





WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF



AND MR THOMAS LEYSEN

# THE CINQUANTENAIRE TAPESTRIES

*The Collection of the Royal Museums of Art and History*

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GUY DELMARCEL & INGRID DE MEÛTER

*With the collaboration of Werner Adriaenssens*

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BRUSSELS, 2023



## FOREWORDS

Who better to compile this catalogue of our world-renowned Tapestries collection in 2023 than two former curators of the Royal Museums of Art and History? The material limitations of these works of art, which are often enormous in size and are only able to withstand a temporary exposure to light, make it impossible to admire the collection in its entirety. This alone surely justifies the task of producing this exhaustive catalogue.

With great enthusiasm, enormous commitment and unrelenting perseverance, Prof. Dr Guy Delmarcel and Dr Ingrid De Meüter have succeeded in developing this ‘catalogue raisonné’, assisted in part by Prof. Dr Werner Adriaenssens.

We would like to thank the authors for this study, which could never have been finalised without the generosity of external sponsors. We would like to express our deepest gratitude, therefore, to Mr Thomas Leysen and Mr Michel de Brauwer (Pietercil Group NV), who have been close friends of the museum for many years. We are also very grateful to Mr Yvan Maes De Wit (De Wit Royal Manufacturers of Tapestry) who has assisted the museum several times with his expertise on conservation and restoration assignments. We would also like to thank the team from Snoeck Publishers for their professional cooperation throughout the project.

Finally, we are also delighted with the support we have received from the Cabinet of Minister Sven Gatz, responsible for Budget, Finance and General Policy in the Brussels-Capital Region.

This new publication comes not a day too soon. 67 years after the last exhaustive catalogue rolled off the press, art lovers, scientists and the general public can once again immerse themselves in the exceptional heritage collection of the Royal Museums of Art and History.

It is our great pleasure to present this wonderful book to the reader.

ALEXANDRA DE POORTER      BRUNO VERBERGT  
*Interim Director-General (2015-2021)*      *Interim Director-General*

Few residents or visitors in Brussels today are aware of the extent to which it once bustled with the activity of scores of tapestry workshops, or that the city was as central to the European tapestry trade as Hollywood is to modern film production. Similarly, few people realise the degree to which tapestries from the Southern Netherlands were the pre-eminent form of art and magnificence for the rich and powerful throughout Europe from the middle ages until well into the eighteenth century. Yet that was indeed the case, with vast numbers of tapestries of various qualities being made in cities such as Bruges, Tournai, Lille, Brussels, Antwerp and Oudenaarde, and being exported to patrons as far afield as Scandinavia, Italy, Spain and Russia.

Many factors have contributed to this knowledge gap: the eighteenth-century revolutions that displaced the Ancien Régime and interrupted longstanding court traditions of display and ceremony, in which costly tapestry had been an intrinsic part; the concomitant rise of an art market serving a more bourgeois clientele that celebrated painting over other figurative arts; the loss of vast numbers of tapestries to vandalism and neglect during the nineteenth century; the perpetuation by modern art history of a hierarchy that fetishizes easel painting; and the taste of the modern art market in which painting continues to be the principle medium of speculation. Perhaps most significant among the reasons for the medium’s neglect is the difficulty of accessing tapestry collections and learning about them. Although many tapestries do survive in royal, government, museum and historic house collections across Europe and America, tapestry displays require considerable space and the support of specialised staff. The sad truth is that the vast majority are in storage and scholarly publications on the subject have been few and far between. Similarly, more wide-ranging efforts to engage a lay audience with the subject are almost non-existent.

Given the preeminent role that Flemish cities played in tapestry production, it is especially unfortunate that so few tapestries have survived in public collections in modern-day Belgium, and this is one of the reasons that the collection of the Cinquantenaire Museum is especially significant for a local audience. In addition, for an international audience, the collection is now one of the leading ensembles of Flemish tapestry in the world. Although it lacks examples of the magnificent sets that were made for the Habsburg rulers in the sixteenth century – many of which survive today in the Spanish royal collection and the Austrian State collection in Vienna – it nonetheless provides a rare and important locus for both scholarly study and popular appreciation. On one hand, the collection provides a chronological overview of stylistic development from the mid-fifteenth century to the present day.



On the other, it embraces products from the diverse Southern Netherlandish centres in which the tapestries were made, allowing for investigation of the divergent technical characteristics of these different manufactories.

That the collection is as comprehensive as it stands as a tribute to the directors, curators and scholars who have laboured to build the collection over the decades, especially Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, whose catalogue of the collection, published in 1956, was a milestone in early scholarship of the subject. Since that date, the collection has grown considerably, while scholarship in the field has also advanced enormously, providing many new insights to the artists, weavers, merchants and patrons on whom this flourishing industry depended and the impact on tapestry production and usage of the socio-economic and political circumstances of the times.

Significant contributions to that developing understanding have been made by the authors of the present volume, both of whom served with distinction as curators of the Cinquantenaire collection, Guy Delmarcel and Ingrid De Meûter. Both are eminent experts in the field, Guy, with a special focus on the iconography and manufacture of Brussels tapestries, Ingrid on the production of tapestries from other Southern Netherlandish centres, especially Oudenaarde. Both have authored major survey publications on the subject of tapestry, along with numerous articles in peer-reviewed scholarly journals.

Tapestry is not an easy medium to display or to explain, although ironically, the multiple narratives that many historic tapestries embody are almost a precursor to the modern-day pictorial narratives of comic books and anime. In this world of celebrity artists and digital imagery, the medium can seem alien and unfamiliar. But it is part of our history, a material heritage that, once we take the time to explore and appreciate its many beauties, is richly rewarding. As an art historian who has specialised in tapestry history, it is especially gratifying for me to see the Cinquantenaire Museum renewing its support for the furtherance of tapestry study in this scholarly and beautifully illustrated catalogue.

THOMAS P. CAMPBELL

*Director at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco*

From the end of the fourteenth century through to 1789, tens of thousands of figurative tapestries were woven in dozens of workshops located in the region of the former Southern Netherlands that corresponds to present-day Belgium and Northern France. Tapestry was considered the most prestigious art form in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was mentioned in the first position in the inventories of kings, princes and nobility, expressing all their wealth, power, culture and connoisseurship. These works were exported to all the countries of Europe, and those that have survived the ravages of time are on display today in the great museums of Europe and America. The knowledge of the weavers of our regions spread throughout Europe with the founding of manufacturers abroad, the most famous of which include the Arazzeria Medicea in Florence, the Manufacture Royale des Gobelins in Paris, the Royal Tapestry Workshop at Mortlake in west London, and the Real Fabrica de Santa Barbara in Madrid.

The French Revolution put a halt to the activity of most producers, but a gradual revival took place in the nineteenth century at sites in Belgium, such as Mechelen. The Royal Manufacturers De Wit is the last remaining example still active. Initially dedicated to the weaving of new models, the company also later became involved in the conservation of antique tapestries.

The Royal Museums of Art and History in the Parc du Cinquantenaire in Brussels, which offers a highly representative selection of articles from our regions, often called on the Manufacture for maintenance, restoration and conservation work. In this respect, the restoration of the major series of the *Life of Jacob*, which was acquired by the Belgian State in 1950, was the most notable undertaking. We have contributed to education in the museum by donating a didactic room equipped with a basse-lisse (low-warp) loom, related instruments and a tapestry.

It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we have been able to participate in the publication of the new catalogue of this collection. Its international reputation is well established, thanks to the numerous acquisitions made over the course of almost two centuries, the temporary thematic exhibitions of its works, and the numerous publications produced by its curators – Guy Delmarcel, Ingrid De Meûter and Werner Adriaenssens – all experts in the field and the authors of the current volume. We would very much like to thank them for their remarkable work.

This catalogue will be part of a series of similar books being published on other major museum collections in Europe and North America. It will serve as a reference work for art historians, the art trade, collectors, and museum visitors alike.

YVAN MAES DE WIT

*President at De Wit Royal Manufacturers of Tapestry*





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## INTRODUCTION

### *Building the Collection*

Despite the enormous quantity of tapestries produced in our regions between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century, Belgium did not have a historical collection at the time of its independence in 1830. The collection of European tapestries in the Royal Museums of Art and History is the largest in the country, but was not built up until after 1844.

On 8 August 1835, a Royal Decree established the Musée d'Armes Anciennes, d'Armures, d'Objets d'Art et de Numismatique, the first national museum in the recently created country of Belgium. In 1847, it moved to the Porte de Hal (an old city gate of Brussels), and became the Musée Royal d'Armures et d'Ethnologie. Its first catalogue, which was published in 1854, already listed 711 pieces, described as "objects in gothic or ogival style". These include a table carpet from the Northern Netherlands (cat. 58), acquired in 1844, and a German tapestry entitled *Game of the Wildmen* (cat. 2), which was donated in 1851. It was not until 1861 that the first textile from our regions, the *Deporation of Christ* (cat. 18), appeared in the collection.

The collection was split up in 1889. The collections of arms and armaments remained in the Porte de Hal, and those relating to antiquities and ethnography were relabelled for the Musées royaux des arts décoratifs et industriels and transferred to the east side of the city, to buildings erected in 1880 to celebrate fifty years (*le cinquantenaire*) of Belgian independence.

The tapestries originally formed part of the antiquities collection. On the walls of the rooms containing Greek amphorae or Egyptian mummies hung eighteenth-century tapestries (fig. 1).

In 1919, a new building was inaugurated, in which the arts and crafts were displayed in two halls. The museum received its current name in 1929. One of the four departments of the museum has been managing the decorative arts or crafts ever since.

As mentioned above, the first pieces that entered the collection in the nineteenth century were from foreign workshops, but the aim of successive curators has always been to acquire as many representative and beautiful

pieces as possible from the many centres of production in the Southern Netherlands, with the emphasis on Brussels because this city was the most important and the leading centre. In order to complete the overview, the collection was supplemented with the creations of weavers who had emigrated abroad.

Tapestries were acquired in a variety of ways, with purchases from private individuals and at auction being the most common methods of acquisition. Two auctions stand out in particular for the importance of the pieces.

The first striking auction at which seven tapestries were purchased was that of the Léon de Somzée collection in Brussels in 1901. The core of the Tournai examples were purchased there, the most expensive of which, the *Passion Tapestry* (cat. 3) from around 1450, cost BFr. 70,000, which was then the equivalent of five years' wages for a state employee.

Two important sixteenth-century tapestries were purchased from the Spitzer collection, which went under the hammer in Paris in 1893, namely *St Anne, the Virgin and the Christ Child* (cat. 15), and the fourth and last tapestry from *The Legend of Our Lady of the Sablon* (cat. 11).

Donations and bequests also contributed towards the growth of the collection. The Vermeersch bequest of 1911, which included thirteen tapestries, should certainly be mentioned here.

In her catalogue of 1956, Marthe Crick-Kuntziger mentions gaps in the collection that still needed to be filled. Since her original wish, successive curators have managed to fill in several of these gaps in knowledge.

Fine examples with an interesting pedigree from the Early Renaissance (cat. 12, 13, 17) and the High Renaissance in Brussels (cat. 29, 30) were added. They were produced for important Italian and Spanish purchasers. Interesting examples of Brussels tapestries that were not yet represented were also added, such as those of the Geubels family (cat. D2) and the tapestries of Jan Le Clerc and Daniel II Eggermans, based on a design by Charles Poerson (cat. D3), an artist who was missing from the collection until recently. Also interesting is the deposit by the Cathedral of Saint Gudula and Saint Michael of the last series woven in Brussels by the Van der Borgh workshop between 1769 and 1785 (cat. D7).



[FIG. 1] A former gallery in the early twentieth century with a combination of different collections.

The representation of smaller centres such as Oudenaarde grew considerably following the addition of two sixteenth-century tapestries with marks (cat. 36, 37) and a creation by Albert Goeman that is two hundred years younger (cat. 88). The proportion of examples woven outside the Southern Netherlands also increased, with examples from Delft (cat. 45), Pastrana in Spain (cat. 47), Lille (cat. 87, D4-5), the pre-Gobelins workshops in Paris (cat. 46) and from the Manufacture Royale des Gobelins (cat. 89).

Finally, we should mention one group that was completely absent for a long time. Tapestry production from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had not previously received any attention. Since the 1980s, a total of twelve modern tapestries have joined the collection, alongside interesting models painted in oils on canvas (cat. 101, 112).

The collection has now grown to 163 tapestries and nine cartoons painted on canvas. Sixteen deposits made by public institutions and services such as the King Baudouin Foundation, the European Community, the National Lottery, the FPS Economy and the Cathedral of St Gudula and St Michael complete the collection. These were accepted whenever they filled a gap in the collection. They were grouped as the most recent acquisitions, bringing the total to 188 items. Of this total collection, one quarter is constantly on display in the rooms devoted to the decorative arts.

