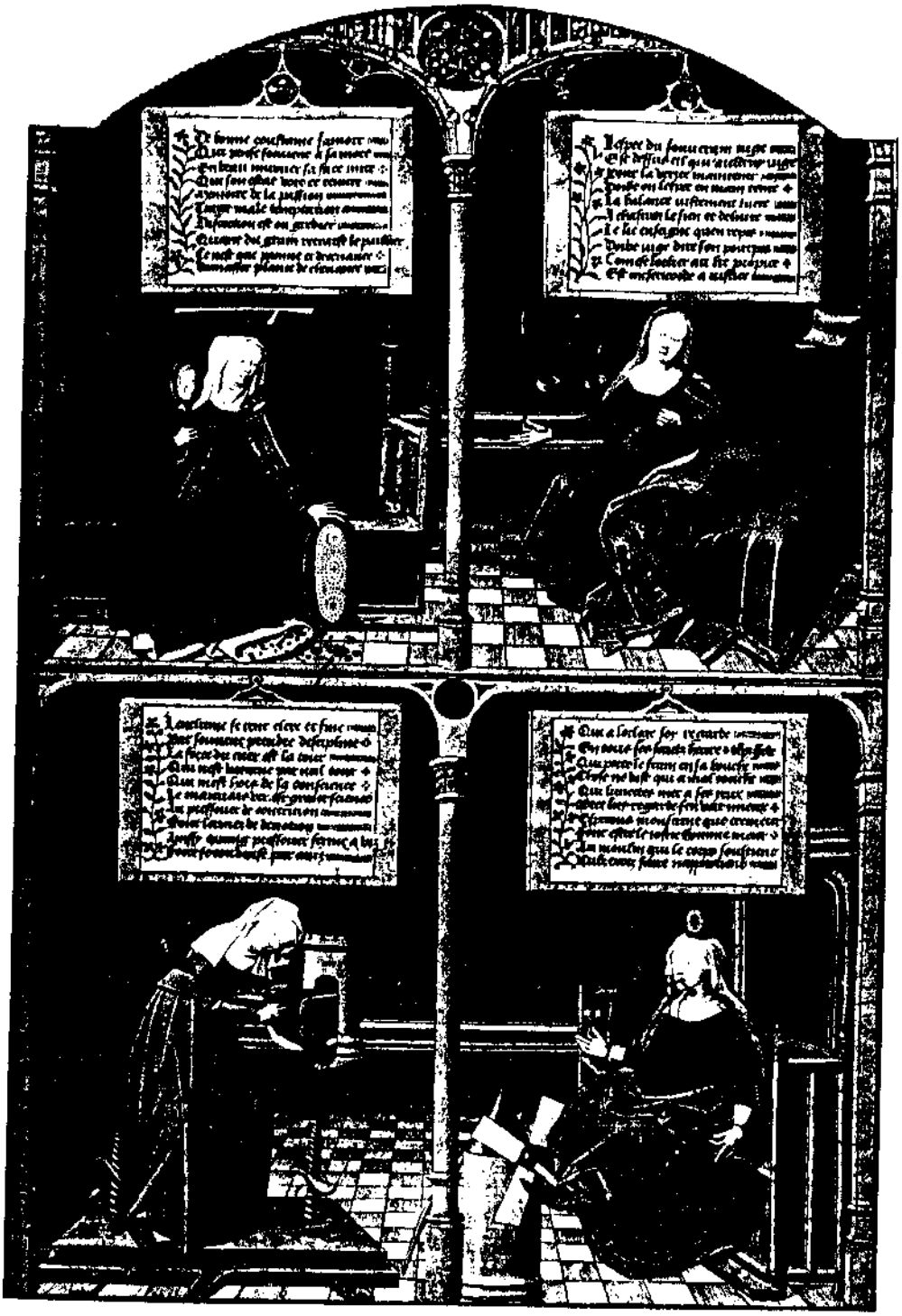

Fig. 20 Anonymous, Fortitude illumination, Duke of Nemours manuscript, ca. 1470.

Fig. 21 Anonymous, Faith, Hope, and Charity, Parisian miniature, ca. 1500.

Fig. 22 Heinrich Vogtherr the Elder, Hope, ca. 1550.

Fig. 23 Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Hope, 1559.

Fig. 24 Hans Burgkmair, Fortitude, ca. 1515.

Fig. 25 Hans Sebald Beham, Fortitude, ca. 1539.

Fig. 26 Hans Sebald Beham, Temperance, ca. 1539.

Fig. 27 Heinrich Aldegrever, Fortitude, ca. 1528.

Fig. 28 Frans Floris, Perseverantia, 1560.