A word of thanks is due to the generous donors of some of these works: Baron Louis Empain (cat. 30), Baron P. van Zuylen cat. 45), Mr and Mrs Jean Van Noten (cat. 103, 105), the widow of Mr Frans Olbrechts (cat. 104), Mr Edmond Dubrunfaut (cat. 109), and the Royal Manufacturers De Wit (cat. 112).

### Research

This new catalogue of the tapestry collection at the Royal Museums of Art and History was preceded by two previous illustrated editions.

In 1910, a concise catalogue by Joseph Destrée (1853–1932) described fifty items. When Marthe Crick-Kuntziger (1891–1963) published a new, extensive catalogue in 1956, the collection consisted of 115 tapestries. It was the result of her acquisitions and of the knowledge acquired over thirty-five years, which she recorded in dozens of contributions to the museum bulletin. For a long period, this catalogue has been also an international reference work on tapestry art.

The academic research on the collection was continued by the later curators. Marguerite Calberg (1898–1973) worked with Marthe Crick-Kuntziger until 1963. In addition to her publications on embroidery, she made five

contributions on tapestries between 1959 and 1963, mostly in the museum bulletin. Her successor Jean Paul Asselberghs (1935–1973) specialised in the Middle Ages and in tapestry art in Tournai. He prepared the catalogues of several exhibitions in Tournai, and a survey of Flemish tapestries in the USA, a study that was published posthumously after his tragic and all too young death.<sup>1</sup> This work was continued by Guy Delmarcel (curator from 1973 to 1990), Elsje Janssen (1993–2000), and Ingrid De Meüter (2000–2021).

After sixty-two years, the 1956 edition needed to be updated and in 2018 the present authors, who each also managed this collection for many years, decided to compile a new catalogue.

The literature on the subject of tapestry art has also increased exponentially, and many new insights about the collection had to be incorporated. Our thanks here go to all fellow art historians whose publications were used in the production of this work and are listed in the bibliography. [GD & IDM]

1. For their bibliographies, see Marthe Crick-Kuntziger in *BMRAH*, 3rd series, 29, 1957, pp. 127–130; Marguerite Calberg in *BMRAH*, 4th series, 35, 1963, pp. 140–141; J.P. Asselberghs in *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain*, vol. VI, 1973, p. 282.

### **NOTE TO THE READER**

The pieces in the collection are chronologically divided into six periods, each of which is introduced by way of a short explanation of the context.

**Dimensions** of the analysed works are given in centimetres: height x width.

**Condition reports** are not generally provided for the entries, with a few exceptions. Reports may be consulted in the inventory files of the museum, where available. Where the condition of pieces has been noted, it is usually when pieces have gone for conservation externally, mainly in the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) in Brussels.

**External exhibitions** are not mentioned systematically. When an exhibition catalogue contains new research material, the related entry is mentioned under the literature of the described pieces.

### **Abbreviations:**

GD: Guy Delmarcel

IDM: Ingrid De Meüter

WA: Werner Adriaenssens





- I -

## THE MIDDLE AGES





[1]



[6]

**I**N COMPARISON WITH other museum collections, the group of Gothic-style tapestries is rather limited. It contains only nine examples, but provides a good sample of the production in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *The Assignment in the Temple* (cat. 1) joins the famous production of the *Apocalypse of Angers*, as a fragment of a larger piece from a *Life of Mary*. The *Game of the Wild Men* (cat. 2) is a precious and extremely rare example of German weaving in the first half of the fifteenth century, the only one of its kind in Belgian collections. It was donated by a family of merchants who had moved from Germany to Antwerp during the French era. The second half of the fifteenth century contains pieces that could either have been woven in Tournai or Brussels. The heroic feats of arms of the medieval nobility are portrayed in the *Battle of Roncevaux* (cat. 4) and ancient mythology appears in a contemporary guise in the *Deeds of Young Hercules* (cat. 7). Rural life can be seen in the *Sheep Shearing* (cat. 6) and the ever-present religion of the time is glorified in the monumental work with the *Passion of Christ* (cat. 3).

In the final years of the century, Brussels would take the lead in the design and production of the tapestries. The compositions are more refined and elaborated in detail and are in keeping with the successors of Rogier van der Weyden in Brussels. A good example of this is the *Glorification of Christ* (cat. 8), a religious-allegorical genre that was continued in the next generation. [GD]





[1]

[1]  
PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Paris or Arras, 1375–1400  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 153 × 185 cm; 5 warps per cm  
Inv. 3199

Provenance: 1876, purchase from the Leon y Escosura collection, Paris

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 13–15, no. 1; Vienna 1962, pp. 398–99, no. 521; Paris 1973, pp. 38–39, no. 2; Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 110, 113; Paris 1981–82, p. 390, no. 334; Campbell 2007, p. 16.

Mary is holding the infant Jesus on an altar. Jesus makes a blessing gesture to the Elder Simeon, who stands with his arms shrouded, ready to receive the Child. Above the altar hangs a burning lamp. Mary is followed by Joseph and a young woman, each holding a lighted candle. The woman also carries a basket with four birds as an offering, perhaps after the description in the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (II: 1). The purple background is dotted with vineyard vines, which may imply a reference to the Eucharist (Last Supper).<sup>1</sup> Wavy clouds adorn the top border.

Commentary

The Presentation in the Temple, described at Luke 2: 2–40, usually belongs to cycles with the Life of Mary as one of the Joyful Mysteries, and is celebrated on Candlemas, 2 February.<sup>2</sup> This, however, is a fragment of a larger tapestry. Beneath the scene itself, one sees fragments of angels' heads and wings. This fragment may have belonged to a tapestry, woven after the cartoons that were used in the production of a *Life of Mary*. Such a tapestry depicting the *Vie de Notre-Dame* was commissioned in 1379 by the Duke of Anjou from Nicolas Bataille, the Parisian purveyor of the Apocalypse of Angers. Another similar series featuring the Five Joys of Mary had been executed by Pierre de Beaumetz in Paris in 1388.

There are also reports of series with the Life of Mary that have now been lost, such as in Arras in 1400, where the weaver, Gilles Eglentier, sold a series to a citizen of Bruges, and in Bruges in 1423, where Duke Philip the

Good bought such a series from Giovanni Arnolfini to give it to Pope Martin V.<sup>3</sup>

The composition has been compared to miniatures in manuscripts from the late fourteenth century, such as the *Bible de Jean de Sy*, or the *Hours of Jeanne de Navarre*, attributed to Jean le Noir.<sup>4</sup> The image scheme was already in frequent use in liturgical embroidery both in Italy and in England from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, and there too one finds a background of ascending vines.<sup>5</sup>

The folded clouds of the upper edge occur as an ornament on tapestries from German-speaking areas (Alsace, Switzerland) until the middle of the fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup> [GD]

1. Shorr 1946, pp. 17–32.
2. Kirschbaum 1994, I, col. 472–477.
3. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 110, 113.
4. Von Wilckens, *Kunstchronik* 1974, 27, pp. 176–177; Joubert, in Paris 1981–82, p. 390, no. 334.
5. Wardwell 1982, pp. 149, 151.
6. Cleland & Karafel 2019, pp. 64–67.



[2]  
**GAME OF WILD MEN**

Central Germany, 1415–1440  
 Designer and weaver unknown  
 Wool and silk; 114 × 385 cm; 7 to 9 warps per cm  
 Inv. 433

Provenance: 1851, gift from the Kreglinger family<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Kurth 1926, pp. 146, 246, plate 171; Göbel 1934, III/1, pp. 113, 289, pl. 89; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 15–16, no. 2; Cantzler 1990, pp. 29–30, 190–191, fig. 3.

From left to right, a story of characters is depicted, all of whom are clothed or covered in curly fronds of hair. These are the so-called “Wild Men” from the Germanic medieval tales.

On the left, the crowned “King of the Savages” rides up on horseback to a tent where the crowned “Queen of the

Savages”, seated on a throne and holding a sceptre, is welcoming him. His arrival is announced by a sentry blowing a horn at the top left of a tower. From the king’s left hand, a phylacterium with a woven inscription reads: “*ich finde hier truwe und stede die ich lange so gern hede*” [Here I find the loyalty and perseverance that I have wanted so long]. The queen replies, “*wer truwe und stede in herze dreit, fint der nit stede daz ist mir leyt*” [I should regret when somebody, who fosters loyalty and perseverance in his heart, fails to find this].

The king and queen take a meal in the company of another couple. That “wild man” wears a crown and a necklace of ivy. The king offers his cup to the queen and says: “*und aller freude spiel, der kon die reinen frauwe machen fiel*” [Noble women are well capable to provide the game for lust and joy], to which the Queen replies: “*freyde mit zochten wohl behut, daz ist den reinen frauwen gut*” [For noble women is joy appropriate that is protected by good behaviour].



[2]

On the banderole coming from the muzzle of a dog it says: “*ich huden*” [I am on guard]. A servant brings two covered dishes, while two wine bottles are cooled in the fountain, and a dog sniffs in a basket. Next, the king and queen play a game of TricTrac. The queen asks: “*wildu dru kysen, so kanst du niet ver(g?y?)sen*” [If you choose three, you cannot lose] and the king replies: “*ich spele von allen minen sinen, abe ich och dru kone an gewinen*” [I play with full power to win maybe all three].

Afterwards, the king departs on horseback to hunt, followed by his falconer seated on a unicorn. He says to a dog that he is keeping on a leash: “*bracke sech dich vor und wise mich of die rechte spor*” [Bracke, watch out, and show me the right track].

The king comes to a hermit seated in front of a cave and asks him: “*war umb bistu abgescheiden sogar von der werlde freiden*” [why do you live so separated from all worldly pleasures?], and the hermit answers him: “*der werlde freyde ist klein, darumb fliehen ich alesz gemein*” [worldly pleasure is of little value, therefore I fly away from it].

The background is decorated with tendrils and large flowers. The front edge is filled with small scenes. From left to right we see a miller travelling by donkey to a watermill; two naked children riding a hobby horse; a man in a boat rowing on a pond below the fountain, with two swans; an archer aiming at the swans; two boys wrestling; a woodcutter felling a tree, while his companion sleeps; two swordsmen; a man protecting himself from an ibex.



FIG. 1 *Story of Wilhelm von Orlens* (detail), Middle Rhine, 1415–1440. Museum für Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main, inv. 6809.

Commentary

The texts on the banderoles are written in late-Gothic minuscule. The words are separated by colouring each initial letter in red. The sentences form a two-line rhyming verse, indicating the dialogue taking place between the characters.

By comparing the style with the *Story of Willem von Orlens*, in the Museum für Kunsthandwerk in Frankfurt am Main (fig. 1), the work is attributed to an unknown workshop in the Middle Rhine region (Mainz-Heidelberg) and has been assigned various dates within the period of 1415–1440.

The queen’s hair attire, with braids presented on top of the ears, emerged around 1420.<sup>2</sup> One characteristic feature is the use of inscriptions on banderoles, a system of inscriptions that was used on tapestries from German-speaking countries until well into the sixteenth century. The texts on this tapestry cannot be connected to existing literary works.

The faces of the characters are blurred, which indicates that they were not woven, but rather embroidered or drawn in ink. Backgrounds have been filled up with tendrils and large flower buds. Due to their low height, these works are intended as “back sheets” or dorsalia, hanging on the wall behind a series of chairs or sofas. They are possibly the work of a single weaver, given their limited height, which corresponds to the width of the loom. [GD]

1. The brothers Georg (1765–1821) and Christian (1770–1813) Kreglinger emigrated in 1797 from Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Karlsruhe to Antwerp, where they operated a flourishing import trade in wool and hides. It is very likely that they brought this tapestry, also from the Central Rhine area, from their homeland. The company, now known as Plouvier & Kreglinger, is still located on the Grote Markt in Antwerp and celebrated its bicentenary in 1997. See Baetens 1998, pp. 17–20.

2. Cantzler 1990, p. 190.



[3]  
SCENES OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST

Southern Netherlands, 1445–1455, mid-fifteenth century  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 424 × 911 cm; 6 warps per cm  
Inv. 3644

Provenance: 1901, auction Léon de Somzée, no. 522,  
self-purchased in Spain

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1931 C; Crick-Kuntziger 1933 A;  
Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 20–22, no. 4; J.K. Steppe in Leuven 1975,  
pp. 116–120; Joubert 1987, pp. 28–29; Joubert 1993, p. 53, fig. 19;  
Rapp & Stucky 2001, pp. 221–229.

The tapestry presents a synchronised image of three moments from the Passion of Christ.<sup>1</sup> On the left, Christ, barefoot and dressed in a long purple robe, carries the cross to Golgotha. Two executioners walk alongside him, one of them holding him bound by a long rope and threatening him with a stick. Behind him, a man wearing a turban, perhaps Simon of Cyrene, helps carry the cross using both hands. Another young man, dressed in clothes from around 1460, also holds the cross while looking at Christ with pity. To the left of Christ is Mary. With her right hand, she holds up her wide cloak in blue velvet and extends the left hand towards the cross: it is not clear whether by this gesture she too is helping to carry the cross, or is simply pointing at it. Behind her come the three Marys, recognisable by their aureoles, and behind Jesus, we can count ten soldiers and five judges or scribes. Two soldiers carry a banner depicting fanciful quadrupeds.

The middle part of the tapestry is separated from the left side by some miniature bushes. Christ is hanging on the cross, his right side pierced by the lance of the blind Longinus. The blood flows abundantly to his knees, under the perizonium, and also from his pierced hands and feet. His hair reaches almost as far as his loins. The evil murderer turns his head away from Christ, on his left. On the right side of Christ, on the left of the picture, the repentant murderer hangs on a cross in tau form; on the bande-roule is his exclamation: “*memento mei domine, dum ven(eris in regnum tuum)*” [remember me, Lord, when you will come in your reign] according to Luke 23: 42. As a counterpart,

on the other side of the cross, one reads the words: “*vere filius erat iste*” [this was the true son (of God)] from Mark 15: 39, which the centurion pronounces while pointing to the crucified one. Opposite him stands Longinus on horseback, dressed in rich brocade and adorned with a large turban. On the reins of the horse are woven letters: PIAT RO-VAI-M. In the foreground on the left, Mary falls in a swoon and is supported by St John and one of the three Marys. At the feet of the cross, two men with drawn knives are fighting over the garment of Jesus. On the right, a heavily armed soldier points at them. Behind him is a horseman, possibly one of the scribes, two other citizens and three soldiers.

On the right, the risen Christ emerges from the tomb. Dressed in a wide garment, with the crown of thorns still on his head, he carries a cross staff with a banner. Three soldiers are sitting around the grave, one is sleeping, the other is looking at the risen man with his hand raised in alarm. Behind Jesus come the three Marys with the ointment pots in their hands. The angel announces the resurrection to them. At the top right, the risen Christ steps up to a building in which flames are bursting from the roof, the entrance to Limbo to which He will descend.<sup>2</sup>

The upper edge of the tapestry suggests the city of Jerusalem with all kinds of buildings in a landscape. Between the crucified Christ and the good murderer, one notices a building with two red spherical towers, one of which a crucifix has been placed. Next to it, we can see an orchard. It is apparently an allusion to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Temple Mount, and to the Garden of Olives (Gethsemane). The two pools of water possibly evoke the pond at Bezata, a five-columned bathing facility in Jerusalem, where, according to John 5: 1–9, Jesus healed a paralytic. The sides and the front are filled with numerous small trees and with flowers arranged in separate bunches.

*Commentary*

According to the gospels, several parts of the story of the Passion are enriched with apocryphal motifs borrowed from medieval devotion. Depictions of the bearing of the cross involving Mary already appear in the fourteenth



[FIG. 1] *Last Supper*, from *Passion of Christ*, Southern Netherlands, mid-fifteenth century, Vatican Museums, inv. 3742.

century, such as in the work of Simone Martini (the Orsini polyptych, Musée du Louvre, Paris), and on the French piece, also in the Louvre, the so-called *Parement of Narbonne* (1364–1380).<sup>3</sup> The legend of the centurion Longinus, who cured his blindness by touching the blood, also has its origins in the medieval period.<sup>4</sup>

It is generally accepted in the literature that the Brussels Passion tapestry once formed part of a series with the *Last Supper*, which is preserved in the Vatican Museums (fig. 1). They are related both on a stylistic level and also with regard to the materials that were employed.<sup>5</sup>

The tapestry was thought to have originated in Tournai by virtue of the inscription PIAT VAI ROM, since Piatius is one of Tournai’s patron saints.<sup>6</sup> An additional argument in support of a provenance from Picardy (Arras or Tournai) is the presence of flint nodules (“*rognons de silex*”) at the foot of the cross; such rocks are abundant in that region.<sup>7</sup>

The work in the Vatican, and with it this tapestry depicting the Passion, was associated with an order to the Brussels tapestry maker Gielis van de Putte, in 1477, in which mention is made of a piece depicting the Last Supper, which was assumed to have been woven in Brussels.<sup>8</sup> The arguments in favour of this, including those of later authors, seem, in our view, to be too weak to attribute the work to one centre in particular.<sup>9</sup>

Both the weaving workshop and the person who designed the cartoon are unknown. However, the style of the compositions and the characters may be compared to contemporary series, especially to the *Life of Saint Peter*, donated in 1460 by Bishop Guillaume de Hellande to the Cathedral of Beauvais, and now preserved in Beauvais, Paris and Boston.<sup>10</sup> In the case of this last series, Jacques Daret (c. 1404–c. 1470) was suggested as a possible designer, because of the similarities with his polyptych for the Abbey of Saint-Vaast, 1433–1435.<sup>11</sup>

The flora in the foreground is almost identical to that on the *Adoration of the Magi* and on the *Legend of Trajan and Herkinbald*, both preserved in the Historisches Museum in Basel. Designs by Jacques Daret are thought to have been used for these works too, and a version was executed in Tournai in around 1440.<sup>12</sup>

Passion tapestries were woven repeatedly in the fifteenth century. The oldest tapestries still preserved are those of the Seo in Zaragoza, which date from the third decade of the century. On 22 April 1461, Philip the Good paid Pasquier Grenier in Tournai for a series of six Passion tapestries, woven with gold and silver, which are now lost; perhaps the piece discussed here is another edition of those cartoons.<sup>13</sup>

The models for this tapestry were used at least once for a variant edition, the middle section of which belongs to the collection of the Marquesa de Castropinos<sup>14</sup> and a piece from the left-hand section, also from Spain, was offered on the Paris art market in 2010. [GD]

1. Conservation treatment thanks to the Baillet Latour Fund in 2014.
2. This is the apocryphal scene, after the letter of Paul to the Ephesians 4: 9.
3. Kirschbaum 1994, II, col. 650.
4. Kirschbaum 1994, VII, col. 410.
5. An in-depth analysis of both works, carried out by Rapp and Stucky (2002 pp. 221–229), showed however that the tapestry in the Vatican belonged to the old collection there; it was taken to France under Napoleon, and then donated to the Spanish Crown. Queen Maria-Christina subsequently returned it to the Vatican.
6. The variant in the Castropinos collection bears this inscription: VIA RMI VAR.
7. Crick-Kuntziger 1933 A, pp. 36–38.
8. J. Duverger 1971, followed by Steppe in Leuven 1975, pp. 116–120.
9. Rapp & Stucky 2002, pp. 228–229, with lit., p. 320.
10. Crick-Kuntziger 1933 A, pp. 35–36; Asselberghs 1967, p. 15; Cavallo 1967, pp. 51–55; Joubert 1987, pp. 17–35.
11. Joubert 1990.
12. Rapp & Stucky 2002, pp. 37–38 and 62.
13. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 20.
14. Ghent 1959, pp. 25–27 and pl. 3.





[3]



[4]

## THE BATTLE AT THE RONCEVAUX PASS



[4]

Southern Netherlands, Tournai (?),  
 third quarter of the fifteenth century  
 Workshop and designer unknown  
 Wool and silk; 378 × 569 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm  
 Inv. 3643

Provenance: 1901, auction of the Léon de Somzée collection, no. 521

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger, 1931 B; Brussels, 1951, p. 62, no. 127;  
 Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 17–20, no. 3; Lejeune & Stiennon 1967,  
 I: pp. 386–393, II, pl. 454–460; Asselberghs 1967, pp. 25–27;  
 Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 7, 27, 35, 37; Wingfield & Hefford 1980,  
 pp. 18–19; Digby Berlin, 1989, no. 3/10; Campbell 2007, p. 43;  
 Michel 2017, pp. 121–140.

This partially preserved tapestry depicts the Battle in the Roncevaux Pass. In 778, Charlemagne's army withdrew from Spain after battles against the Islamic occupiers there. In the Roncevaux Pass, in the Pyrenees between Spain and France, the rear guard of his army, led by Roland, was attacked on August 15 by supposed "Saracens", who were in fact Basques. After a heroic struggle, depicted on the tapestry, Roland was defeated and died on the battlefield.

Different episodes of the battle are shown synchronously from left to right. Roland, recognisable by his sword with the inscription "durendal", cleaves the head of King Marcilus ("marcille"). He also swings his sword "durendal" and blows the horn in vain for help. At the bottom, he tries to break his sword on a rock and finally, at the bottom right, he dies in a state of madness. On the right, his companion *Bauduin* takes away his horn and his sword. Above him, his fellow warrior, *Baligant*, also takes flight.

The texts at the top read as follows:

**BANDEROLE ON THE LEFT, FRAGMENTARY:**

*...ier les peines  
 ... et vaines  
 ... son espée en  
 ... que il a coppé e(n)*

*[... the troubles  
 ... and in vain  
 ... his sword in  
 ... which he had cut]*

**BANDEROLE IN THE MIDDLE:**

*Deux pieces fist de la pierre de marbre. Sans amener l'espee  
 d'achier fin  
 Lors demy mort sest couchie contre i. arbre. en graciant jhesus  
 le roi divin  
 La le trouva son frere bauduin. au quel rolland de soif se  
 desconforte  
 Mais il ne sceult trouver iawe ne vin. Paour adouchier lardeur  
 terrible et forteu*

[He made two pieces from the marble stone, without diminishing the sword of fine steel  
 Then, half dead, he leaned against a tree, giving grace to Jesus the divine king  
 There his brother Baldwin found him, and Roland asked him to relieve his thirst  
 But he could not find water or wine, to moderate the terrible and strong heat]

**BANDEROLE ON THE RIGHT:**

*Bauduin prend cheval cor et espee et se depart car les sarazins  
 c(raint)  
 Or vient thiery qui voit fort decoppée. La cha(r) rolland qui  
 durement (se plaint)  
 Reclamant, dieu qui tout scet et tout vaint. Et thiery pleure  
 aux pita(bles cris)  
 Ainsy rendit lesperit comme saint. le bon rolland martir de  
 jhesus c(rist)*

[Baldwin takes horse, horn and sword, and leaves as he fears the Saracenes  
 Then comes Thiery who sees the cuts in the body of Roland, complaining heavily  
 Evoking God who knows and overcomes everything.  
 And Thiery weeps at [Roland's] pitiful cries  
 And so, he died as a saint, the good Roland, martyr of Jesus Christ]





[FIG. 1] *Charlemagne's Dream and Departure*, from *Life of Charlemagne*, Southern Netherlands, 1450–1475. Franses Gallery London.

These verses are decasyllabic, with a rhyme scheme of: a-b-a-b / b-c-b-c. Such verses are characteristic of a specific genre, the epic, which emerged from the late eleventh century onwards, and of which *La Chanson de Roland* is the prototype.

The text on the long banderole on the left refers only to the right-hand part of the fabric: the injured Roland thrusts his sword into a rock, and then leans against a tree, waiting for a drink that his brother Bauduin cannot find (the latter is not depicted here). The text on the right titulus illustrates the departure of Bauduin and the actual death of Roland, which may have been displayed in a right-hand section that has since been lost.

#### Commentary

This historical episode was retold in the Middle Ages in the French epic *La Chanson de Roland*, which was written around 1098 and is the oldest literary text in French. The story was later taken up again with variations, for example in a *Historia Caroli Magni*, or *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*, created in the twelfth century, and attributed to Turpin, Bishop of Reims, known as the Pseudo-Turpin.

The latter of these served as inspiration for the tapestry.

Other fragments of this large composition from one or more lost series exist, for example, in the V&A Museum in London, the Musée de la Tapisserie in Tournai, and the National Museum in Stockholm. The tapestry in Brussels in fact forms part of a series on the *Life of Charlemagne*. A first section, now in private hands, depicts *Charlemagne's Dream* and his departure for war (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup>

A second section, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, shows *Charlemagne Building Churches*, thanks to the spoils of war he brought back from his first campaign in Spain.<sup>2</sup>

The *Battle of Roncevaux Pass* itself was subdivided into several tapestries. It is thought to begin on a fragment, now in Clos-Lucé (France), and continues on a large tapestry, now in the Museo del Bargello in Florence (fig. 2),<sup>3</sup> part of which was copied on another fragment located in Clos Lucé.

The Brussels tapestry ended on the right with Roland's actual death, part of which is still preserved at the National Museum in Stockholm (fig. 3).

The original fabric would have been 4.60 m high and 13.30 m long.<sup>4</sup>



[FIG. 2] *Battle of Roncevaux*, left-hand part, from *Life of Charlemagne*, Southern Netherlands, 1450–1475. Museo del Bargello, Florence.



[FIG. 3] *Battle of Roncevaux: Roland's Death*, from *Life of Charlemagne*, Southern Netherlands, 1450–1475. National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm, inv. NM 109-1968.