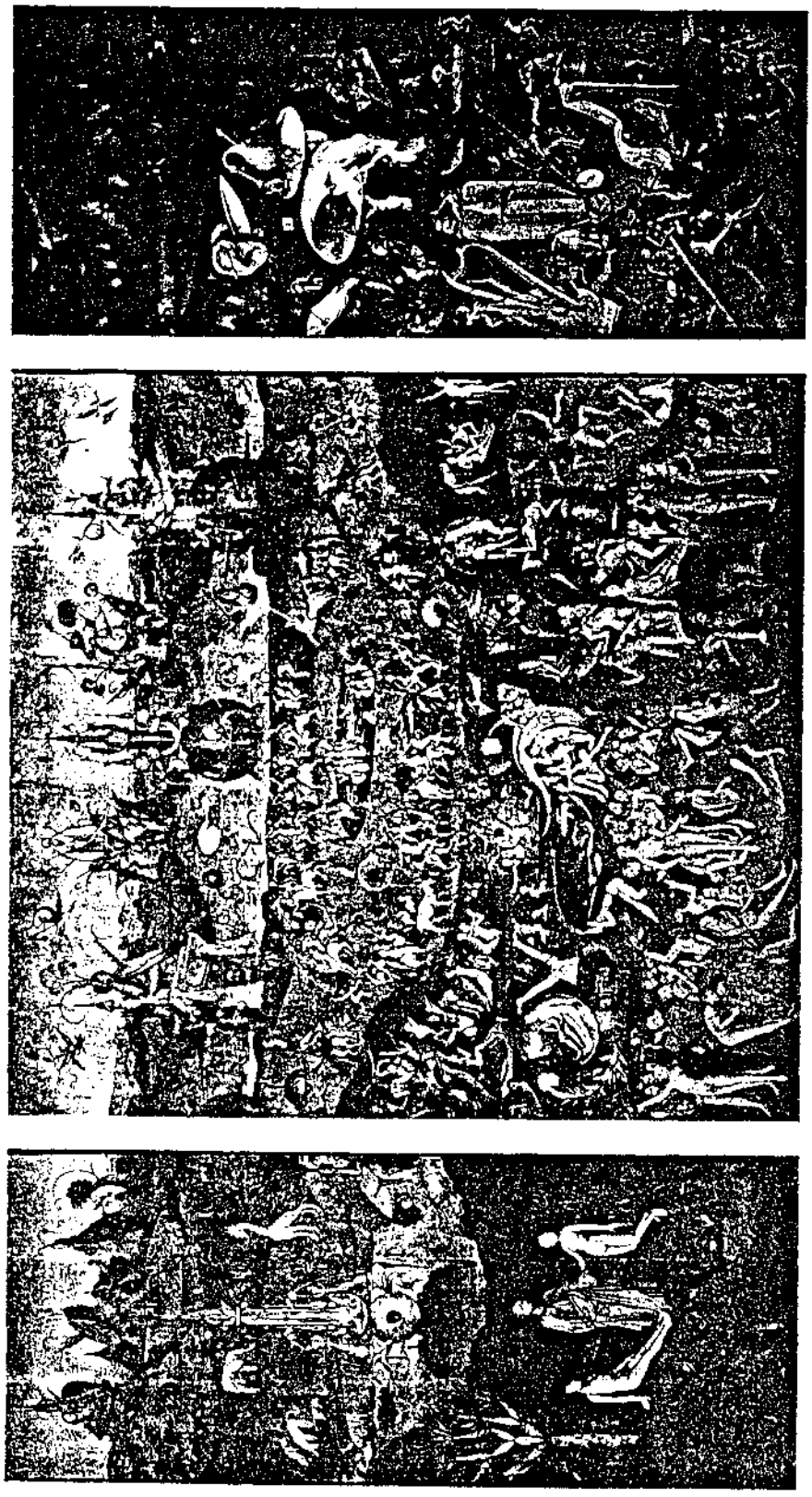

Fig. 29 Hieronymus Bosch, Garden of Earthly Delights, ca. 1510-15.

Fig. 30 Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The Triumph of Death, ca. 1562-64.

Fig. 31 Albrecht Durer, Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, ca. 1498.

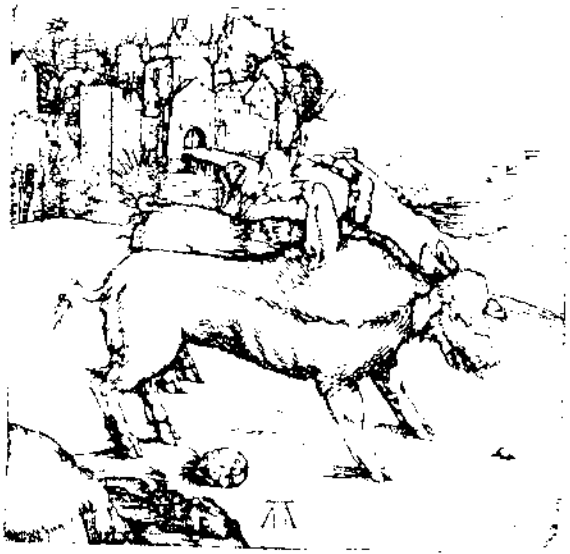

Fig. 32 Albrecht Durer, Eight-legged Pig, ca. 1496.

Fig. 33 Albrecht Dürer, St. John before God and the Elders, ca. 1498.

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