Parts of the composition of this tapestry are repeated on fragments in the Musée de la Tapisserie in Tournai and in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, which points to a different edition of the cartoons. According to Asselberghs, this would include the piece in Dijon, which, because of the greater refinement of the drawing – in the small banner on Roland's helmet, for example – would have been produced earlier than the versions located in Brussels, Florence and Stockholm.<sup>5</sup>

The deeds of Charlemagne were depicted in tapestry very early on. In 1356, Queen Leonora of Sicily (c. 1325–1375), wife of Pedro IV of Aragon, bought a tapestry on that theme.<sup>6</sup> Parisian merchants traded such tapestries between 1389 and 1407, and in 1440, Pope Felix IV took such work from the collection of the Dukes of Savoy.<sup>7</sup> Charlemagne also appears as one of the Nine Heroes from the inventory of Louis I, Duke of Anjou, in 1364.<sup>8</sup>

This series is usually dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Certain words in the inscriptions refer to dialectal forms from Picardy, to which Tournai also belongs.<sup>10</sup> [GD]

1. RMAH 1450.33, Lelong collection; CL 27 June 1974; 2020 at Franses London; ref. to Michel 2017!
2. For Dijon, see: Tournai 1967, fig. 10; for Bargello: MRAH 1450.37, ACL 205634.
3. RMAH 1450.54; ACL 7449 A.
4. Reconstruction by Michel 2017.
5. Asselberghs 1967, pp. 25–27.
6. "pannum de lana figuratum cum istoriis Caruli Magni", A. Rubio y Lluç, *Documents per l'Historia de la cultura catalan mig-eval*, 1, Barcelona, 1908, p. 171.
7. Lestocquoy 1978, pp. 7, 27, 35; Promis 1876, p. 311.
8. "Item un tapis de Charlemaigne, du Roy Artus et de Godefroy de Billon, contenant vi.aulnes", G. Ledos, 1889, p. 173.
9. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 17; Campbell 2007, p. 42 situates it in the period 1440–1450.
10. See the linguistic analysis by Fernand Desonay in Crick-Kuntziger 1931 B.



[5]  
HEAD OF A GRIFFIN

Southern Netherlands, third quarter of the fifteenth century  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool; 35 × 48 cm; 5 warps per cm  
Inv. 5961

Provenance: 1925, purchased from the Joseph Destrée collection

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 22, no. 5.

The fragment shows the head of a bird of prey with its beak open, with a red tongue and red feathers at the neck; around the bird are several groups of flowers.

Crick-Kuntziger saw an affinity with the griffins that carry Alexander the Great to heaven on the *Life of Alexander the Great* (Genoa, Palazzo del Principe). This last tapestry was produced in Tournai in approximately 1460–65.<sup>1</sup> [GD]

1. Rapp & Stucky 2001, pp. 242, 244.



[5]





[6]

## [6] SHEARING THE SHEEP

Southern Netherlands, Tournai (?),  
third quarter of the fifteenth century  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool: 165 × 224 cm; 5 warps per cm  
Inv. 3859

Provenance: 1907, purchased at the Bacri gallery, Paris

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 22–23, no. 6;  
Rapp & Stucky 2001, pp. 386–87, fig. 306.

Behind a watercourse, partly bordered by a wooden fence, two shepherds and a shepherdess are sitting on a lawn amidst some trees and bushes. The shepherd on the left is busy shearing a sheep, while the man on the right is reaching out a piece of bread to the woman in the middle. She accepts it, while a sheep drinks from a tub on her lap. A large sheepdog rests in front of her, and five little sheep, one of them with a black coat, stroll behind them. In front of the shepherd on the left lies his shepherd's staff, and hanging from the belt of the shepherd on the right are a money bag, a sheath for his knife and a recorder. A wooden spoon is attached to his hat. Their clothing is rather colourful, but the trousers of the man on the right are patched at the knees.



### Commentary

The tapestry has clearly been shortened along all four sides. In the absence of borders, one cannot directly relate this work to a possible series on the theme of the shepherd's life. It does belong to a scattered group of contemporary scenes of peasants and shepherds and their various occupations, such as woodcutters (Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, inv. 11072), and hunters of rabbits with ferrets (Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco, inv. 39.4.1, and Burrell Collection, Glasgow inv. 46.56). Most closely related to this tapestry in terms of theme and style is the *Peasants' Picnic*, in the Musée du Louvre (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> All of these have been dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century.

The theme of the shepherd's meal in the open air was later taken up once again in a piece from the Bruges series with the shepherd's tale of *Gombaut and Macée*, which dates from the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> [GD]

1. Inv. OA 10441, 280 x 350 cm, see Cleland & Karafel 201, p. 345; Bennett 1992, p. 30.

2. St Lô, Musée d'Art, inv. 840-1-5, see Bruges 1987, pp. 270–272.

**[FIG. 1]** *Peasants' Picnic*, from *The Shepherd's Life* (?), Southern Netherlands, 1450–1475. Musée National du Louvre, Paris, inv. OA 10441.



[7]  
SCENES FROM THE YOUTH OF HERCULES

Southern Netherlands, Tournai (?), 1464–1488  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 387 × 415 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm  
Inv. 3645

Provenance: 1901, auction of the Léon de Somzée collection,  
no. 524

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1931 A; Crick-Kuntziger 1956,  
pp. 23–25, no. 7 (with lit.); Tournai 1967, pp. 20–22a;  
Laruelle 2019, I, pp. 171–172, 197–203; III, pp. 27–31, cat. 6 A-D.

Various episodes from the youth of Hercules are depicted here.<sup>1</sup> At the bottom left, the baby (“Hercules”) is washed by two midwives, while his mother Alcmene (ALCMENA) looks on from the maternity bed, along with five other ladies. At the top left, little Hercules strangles two monsters that threaten him in his cradle. In the centre foreground, the young Hercules, bow and arrow in hand, comes to ask King Eristheus (ERISTEUS) for permission to take part in a tournament. He is followed by his friend Theseus (CHESO, distorted inscription). At the bottom right, the tournament is announced by a messenger, with a leopard (?) at his feet.



[7]

The tournament takes place in the uppermost register. Together with his companion, Hercules aims his arrow at an invisible target. Afterwards he is on horseback in armour and with a lance, he tries to strike his opponent, whose own lance is broken. In the background, the referees are watching and one of them seems to be declaring victory, as his arm is raised.

At the bottom, the tapestry is bordered with bunches of flowers and with the battlements of a rampart.

*Commentary*

The characters are all wearing clothing and carrying weapons from the period. The deeds of Hercules were depicted in a number of tapestries around 1470–1480, which correspond to the descriptions in the *Recueil des Histoires de Troie*, a compilation of ancient history commissioned in 1464 by Duke Philippe the Good from his chaplain, Raoul Lefèvre.<sup>2</sup> The tapestries that still survive are now scattered across many different collections and apparently do not all belong to the same edition.

On the basis of the drawing and the quality of the weaving, it is possible to put forward a partial grouping of the edition to which this work would have belonged. The story that begins with the work discussed here continued with the *Conquest of the Isle of Sheep* (Musée de la Tapisserie, Tournai) (fig. 1), the *First Conquest of Troy* (Davis Museum, Wellesley College) and *Hercules Rescues Hippodamia from the Centaurs* (Mobilier National, Paris). The latter two bear a coat of arms that was sewn on later and is said to belong to Cardinal Charles de Bourbon (1433–1488). This reading is uncertain, but the attribution may be retained.<sup>3</sup>

One copy that incorporates *Laomedon Forbidding the Argonauts to Enter Troy*, now in the Joslyn Art Museum at Omaha, USA, has the original titulus preserved, written in Latin prose.<sup>4</sup> Fragments of other editions are kept in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and in the Musée de la Tapisserie, Tournai.<sup>5</sup> [GD]

1. The tapestry is incomplete and was cut on the sides and the top. Many old and clumsy restorations make it difficult to read.
2. For a historical overview and a summary of this work, see Laruelle 2019, I, pp. 170–171; II, pp. 369–405.
3. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 24, completed by Laruelle 2019.
4. Laruelle 2019, III, p. 29.
5. Tournai 1967, nos. 6–8; Hartkamp & Smit 2004, p. 37, no. 6 a-c; Laruelle 2019, vol. III, pp. 23–25 and 33–35.



[FIG. 1] *Conquest of the Isle of Sheep*, from *The Story of Hercules*, Southern Netherlands, 1464–1488. Musée de la Tapisserie, Tournai.



[8]

## THE GLORIFICATION OF CHRIST

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, around 1500  
Workshop: possibly Pieter van Aelst  
Designer unknown  
No marks; wool and silk; 370 × 468 cm; 7 warp threads per cm  
Inv. no. 3647

Provenance: 1901, auction of the Léon de Somzée collection, no. 527

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 25–26, no. 8;  
Leuven 1975, pp. 124–125; Cavallo 1993, pp. 387, 391;  
Campbell 2007, p. 84.

This tapestry shows, in the form of an altarpiece, several scenes focused on the glorification of Christ. In the centre, the young, bearded Jesus is enthroned as ruler of the world, with the imperial attributes of an arched crown and a globe, surrounded by a multitude of angels. Before him, Peace, with a lily, and Justice, with a sword, are in dispute, in the so-called Paradise Process (cat. 12.2). In the small boxes are Adam and Eve, the ancestors of mankind. Jesus is worshipped in front by the rulers: on the right, the worldly rulers, with the emperor, the king and the nobility; on the left, the spiritual rulers, consisting of the pope, the cardinals, bishops, abbots and abbesses.



[8]

On the sides, biblical prefigures can be seen. On the left, the Tiburtine Sibyl comes to predict the coming of Christ to the Emperor Augustus, and at the back, Mary appears to him in heaven.<sup>1</sup> On the right, Esther, accompanied by Mardocheus, is welcomed by King Assuerus.<sup>2</sup>

In the upper corners are the Christian Heroes: on the left, Charlemagne (with an eagle and a lily on his shield), and on the right, King Arthur (three crowns), and Godfrey of Bouillon (a cross of Jerusalem), recognizable by their coats of arms.<sup>3</sup>

The two small scenes in the upper register apparently allude to parables. Left, perhaps the parable of the Hidden Treasure in a Field (Matthew 13:44), or to the prediction of the Second Coming of Christ, recounted in Matthew (24: 39–42), that only one of the two men in the field would be chosen. For Cavallo, it is the devil, in the guise of a rich man, who tries to distract the working man from his work.<sup>4</sup>

On the right, a richly dressed lady is standing in front of a counter on which a man is offering her a piece of precious cloth. Crick-Kuntziger regarded this as another parable on the Kingdom of Heaven, where the householder draws from his treasure new and old things (Matthew 13: 52), but it may also be read as the devil – as a woman – inducing the young man behind her to waste his money.<sup>5</sup>

### *Commentary*

Both the story and the composition of this tapestry are also found on three other surviving copies, two almost identical in form, at present in the Seo at Zaragoza and in The Cloisters in New York, and another with different details, in the National Gallery of Art in Washington.<sup>6</sup>

The Zaragoza tapestry (387 × 433 cm), donated by Archbishop Alonso de Aragon, a natural son of King Ferdinand, after his death in 1520, is possibly the oldest version. It not only contains threads of precious metal, but the drawing is much more refined: almost all personages wear robes with finely woven patterns, while these remained plain in both the Brussels and New York copies, and the foreground shows an elaborate composition of plants and flowers, comparable to those on the so-called “golden tapestries” (*paños de oro*) of 1502 in Madrid.<sup>7</sup> In the Brussels copy, this has been replaced by textiles suggesting carpets.

This type of tapestry is attributed to Brussels as a centre of tapestry weaving, because of the analogy of drawing and style with other works (cat. 10, Herkinbald). In all probability, it originated in the workshop of Pieter van Edingen, alias Van Aelst, and this also by formal analogies.

The copy in Zaragoza, which we consider the first edition, includes borders as well as the different columns, which occur identically on the *Fulfilment of the Prophecies at the Nativity*, one of the six tapestries that Van Aelst

delivered to Johanna of Castile in 1502, and still in the Spanish royal collection.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the little dog at the front left of the Madrid piece is literally repeated on the piece in Zaragoza. Since Van Aelst possessed the cartoons of the so-called “golden tapestries”, it is likely that these formal details are repeated on other works in his workshop, such as the work at Zaragoza and the piece described here, albeit a simplified edition. The piece at Zaragoza came from Alfonso de Aragon, the half-brother of Johanna, after his death in February 1520.<sup>9</sup> [GD]

1. According to the *Legenda Aurea*. On the version preserved in New York, the names Octavian and Seville are woven in gold, see Cavallo 1993, p. 391.
2. Book of Esther, Chapter 4.
3. Wyss 1957; Kirschbaum 1994, II, col. 235–236.
4. Cavallo 1993, p. 39.
5. Cavallo 1993, pp. 401–402.
6. Zaragoza: Torra de Arana 1985, p. 132; New York: Cavallo 1993, pp. 391–402; Washington (the so-called Mazarin tapestry): Souchal in Paris 1973, pp. 177–178.
7. Torra de Arana 1985, pp. 132–138 Cavallo 1993, p. 385.
8. Patrimonio Nacional series 2/ 1, see Junquera 1986, I, p. 7; Brussels 2000, p. 27.
9. Zalama 2012, p. 301.





[9]

[9]  
COURT SCENE

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, 1500–1525  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 335 × 250 cm; 6 warps per cm  
Inv. v 2915

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, no. 9.

An elderly king, with a grey beard, is recognisable by his crown, his sceptre and the ermine, shoulder-length cloak. From his heavy necklace hangs a golden eagle. He is enthroned in a colonnaded hall amidst his court. He points with his left hand to a younger queen alongside him, who holds a branch with leaves in her right hand. Behind and around them is a large crowd of young men and women, watching them. In front, several older men are thronging at the foot of the throne. One of them is taking off his hat, and four more are also bareheaded. A balding man at the front points to the king and is apparently addressing him. In front of him, a young page holds a book half open. Behind this speaker stands a second man holding a closed book under his arm. The floor is covered with a red carpet, on which one can recognise a pomegranate pattern. A young man in the front right is also wearing a cloak with such a pattern.

*Commentary*

In the absence of clear iconographic elements, the subject of this tapestry is uncertain. Marthe Crick-Kuntziger suspected that it was Charlemagne, who, according to the medieval legend in *Ly Miror des Histors* by Jean d'Outre-merse, is said to have married the young Sibilhe, a daughter of the king of the Greeks, at an advanced age.

A more obvious explanation can be offered by comparison with other contemporary tapestries. A formal resemblance is offered by a depiction, now preserved in New York,<sup>1</sup> of Esther inviting Assuerus along with Haman to a banquet.

Here, however, the man in the foreground seems to be engaged in a quarrel with the king, with the little page

holding out an open book to him. This may refer to the rebuke of David and Bathsheba by the prophet Nathan. It is then a more concentrated version of the scene on the series of *David and Bathsheba* in the Musée de la Renaissance at Ecoeu. <sup>2</sup> The piece may have belonged to a scattered series of the life of David, from which versions of this and other scenes are known. <sup>3</sup> Unlike those examples, however, Bathsheba is not sitting on the throne next to David.

Stylistically, this piece belongs to the large group of Brussels tapestries of the early Renaissance, grouped around works such as the *Legend of Herkinbald* and the *Glorification of Christ*, both in this museum (cat. 8 and 12). The drawing of the characters, their clothes and headgear were designed by the same artist who made two other important pieces, the *Legend of Trajan* in Boston, <sup>4</sup> and the *Lamentation of Christ* in this museum (cat. 18). [GD]

1. Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters, inv. 5380, in Cavallo 1993, pp. 387–88, and in the figure on p. 390.
2. Brussels 1976, p. 41; Delmarcel 2008, p. 65, pl. VI.
3. Amongst other places in the Town Hall in Brussels, in the PN Madrid (series 3/111) and in the Art Museum in Saint Louis (USA). Brussels 1976, pp. 52–54; Junquera 1986, 1, p. 12; Asselberghs 1974, p. 31.
4. Cavallo 1967, p. 89 and pl. 23 (where it still bears the title of the Miracles of St Claude), see Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 248–253 with illustration; also in Campbell 2007, pp. 138–139 (colour).





- II -

## THE EARLY RENAISSANCE



**T**HE FIRST QUARTER of the sixteenth century is rightly considered to be the original heyday of tapestry art in Brabant. The formulas of the Late Gothic painters were enriched by Renaissance elements from Italy and Germany, as will be seen here on some clearly datable works. A benchmark is provided by the exceptionally well-documented *Legend of Herkinbald* (cat. 10), which was produced after a design by Jan van Roome and woven in Brussels in 1513. The two tapestries of the *Legend of Our Lady of the Sands* (cat. 11) are also milestones in the production of the period, both as the earliest tapestry design by Bernard van Orley, and of a local devotion which in this case is being associated by the purchaser with the ruling house of Habsburg in 1516–1518.

The religious allegory, which already appears in the mentioned *Glorification of Christ* (cat. 8), is further portrayed in the groups of the *Triumph of the Virtues* (cat. 12) and of the *Prodigal Son* (cat. 13), which were created for a Spanish cathedral between 1515 and 1524 and have returned to their homeland via an American collection. This is joined by a group



[11]



[12]



[25]

of six tapestries created in the first quarter of the century, all of which are devoted to themes from the Life of Christ. The small pieces such as *Luke Paints Mary* (cat. 14) and *St Anne, the Virgin and the Christ Child* (cat. 15) have their counterparts in the painting and sculpture of the last century. The *Lamentation of Christ* (cat. 18) incorporates a tableau by Perugino adapted in a northern style, and in the *Baptism of Christ* (cat. 16), an Italian influence is noticeable with regard to the composition and the rendering of the anatomy after Ghirlandaio. In *Christ Before Pilate* (cat. 17), scenes have been borrowed from the engravings of Albrecht Dürer, and in the work known as the *Finding of the Cross* (cat. 19), there is the signature of the cartoon designer Leonard Knoest.

The *Life of Judith* (cat. 24) and the *Triumph of Love* (cat. 25) bear witness to the contemporary production in Tournai. This latter allegory, as well as the *Triumph of Fame* (cat. 26) which may have been woven in France, draw on Petrarch's *Trionfi* from the Italian Renaissance. [GD]





[10]

[10]

## THE LEGEND OF HERKINBALD

Brussels, woven by Lyon (de Smedt?), 1513  
 Design by Jan van Roome, alias Van Brussel (active 1509–1522)  
 Cartoon by “Philips the painter”  
 Wool, silk, silver and gold thread; 387 × 430 cm; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. 865

Provenance: April 1861, purchased from the administration of  
 Saint Peter’s Church in Leuven

Literature: Destrée 1904; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 27–28, no. 12  
 (with bibliography); Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 79–83, no. 19;  
 Delmarcel 1999, pp. 65–66; Rapp & Stucky 2001 pp. 307–312;  
 New York 2002, p. 137.

The tapestry illustrates a Eucharistic miracle around the legend of Herkinbald in three episodes. In the upper corner on the left, a young man is assaulting a young lady. This comes to the attention of Count Herkinbald, who is ill in bed. The man is sentenced to death, but since he is Herkinbald’s nephew, his entourage wishes to spare his life. Sometime later, the nephew pays a visit to his uncle. The latter grabs him and stabs him in the throat with a dagger, which can be seen at the top right. In this way, the judge executes his own sentence, regardless of the family ties with the guilty party. When the judge is on his deathbed, the bishop refuses to give him the last rites, as he is guilty of murder. At that point, however, the host miraculously passes from the pyxis, carried by the bishop, onto Herkinbald’s tongue, as proof that God approved Herkinbald’s righteousness, which forms the main subject in the middle of the tapestry. No fewer than 37 people are depicted around this scene. Some of them are carrying burning torches, which suggests that the event took place at night.<sup>1</sup> The entire scene apparently takes place in an open loggia: the floor carpet that can be seen under the kneeling woman in the front on the left runs on into a foreground densely covered with numerous flowers.

The woven border that surrounds the entire tapestry is also decorated with plants in oblong boxes, namely roses, daisies and bunches of grapes. The rectangular boxes are alternately filled with an Agnus Dei and with a chalice with host, all of which are Eucharistic attributes.

### Commentary

This tapestry, an ‘exemplum’ of a Eucharistic miracle, was paid for by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament in Leuven in 1513 as ornamentation for their apse chapel in the city’s St Peter’s Church, for which the still present triptych of the Last Supper by Dirk Bouts (1464–1468) was also intended. The presence in this chapel is confirmed by a testimony from the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup>

The story is taken from the *Dialogus miraculorum* of Caesarius of Heisterbach (1219–1223), Book 9: “de Eucharistia”, Chapter 38: “de sacramento corporis et sanguinis Christi”.<sup>3</sup> Together with the legend of Trajan, Herkinbald’s legend had already been depicted as an example of justice, on the well-known tapestry dating from around 1440 in the Historisches Museum in Bern, which shows the now-lost justice scenes reproduced by Rogier van der Weyden (1432–1445) in Brussels Town Hall (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup>



[FIG. 1] *The Legend of Herkinbald*, Tournai, around 1440. Historisches Museum, Bern, inv. 2-5.





[FIG. 2] Aert Ortkens, *Herkinbald Kills his Nephew*, drawing, first half of the sixteenth century. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. S II 81859.

As on this tapestry, Herkinbald grabs his nephew by the hair and not by the throat, as described in the original story. Related representations have been preserved from the same period, such as a drawing attributed to Aert Ortkens (Brussels, Albert I Royal Library, Print Room, no. S II 81859) (fig. 2), and a painting on canvas by Lambert van Luytge from 1507–1510 (Cologne, Kölnisches Stadtmuseum) (fig. 3). The latter was also intended as an example of justice for the town hall of Cologne.<sup>5</sup>

In the accounts of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament in Leuven, there is mention of “pay to master Jan van Brussel, in Brussels, for the design of which our patron has been made”.<sup>6</sup> He received 2.5 Rhine guilders, and 5 *stuivers* (pennies) for two jars of wine; the actual cartoon is from “Philips the painter, from that pattern to make 13.5 Rhine guilders”, plus 10 *stuivers* to bring the cartoon to the church and to hang it up. Through the mediation of Jan van Aken “Lyon, the weaver in Brussels” was paid 18 + 12 + 18 Rhine guilders for weaving. This concerns the “master Janne van Roome alias van Brussel schildere”, a painter who was paid by the court in Mechelen in 1509–10 for the designs of the statues of the Dukes of Brabant on the pillars of the Balienhof in Brussels. In 1513–14, he also designed the three tombs in the church of Brou, in Bourg-en-Bresse, built as the burial church of Margaretha of Austria.<sup>7</sup>

Both the cartoon painter Philips and the weaver Lyon were later hypothetically identified with various people. In this case, we are referring to Leon de Smedt, a Brussels tapestry maker mentioned between 1490 and 1524, when

he had to flee the city because of debts, but of whose production nothing further is known.<sup>8</sup> As far as ‘Philip the painter’ is concerned, the names Philip van Orley and Philip van Mol were proposed, however no convincing arguments were put forward.<sup>9</sup> Some may be of the opinion that his signature can be detected on the *Lamentation of Christ* in this collection (cat. 18).

This tapestry is one of the rare pieces where both the date and the name of the designer were explicitly documented in that period. The narrative series of picture is built in the form of a triptych, divided by fine baluster columns in early Renaissance style. In this type of tapestry, the main characters are surrounded by a multitude of ‘onlookers’. They fill the space around the main scene and come from the sides to the centre behind the baluster columns. Their attitudes and gestures are very restrained, and their attire is highly varied, displaying a great many precious fabrics.

The back of the bedstead behind Herkinbald is decorated with motifs of double birds and a reclining lion in a halo. They are apparently taken from an Italian silk of the fourteenth century (fig. 4).<sup>10</sup>

The same textile pattern, with slight variations, was applied to several tapestries of that period, including in this collection the *Legend of Our Lady of the Sablon* (cat. 11.2), the *Parable of the Prodigal Son* (cat. 13.1), and *Christ before Pilate* (cat. 17). It can still be found on the dress of Pomona, from the early seventeenth century (cat. 40).<sup>11</sup>



[FIG. 3] Lambert van Luytge, *Legend of Herkinbald*, painting on canvas, c. 1507. Stadtmuseum, Cologne, inv. HM 1940-236.



[FIG. 4] Silk fragment, Italy, fourteenth century. Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, inv. 533.

In depicting the dying Herkinbald, the designer has placed the deathbed in a frontal perspective, which is repeated in the canopy. With the yellow-green blanket, the folds create the illusion that the character is raising his right knee.

Some of the characters are apparently engaged in a dialogue, looking past each other obliquely. It is assumed that some of the figures are portraits, such as the man with the red, hooded cloak at the foot of the bishop, and especially the man with a brown velvet cloak and headgear characteristic of the Doctor of Theology to the right of the bed who points to the dying person. Are these members of the Brotherhood of the Blessed Sacrament of Leuven, like their predecessors who had themselves depicted on the famous triptych by Dirk Bouts from 1464–1468 in that same city?

This tapestry has served as a reference point for the dating and artistic attribution of similar works, not only for the series of *David and Bathsheba* (Musée de la Renaissance, Ecouen), because of the representation of the statues on the Balienhof and a drawing attributed to Jan van Roome,<sup>12</sup> but for many others in this style. The same forms of clothing and headgear were applied to many other tapestries. The series that seem most related to the present tapestry are those of the *Life of David* and the *Life of St John the Baptist*, both of which are preserved in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, series 3 and 4).<sup>13</sup> [GD]

**Annex:** Payments by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament in Leuven for the production of this tapestry. From the accounts of 1513.

*Item betaelt meester Jan van Brussel, te Brussel, van de ontwerpe daer ons patroen na ghemaect es, 2 ½ Rijngulden. Item noch hem gegeven twee potten wijns, 5 st.*

*Item betaelt Philips den schilder van dat patroen te maken, 13 ½ Rijngulden. Item noch Philips ghegeven van dat hij 't patroen-hier bracht en in die kercke ghehangen heeft, 10 st.*

*Item betaelt in handen van Jan van Aken, om Lyon den legerwerker te Brussel te gheven 18 Rijngulden. Item betaelt den selven van den borde te maken, 20 st.*

*Item noch betaelt aen een vierendeel pont gotz, 4 gulden 4 st.*

*Item noch ghegeven den cnaepen diet werck wirken drinkgelt 6 st.*

*Item noch betaelt in handen van Jan van Aken voor Lyon 12 Rijngulden*

*Janne van Aken 18 gulden ghedaen om Lyon te geven.*

(after Edouard Van Even, *Louvain monumental*, Leuven 1860, p. 181; the original has been lost in the city archives)

1. This can also be seen on the Legend of Our Lady of the Sablon, see cat. 11.2.
2. Wauters 1878, p. 92, note 1: Colvenerius' comment on Thomas of Cantimpré.
3. See Cetto 1966, pp. 144–145, 204–211, and Rapp & Stucky 2001, 310; and a variant at Thomas of Cantimpré (1186/1210–1276/1294), *Miraculorum et exemplorum mirabilium sui temporis*.
4. Discussed in detail in Cetto 1966, and subsequently in Rapp & Stucky 2001, pp. 41–70.
5. Cetto 1966, pp. 145, 47; Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 140, 134; Rapp & Stucky 2001, pp. 61, 59.
6. Rapp & Stucky 2001, p. 458, after Van Even 1860, p. 180.
7. Dhanens in Brussels 1976, pp. 231–238.
8. Wauters 1878, p. 461; Duverger 1934, pp. 217–218, 227; Roobaert 2002 A, p. 70.
9. Pinchart 1864; Wauters 1878, p. 90.
10. Errera 1927, p. 53, no. 34.
11. Other examples are mentioned by Stepe in Brussels 1976, p. 119, and by M. Lupo in Castelnuovo-Lupo 1990, pp. 150–153.
12. Dhanens in Brussels 1976, pp. 231–238; Delmarcel 2008, pp. 113–115.
13. Junquera 1986, I, pp. 9–21; Brussels 2000, pp. 31–61; Madrid 2001, pp. 78–91. On the tapestry showing the *Farewell of St John*, from the latter series, there is a woman in the foreground right, whose clothing corresponds to the seated woman with a book in the foreground right on the Herkinbald tapestry. See Delmarcel in Brussels 2000, pp. 105, 107.





[11.1]

[II]

## LEGEND OF OUR LADY OF THE SANDS

Two tapestries

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, dated 1516–1518

Workshop unknown

Design attributed to Bernard van Orley (c. 1488–1541)

Wool and silk; 8 to 9 warps per cm

Inv. 3153 and 9888

Provenance: inv. 3153: 1893, purchased in Paris

from the Spitzer collection

Inv. 9888: bought at auction in London, Christie's, 30 May 1963

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1930 A; Crick-Kuntziger 1942 A;

Crick-Kuntziger 1956, no. 15; Brussels 1976, pp. 97–99; De Meüter

2015, pp. 14–19; Cleland & Karafel 2017, cat. 127, pp. 578–585;

Brussels 2019, pp. 224–231.

### History

The series was ordered by Francesco de Tassis (c. 1459–1517). The border includes the arms of Tassis and of Tonola Magnasco, his mother, along with his mottoes: HABEO QUOD DEDI [I own what I have given away] and DVM VIXIT BENE BENE VIXIT [As long as he lived as a good man, he lived well]. The coat of arms of Tassis is an example of “canting arms”. It depicts a badger (Italian: *tasso*), an allusion to the family name. Moreover, on the right edge of the fourth tapestry, i.e., the end of the series (cat. II.2), a text is woven in, stating his name and the year 1518.<sup>1</sup> He came from an Italian family that had been in the service of the Emperor for several generations. His grandfather started the first imperial postal service for Frederick III between Innsbruck, then his main residence, and the other Habsburg possessions. From 1501 onwards, Francesco was appointed by Philip the Handsome as the first postmaster general at the Habsburg court. His task was to maintain the mail lines between the court residences in the Southern Netherlands, Germany, France and Spain.

In November 1516, the title of postmaster general became hereditary and was passed to his nephew, Giovanni Baptist, as his successor. The family thereby acquired a monopoly. It is possible that the new contract gave rise to the order, and that he recorded this document on the

tapestries. Since Francesco died at the end of 1517, he was no longer alive to witness the completion of the series in 1518, as the text on the final tapestry suggests.

When Charles became Duke of Brabant in 1515, he moved the court from Mechelen to Brussels. Francesco de Tassis then settled in a large mansion near the Church of Our Lady of the Sands (Notre-Dame du Sablon). The exact location there cannot be determined.<sup>2</sup> Nor is anything known about the preservation of the series until it is mentioned in 1874 in the collection of Emile Peyre (1828–1904) in Paris. The four pieces were still together at that time. The series was only split up by the sale of the collection of Baron Frédéric Spitzer (1815–90) in Paris, from 17 April to 16 June 1893. At that auction, the fourth tapestry *The Statue of the Virgin Welcomed with Great Pomp in Brussels* was purchased by the Cinquantenaire Museum and has remained in our institution ever since. The first tapestry and the third tapestry had already been subdivided into three pieces in 1890. The middle section of the first tapestry came into our collection after being purchased at an auction in 1963. Some smaller sections disappeared. The second tapestry belongs to the collection of the Hermitage Museum and the heavily restored third tapestry to the collection of the City of Brussels (Bread House).<sup>3</sup>

### Commentary

Although there are no records of the order, the series can be attributed with great certainty to a Brussels tapestry workshop, as it was intended for a church in Brussels and displays all of the style characteristics of Brussels (cat. 10).

The four-part series tells the story of the local legend, dating from the fourteenth century, of the miraculous transfer of a statue of the Virgin and Child from Antwerp to Brussels, to the Church of the Sablon.<sup>4</sup> This legend gave rise to the procession of the Ommegang in Brussels.<sup>5</sup> Each tapestry in the series is conceived as a triptych in which the different episodes of the legend take place separately from one another.

This is a very interesting series at a pivotal moment in Brussels tapestry production. One tapestry is dated, which is exceptional, as is the depiction of the patron who



had himself immortalised together with historical figures. The series is a typical example of the transition in tapestry from the Gothic style to that of the early Renaissance. It is the earliest series to be credited to Bernard van Orley (c. 1488–1541).<sup>6</sup>

The influence of the Renaissance slowly filtered through into the elaboration of the scenes. While the arrangement of the successive scenes within an architectural framework is still Gothic, the decoration of that architecture is already very Italian, as evidenced by the swollen baluster columns on square pedestals, and the naked angels.

The more sculptural interpretation of the borders differs greatly from the traditional floral borders of the time. The baluster with putto, at the bottom left on II.2, and the medallions in the corners with profiles of warriors *all'antica* also point here to Italian models, perhaps from engravings.

On the columns separating the three scenes of each tapestry, angels hold the shields of the territories under the Habsburg crown: for II.1, Styria, Krain, and the eagle of Tyrol in the middle; and for II.2, Portenau, Burgau, Kyburg and Ortenburg.<sup>7</sup>

Woven in the upper borders of the second and third tapestries is the coat of arms of Philip the Handsome, and in the fourth, that of Margaret of Austria.

The Latin texts on the banderoles in the horizontal borders explain what is depicted.<sup>8</sup> The sequence is indicated by the use of majuscles at the beginning of each text. The inscriptions are in verse. They are *elegiac distich* (couplets) in metre: hexameter above, and pentameter below.<sup>9</sup>

[II.1]

**BEATRICE TAKES THE STATUE OF OUR LADY TO HAVE IT RESTORED**

Inv. 9888  
344 × 280 cm

According to the account of Johannes Gielemans, a monk in the Red Monastery near Brussels, in 1348, at the time of Duke John III of Brabant, there was a statue of Mary in a church in Antwerp that was no longer venerated because of neglect. A devout spinster, Beatrijs Soetkens, who took care of the altar with the statue, had a vision at night in which Our Lady herself urged Beatrijs to have the statue cleaned and polychromed. Beatrice fulfilled this wish and sometime later it was displayed in the niche once again.

The first stage of this legend is illustrated on the first tapestry, that was later unfortunately cut into five pieces.<sup>10</sup> At the left, Beatrijs lies in bed (now at the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, inv. 46.126), while Our Lady appears above her (formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, lost in 1945). On the central panel, now in Brussels, Beatrijs

asks the Antwerp magistrates for permission to have the statue restored.

In the right-hand part, she brings the statue to a sculptor (also formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, lost in 1945) and she restitutes it to the church after treatment (now at Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, inv. 3517).

The text on the banderole at the bottom says:

*“C. Lux erat annoso sordentia pulvere sacra  
Postulat et votis impetrat illa suis”*

[When the day has come, she demands the holy image that has been soiled by the dust. Her wish is granted].

When it was divided into three pieces in the nineteenth century, new vertical borders were added.<sup>11</sup>

[II.2]

**THE STATUE OF THE VIRGIN IS WELCOMED WITH GREAT POMP IN BRUSSELS**

Inv. 3153  
355 × 525 cm

The last tapestry in the series is the most interesting one because it provides us with a lot of historical information. Here the patron is represented three times and the date and his name are given in the right-hand border. Members of the Habsburg family can also be seen. It is also the best preserved of the series because it was brought to the museum in 1893 and has changed hands less than the other scenes.

The texts in the banderoles explain the scenes and are preceded by a letter indicating the order.

After her journey, Beatrice arrived with the statue of Mary in Brussels where it was received with great pomp and carried to the chapel. She was welcomed by the clergy and dignitaries. The kneeling Duke John III has the facial features of Philip the Handsome.

AT THE BOTTOM:

*“Q Portum cymba tenet populus ruit undique clerus  
Obvius it proceres littora duxque petunt”*

[The little boat is docking in the harbour. People are coming from everywhere. The clergy is coming to meet the statue. The personalities and the duke make their way to the bank].

AT THE TOP:

*“R Celica magnanimus veneratus munera princeps  
Excipit inflexo poplite sacra manu”*

[The venerable prince, having venerated the consecrated gift, kneels and receives the sacred image].



1



3



2



4

[FIGS. 1–4] Reconstruction of the first tapestry from *Legend of Our Lady of the Sands*, Brussels, 1516–1518

1. *Our Lady Appears Above Beatrice*. Formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, lost in 1945.
2. *Beatrice Brings the Statue to a Sculptor*. Formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin, lost in 1945.
3. *Beatrice Lies in Bed*. Burrell collection, Glasgow, inv. 46.126.
4. *Beatrice Restitutes the Statue to the Church after Treatment*. Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, inv. 3517.





[11.2]

The statue was carried in procession to the chapel of the Great Guild of the Crossbow on the Sablon by Duke John III and his son. In fact, the young Charles of Austria and his brother Ferdinand are depicted here. The fact that Charles, Duke of Brabant and King of Spain from 1516, wears the king's crown means that the designs certainly date from after his coronation. The rich, fourteenth-century fabric beneath the image recurs in variations on other tapestries of the period (cat. 10).

AT THE BOTTOM:

*"S Grata pheretra duces subeunt natusque paterque  
Fertur ad optatam virgo senera locum"*

[The dukes, father and son, place themselves under the stretcher being welcomed. The Madonna, now content, is carried to the desired place].

Beatrijs Soetkens will guard the statue in the Church of the Sablon. In the final scene, it is venerated by Mary of Evreux, who is portrayed here as Margaret of Austria, and by the young Ferdinand with his four sisters. At the back of this group kneels Theodora Luytvoldi, the widow of Tassis.

AT THE BOTTOM:

*"T Sistitur in sancto miseris patrona sacello  
Nec despecta frequens concio vota facit"*

[She is deposited in a holy chapel to become the protector of the unfortunate. Many believers come to beg favours from her, which she does not refuse].

ABOVE:

*"U Hanc age devoto cultu venerare Mariam  
Illa ferret meritis premia digna tuis"*

[Come, venerate now the Virgin Mary to whom a cult is dedicated. She will give you rewards that are worthy of your deeds].

The patron with a letter in his hand is depicted in roughly the same way in each scene. In the central tableau, his successor Giovanni Battista kneels as well. The inscription in a tablet, on the right border, refers to the customer: *"Egregius Franciscus de Taxis pie memorie postarum magister hec fieri fecit anno 1518"* [The noble Francesco de Tassis, of pious memory, Master of the Posts, caused this to be made in 1518].

By having himself portrayed on the third and fourth tapestries together with members of the Habsburg family, Francesco de Tassis emphasises the achievements of his family, as well as its close ties to the court.

The portraits form a direct connection with Bernard van Orley. In 1515 and 1516, he received commissions to paint the portraits of young Charles, his brother Ferdinand, and their four sisters. Numerous copies were made

of those paintings. In 1518, Van Orley became court painter to Margaret of Austria. This involvement with the Habsburg family in the same period in which the tapestry series was created is not irrefutable proof of the authorship of the designs, but together with other details and stylistic similarities, it is a significant indication.<sup>12</sup>

The procession at the arrival of the statue gave rise to the annual procession, the *ommegang*. The first traces of the procession commemorating the events of 1348 date from 1356. Originally intended as a celebration of the Brotherhood of Crossbowmen, it soon became the most important religious and civic festival in the city.<sup>13</sup> [IDM]

1. The piece with the text is contemporary, but was applied separately. The reason for this remains unknown.
2. De Meüter 2015, p. 15.
3. Inv. T-2976 and inv. E1963/1 respectively. For the distribution of the documents see Idem, p. 19.
4. Brussels 1976, pp. 86–97.
5. Crick-Kuntziger 1942 A, p. 5.
6. Crick-Kuntziger 1942 A, pp. 30–34; Cleland & Karafel 2017, cat. 127, pp. 578–585.
7. Together they cover the Spanish and Italian crown territories over the four pieces: Aragon, Castile, Leon, Aragon-Sicily, Granada, Naples, Navarra, and Galicia, and the Austrian with Styria, Krain, Tyrol, Portenau, Burgau, Kyburg, and Ortenburg.
8. Crick-Kuntziger 1942 A, pp. 12–27 gives descriptions of the tapestries and all of the texts. See also Brussels 1976, pp. 88, 96–97.
9. This is a humanistic verse measure that appears on Brussels tapestries from around 1500, see Delmarcel 2021.
10. Brussels 2015, pp. 14, 19; Brussels 2019, pp. 226–227.
11. Brussels City Museum (Maison du Roi) still has an original vertical border that was replaced by a modern copy during the reconstruction of the third tapestry.
12. Brussels 2019, pp. 154–157; for further debate, see Cleland & Karafel 2017.
13. Idem, pp. 224–225.



[12]

## THE TRIUMPH OF THE VIRTUES



[12.1]

Two tapestries  
 Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, c. 1515–1524  
 Workshop and designer unknown.  
 Wool and silk; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. 9921 and 9923

Provenance: 1519–1524 Cathedral of Palencia (Spain);  
 Hearst USA collection; acquired by the Belgian government in 1964

Literature: de Schoutheete 1966; Asselberghs in Leuven 1971,  
 pp. 602–604; J.K. Steppe, in Brussels 1976, pp. 100–117 (with  
 extensive bibliography); Van Hoef 2001; Zalama & Martínez Ruiz  
 2007, pp. 155–175; Zalama 2013, pp. 295–97.

These two tapestries and the two following ones (9920–9922) originate from the Cathedral of Palencia, Spain. On 18 March 1519, the canons decided to purchase 240 yards of tapestries for the church, “to satisfy the lack and the necessity thereof”.<sup>1</sup> In 1524, four tapestries on the theme of Virtues and Vices, each measuring 60 square yards, were recorded there.<sup>2</sup> Since the total area to be bought was already known in March 1519, one can assume that the buyers had already seen the fabrics or at least had an offer for them. In 1519, older versions of these tapestries were already present in Spanish churches, as will be seen later, namely in the Seo in Zaragoza and in the cathedrals of Lerida and Burgos.

The place and date of manufacture is not known, but the material quality and style of the pieces undeniably refer to designers and weavers in Brussels in the period after 1510.<sup>3</sup> A more archaic version of the Prodigal Son was donated to the Cathedral of Lerida as early as 1514.<sup>4</sup> It was rightly assumed that the purchase was made through the fairs of Medina del Campo, where such tapestries were traded.<sup>5</sup>

Because of their size, their border decoration and their style, the fabrics can be formally considered as a whole, but their iconography can be divided into two groups. The first concerns Mankind living in sin, and subsequently liberated from sin in the Paradise Process (inv. 9921 and 9923); the second illustrates sinfulness and its punishment with the parable of the Prodigal Son and ends in a

rather clumsy synthesis in the second Paradise Process (inv. 9922 and 9920).

These moral allegories formed a commercial success within contemporary production in Brussels, and several editions have been preserved. An older version of the Group of Virtues is kept in the Seo in Zaragoza, and one in Hampton Court Palace, purchased by Cardinal Wolsey in December 1521.<sup>6</sup> A re-edition of the Paradise Process (9923) is preserved in the museum of Lamego, Portugal.<sup>7</sup>

[12.1]

### MANKIND ATTACKED BY THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS<sup>8</sup>

Inv. 9921  
 411 × 650 cm

Several scenes take place on two registers. The uppermost register, which also functions as background, is populated by young people gathered in friendly and amorous groups. At the top left, a young man sits with five ladies by a fountain and one of the ladies is putting a sequin wreath on his head; a little further away, three ladies and two gentlemen are singing, and other couples are talking in the distance. Also, down below on the left, a festive company entertains itself with singing and music, and by braiding flower wreaths. In the middle, two ladies in light clothing are dancing. One of them is taken from an engraving after Andrea Mantegna (fig. 1).

Behind them seven people are holding their hands in the air, in a gesture of despair.

To the right of this ‘sinful’ humanity, a procession of women on horseback rides up, led by a nobleman holding a long arrow, a symbol of justice. These are the vices or deadly sins. They can be identified by referring to their attributes, or to the animals they are riding.<sup>9</sup> Pride (Superbia), the first of the deadly sins, adorned with crown and sceptre, leads the procession riding on the back of a camel. Before her comes a woman on a donkey: the word “Acidia” woven on her garment identifies her as representing Sloth. Lust (Luxuria) sits before her on a pig and combs herself in front of a mirror. Next to Pride comes Greed (Avaritia), in the form of a rich merchant with a money purse and silver bowl in his hands,





[FIG. 1] *Dancing Girls*, engraving after Andrea Mantegna. Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

and Envy (Invidia), sitting atop a monster with the head of a bear. Behind him comes Wrath (Ira), riding a terrifying monster with razor-sharp teeth. On the slightly older version in Zaragoza, Ira is sitting on a griffin with wide-open wings.

On the version at Hampton Court, where only the right-hand section of the composition has been preserved, explanatory inscriptions are woven into the lowermost border, in two cartouches. The somewhat imperfect Latin may be translated as follows: “Evil, which starts slowly, gradually becomes deadly and profane. The seven sins, as they arise in the world, are here figuratively represented”.<sup>10</sup>

[12.2]

#### JUSTICE DISARMS THE VICES

Inv. 9923  
413 × 652 cm

The story continues on two registers. Most of the characters can be identified thanks to the names woven in on the Hampton Court edition. At the top left are seven ladies, the Virtues, in conversation about the sinful life being led by mankind. They are led by Justice, with sword in hand.

In the centre, the crowned figure of God sits on a throne in the clouds, while four ladies hold a debate in front of him. Justice (Justitia) with sword and Truth (Veritas), with the account book of the sins of mankind, denounce sinful Mankind in the presence of Mercy (Misericordia), and Peace (Pax), who take up the defence. Together they form the so-called “Paradise Process”, where it is considered

whether Humanity should continue to exist or not. This age-old theme of Christian meditation goes back to the *Psychomachia* of the Latin poet Prudentius (c. 348–405) and is later taken up again, for example in the *Meditaciones vitae Christi* from the fourteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Finally, both parties come to an agreement when God sends his Son to redeem mankind, according to Psalm 85 (84 of the Vulgate): “Mercy and Truth meet, while Justice and Peace embrace each other”. This scene can be found in Brussels tapestry from the series of the *Redemption of Humanity*, c. 1500 (Musée du Louvre, Paris; Worcester Art Museum, Worcester USA), to the *Story of David and Bathsheba*, from around 1525 (Musée de la Renaissance, Ecoen).<sup>12</sup> In this collection it is also represented on the *Glorification of Christ* (cat. 8).

The story continues at the top right. The virtues chase away the vices, which are recognisable from their attributes: Temperance (Temperantia) with a bridle; Purity (Castitas) with a lily branch; Pride (Superbia) carries a shield with eagle or phoenix; Lust (Luxuria) a blazon featuring a mermaid with comb and mirror; Gluttony (Gula) with a fish; Wrath (Ira) with helmet and sword; Greed (Avaritia) with a moneylock and a beehive; Envy (Invidia) with bow and arrows; and Sloth (Accedia) situated between Gluttony and Lust.

Down on the earth, mankind continues to indulge in earthly pleasures, especially worldly music. Numerous instruments of the period can be seen there: a single-handed flute, a clavichord, a lute, a tambourine, a harp and a positive organ. However, this celebration is disturbed by the virtues. Justice, with upraised sword, attacks

Guilt (Culpa), a kneeling woman, but she is stopped by Misericordia. Higher up, Fortitude (Fortitudo) also raises her sword menacingly.

The lower register of the tapestry is closely related in content to the third subject of the contemporary series of the *Redemption of Humanity*. There, Justitia threatens a young man (designated further along the tapestry by means of the name “homo”), and is stopped by Misericordia (Victoria & Albert Museum, London).<sup>13</sup>

The whole story is explained by the Latin couplets in the lower border of the replica in Hampton Court Palace, from left to right:

“Before the Judge, in the presence of the Virtues, Justice and Mercy plead. The Sinner is threatened by Justice but reconciled by Mercy.”

“Where the blessed Strength appears, the Sins leave the field. The Sins are forever punished by the immortal Virtues”.<sup>14</sup> [GD]

1. “Este dicho día (18.3.1519) y cabildo, los dichos señores mandaron que la hazienda de la obra el señor tesorero y obreros comprasen hasta dozientas y quarenta anas de la tapeçeria que les pareçiese para la dicha yglesia por la falta y neçesidad que della avia” (Archive kath. Palencia, Actas capitulares, 1511–1520); “cuatro tapizes grandes nuevos buenos de cada LX anas de ras, historia de los vicios y virtudes guarneçidos” (Archive cath. Palencia, arm. 4, leg. 8, n°2). Indeed, one will have to wait for an important donation from Bishop Juan Rodriguez de Fonseca in 1526 to have a decent number of tapestries for this church, see Zalama & Martinez Ruiz 2013.
2. Asselberghs in Leuven 1971, pp. 602–604; Steppe in Brussels 1976, p. 103; Zalama 2007 – the average area of each tapestry, 410 x 650 cm, corresponds to 55.97 square Flemish ells, at 69 cm per ell.
3. Compare with Herkinbald (cat. 10); Pietà (cat. 18); Baptism of Christ (cat. 16).
4. Garriga & Berlabé 2010, pp. 45, 130.
5. Steppe 1976, p. 103.
6. Zaragoza in Torra de Arana 1985, pp. 219–233; Hampton Court in Marillier 1962, p. 19 and plate 14, and colour plates in Campbell 2007, pp. 160–161.
7. Quina & Moreira 2006, pp. 96–143.
8. Conservation treatment of inv. 9921 and 9923 thanks to the Baillet Latour Fund in 2004.
9. For the medieval sources of those attributes, see de Schoutheete 1966, p. 29; on this tapestry, they are not named with woven-in names, but the same characters are named on contemporary series of the *Redemption of Humanity*, cf. Marillier 1962, p. 19; Campbell 2007, p. 160; Bennett 1992, pp. 68–72, or the *Moralidades* (Junquera & Herrero 1986, 1, pp. 22–25).
10. “Per colum incipiens primo vanum / Mortale fit atque prophanum / Septem peccata sicut generantur / In mundo figuraliter hic notantur”, in Marillier 1962, p. 19; de Schoutheete 1966, p. 30.
11. De Schoutheete 1966, p. 27.
12. *Redemption of Humanity*, Cavallo 1993, pp. 422–423; Antoine 2007, pp. 6–9; David and Bathsheba, Brussels 1976, p. 41; Delmarcel 2008, p. 63, and pl. VII – see also this cat. 8, inv. 3647 *Glorification*.
13. Copies in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hampton Court Palace, the V&A in London, the Burrell Collection in Glasgow. See, for example, Cavallo 1993, p. 424; Wingfield Digby 1980, plate 34; and Cleland & Karafel 2017, pp. 472–477.
14. “Ante Judicem in virtutum presencia / arguunt Justicia et Misericordia / Minatur culpa a Justicia / sed reconciliatur a Misericordia / Ubi ap(p)aret Fortitudo benedicta / campum deserunt semper delicta / Peccata in eternum castigantur / per virtutes quae non moriuntur”, in Marillier 1962, p. 18.







[13]

## THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON



[13.1]

Two tapestries  
 Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, c. 1515–1524  
 Workshop and designer unknown  
 Wool and silk; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. 9920 and 9922

Provenance: 1519–1524 Cathedral of Palencia (Spain);  
 Hearst USA collection; acquired by the Belgian government in 1964

Literature: de Schoutheete 1966; Asselberghs in Leuven 1971,  
 pp. 602–604; J.K. Steppe, in Brussels 1976, pp. 100–117  
 (with extensive bibliography); Van Hoef 2001, 2 volumes;  
 Zalama & Martinez Ruiz 2007, pp. 155–175.

This second series also illustrates sinfulness and its punishment by means of the parable of the Prodigal Son (after Luke 15: 11–32) and ends on a rather clumsy synthesis in the second Paradise Process (inv. 9922 and 9920).

These moral allegories also made a commercial success within contemporary production in Brussels, and several editions have been preserved. Two older tapestries of the *Prodigal Son* were donated to the main church in Vigevano in 1532 by Francesco II Sforza, Lord of Milan.<sup>1</sup> The first subject can also be found in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the original cartoons of the second, depicting the return of the Prodigal Son, served for versions in the cathedrals of Lerida and of Burgos.<sup>2</sup> The tapestry in Lerida was donated to the cathedral by Francisco Soler, dean of the chapter, on 21 September 1514, which provides a precious *terminus ante quem* for these first versions.<sup>3</sup> The variants in Minneapolis and Lerida respectively show partly different characters, but the clothing of most of the figures also contains noticeable differences from the pieces discussed here. In the case of inv. 9922, a very large part of the composition was redrawn to present a new content, however difficult to explain (see below). It can be deduced that new cartoons were made for this edition too, and also that the content of these tapestries was specifically determined by the canons of Palencia.

The story of the Prodigal Son was already depicted around 1500 on two large tapestries, preserved respectively in the J.B. Speed Art Museum in Louisville and in

the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, where it has been associated with original sin, the virtues and the redemption of Man.<sup>4</sup> They are therefore in keeping with the great allegorical series on the Redemption of Man, several editions of which have been preserved, both in Spain and in the USA.<sup>5</sup>

[13.1]

### THE PRODIGAL SON'S REVELS<sup>6</sup>

Inv. 9922  
 411 × 650 cm

This tapestry and the next are a later interpretation of an older series featuring the Biblical Parable of the Prodigal Son (after Luke 15: 11–32). After requesting his inheritance, the young man above left is welcomed by some ladies. In the centre of this tapestry, he is seated next to a woman of easy virtue, to whom he is handing a money belt; behind him, a matchmaker holds their shoulders with her hands. In front of him, a servant opens his trunk with money and jewels. At the top right, celebrating couples are singing. At the bottom left, the prostitutes are offered drinks by a cupbearer. The party continues on top with a couple in love and a man who is being served food and drink by two ladies. But at the bottom right, the party ends – the



[FIG. 1] *The Prodigal Son Sets Out*, from *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*, Brussels, 1517–1530. The Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, inv. John Van Derlip Fund, 37-17.



young man, now without his headgear, is chased away by the women of pleasure once his money is consumed.

On an undoubtedly older version, now in the Minneapolis Institute of Art (fig. 1), the biblical story is more clearly portrayed. On that version at the top left, we see how the son receives his inheritance, a trunk with valuables, from his father. Underneath that scene, he is received by the women of easy virtue.

On the Brussels tapestry, there is a beautiful scene with the cupbearer and behind the central couple is also a precious canopy. The two pilasters at the uppermost scene are omitted, providing a more homogeneous distribution of space. So the older cartoon was substantially updated and redrawn to produce our later edition.

[13.2]

**THE PEACE, OR THE SECOND PARADISE PROCESS**

Inv. 9920  
411 × 655 cm

The explanation of this tapestry is not unequivocal. One expects that the story will be continued here, as on the two other preserved copies of the series, now in the Diocesan Museum at Burgos and in the Cathedral of Lerida (fig. 2). There, on the left, the prodigal son kneels before the steward, who commands him to take care of the pigs, which happens at the top left. In the centre foreground, the repentant son comes before his father, who embraces him. Above, he bestows new clothes on the son, while trumpet bearers add lustre to the celebration. In the lower-right corner, the father is arguing with the eldest son, who feels aggrieved.

On the Brussels tapestry, several characters are reworked, but in a completely different context. In the first episode, at the top left, a woman kneels with a pig's head next to her, perhaps representing Contrition (Contritio), before a lady with a lily, perhaps Mercy (Misericordia), before a lady with a lily, perhaps Mercy (Misericordia).



[FIG. 2] *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, from *The Parable of the Prodigal Son*, Brussels, before 1514. Museo de Lleida, Lerida, inv. 2037.

cordia).<sup>7</sup> In the next two groups, some figures carry emblems that are difficult to interpret, such as a thistle (Penitence/Penitentia?) or a broken jug (Intemperance/Intemperantia?). Then comes the main scene, in which the figure of God is enthroned amidst female personifications of virtues. It could be explained as the continuation and conclusion of the Paradise Process conducted on the second tapestry. According to de Schoutheete, it can be explained by a Parisian mystery play of 1507. After the first trial, Veritas was sent out into the world to save humanity, but this failed, and a second session was necessary. To the left of God stand Mercy (Misericordia) with a lily branch, and Peace (Pax) with an olive branch, opposite them Truth (Veritas) reading her arguments from a paper, she proposed to send the Son of God to earth. Behind her stand Prudence (Prudentia) with a hammer in her hand, Temperance (Temperantia) with a hanging clock, and Justice (Justitia) with a sword.

Pax appears again in the lower left, raising her hand and dropping the sword of discord. The following figures possibly also represent some virtues, but their identification is rather uncertain. The lady who holds up a mirror to another, is undoubtedly Wisdom (Sapientia) holding the mirror of self-knowledge. The woman with the large rake has no obvious function here; her attribute was assigned to Greed (Avaritia) in the *Psychomachy* in the series of the *Redemption of Man*.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, a lady stands with a flat, round object in her hand, which would indicate a clock. She addresses a woman with a broken jug, therefore once again symbolic of Gluttony. On the far right a woman argues with a young lady, who has an ointment jar at her feet, perhaps a symbol of sinfulness, referring to Mary Magdalene as a penitent sinner. [GD]

1. Forti Grazzini, 1992, pp. 29–55.
2. Minneapolis: Adelson 1994, pp. 56–69. Lerida: Garriga & Berlabé 2010, pp. 46–47.
3. Garriga & Berlabé 2010, pp. 45, 130.
4. Verdier 1955.
5. The best synthesis can be found in Cavallo 1993, pp. 421–445, and in Antoine 2011.
6. Conservation treatment of inv. 9922, thanks to funding from the King Baudouin Foundation, in 1994 Brussels 1994 B, pp. 45–47.
7. Here and again below, a summary is provided of the analyses of de Schoutheete de Tervarent 1966, and of Steppe in Brussels 1976.
8. See Bennett 1992, pp. 68–71 (San Francisco).



[13.2]



## ST LUKE PAINTING THE PORTRAIT OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, early sixteenth century  
Workshop unknown

Based on an archetype by Rogier van der Weyden  
(c. 1399/1400–1464)

Wool, silk, silver and gold; 105 × 82 cm; 7 warps per cm  
Inv. v 2921

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1926, pp. 60–62; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 36–37, no. 19; Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 58–59, no. 13; Brussels 1991, pp. 394–396, no. 125; Forti Grazzini 2014 A, pp. 163–164.

St Luke, recognisable by the ox beside him, his usual attribute, is busy creating a portrait of Mary and the little Jesus. The small wooden panel with its pre-shaped curved frame stands on an easel above a cupboard on which a candle is placed, and in the cupboard below, some books can be seen. The saint apparently sits in an open gallery with an ornamental tiled floor, partially enclosed by a fabric. In the distance on the right, we can see the spire of the Brussels Town Hall; on the left, a vague view of the former palace on the Coudenberg. In front of the saint, a dog lies sleeping, partly on the beautiful border with roses and bunches of grapes. The people portrayed, Mary and Jesus, are not in view.

St Luke is holding the paintbrush with his left hand, and this points to the fact that the cartoon has been reversed, which is typical of low-warp tapestries.

### Commentary

The archetype of this theme is a work by Rogier van der Weyden, which is preserved in several versions (in Boston, St Petersburg, Bruges, and Munich)<sup>1</sup> and also served as a model for a Brussels tapestry from the period of the piece being discussed here (Paris, Musée du Louvre).<sup>2</sup> Luke draws the portrait of Mary and Jesus with a silver pen on a panel/paper. Here, he paints it onto a small panel, the frame for which has already been made in advance. A similar representation can be found in contemporary painting, including that of Colijn de Coter (church of Vieuve) (fig. 1) and a work on tempera attributed to Jan de Beer (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, inv. 67)

A similar devotional panel with Mary and Jesus is still preserved in the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon (inv. 76; 26.7 x 19.0 cm).

The work belongs to a wide group of relatively small tapestries, executed in precious materials, which did not belong to a series but were made separately as woven devotional pieces.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps it was executed for a guild of painters or a painter, of whom St Luke is the patron saint.

It is in keeping with the common style encountered in Brussels tapestries of the period 1500–1520. The decor was produced using templates. In this case, for example, the pattern for the background behind St Luke incorporates



[FIG. 1] Colijn de Coter, *St Luke Painting the Virgin*, oil on panel, before 1493. Église Notre-Dame, Vieuve.



[14]

a reclining lion in an aureole and two birds, which was also re-used on other contemporary tapestries in this collection (cat. 10). The depiction of the tower of Brussels Town Hall is also an indirect reference to the origin of the work and was also used on other tapestries.<sup>4</sup>

The designer of this tapestry is unknown. A number of tapestries in his style were collected by Forti Grazzini under the provisory name of “Master of the Extinguished Candle”, a motif that also appears on this tapestry.<sup>5</sup> [GD]

1. Dhanens & Dijkstra 1999, p. 31.
2. Louvre, inv. OA 3999; 295 x 261 cm. See Delmarcel 1999, p. 49; Van der Stock & Campbell 2009, pp. 403–405; 1490–1500.
3. See Cleland 2009, pp. 137, 140 in connection to this work.
4. This was the case, for example, on the *Baptism of Christ* in the Abegg-Stiftung, see Crick-Kuntziger 1953 B, pp. 94–95, and Wyss 1977, pp. 60–61, and on the first piece of the so-called *Hunts of Maximilian*, in the Louvre, see Brussels 2019, p. 201.
5. Forti Grazzini 2014 A, pp. 161–164; Forti Grazzini 2014 B, pp. 315–342; in this case on p. 342, fig. 17.



[15]

## ST ANNE, MARY AND JESUS



[15]

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels,  
first quarter of the sixteenth century  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool, silk, gold thread; 105 × 105 cm; 7 to 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 3152

Provenance: 1893, purchase from Spitzer collection

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 35–36, no. 18; Delmarcel  
in Brussels 1976, pp. 55–57, no. 12; Delmarcel 1999, p. 75;  
Cleland 2009, p. 133.

Anne and her daughter Mary are sitting on a richly decorated bench. On her right knee, Mary holds the child Jesus, who is pressing a bunch of grapes into a bowl held by Anne. On the left an angel stands and sings a text from a banderole, while on the right, another angel plays a harp. The pressing of the grapes refers to the Eucharistic theme of the Mystical Grapes.

The back of the bench presents two sculpted scenes: on the left, Moses kills an Egyptian who had beaten a Jew

(Exodus 2: 11–12) and on the right, Samson kills a Philistine with the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15: 15–17). These, in turn, are two prefigures of the Passion of Christ. The entire group stands on a stone platform in a landscape that extends behind the angels. In the foreground grow some flowers, such as violets and woodland strawberry. The fine border is decorated with bunches of grapes, vine leaves and roses.

### Commentary

On another contemporary tapestry in the Vatican Museums (fig. 1), the scene is explained by means of a biblical text: “He stretched out his hand to the libation and shed the blood of the grape” (Ecclesiastes 50: 15). It is a foreshadowing of the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, and of the blood that Jesus will shed afterwards for the people in His suffering.<sup>1</sup>

In the contemporary representation of this devotional scene, both in painting and sculpture, Mary sits on the left, that is, to the right of Jesus, and his grandmother on the right.<sup>2</sup> The unknown cartoon designer will have



[FIG. 1] *The Mystical Grapes*,  
Brussels, c. 1510. Vatican City,  
inv. 3833.





[FIG. 2] *St Anne, Mary and Jesus*, Brussels, c. 1500.  
Czartoryski collection, Muzeum Narodowe, Krakow, inv. MNK XIII-259.

followed this arrangement and that order will have been reversed as a result of weaving in low warp. In a later phase, this order is also reversed in paintings.<sup>3</sup>

The refinement of both drawing and weaving refer to a group of Brussels tapestries from the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The pilasters of the throne canopy are already in the early Renaissance style, similar to those on the *Legend of Herkinbald* (cat. 10). An almost identical variant of the group of Mary and Jesus can be found on the tapestry in the Vatican mentioned earlier (fig. 1), a work donated by Pope Julius II (1443–1513) to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.<sup>4</sup> These figures are consistent with the style of Colijn de Coter (c. 1440–1445 to c. 1522–1532).

On a more archaic version in the former Czartoryski collection, now in the National Museum in Krakow (inv. MNK XIII-259: 89.7 x 68.8 cm), the group consisting of Anne, Mary and Jesus is accompanied by Joachim on the left and Joseph on the right, who are both holding up a precious textile behind the group (fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> [GD]

1. "porrexit manum suam in libationem, et libavit de sanguine uve". For this iconography, see Wardwell 1975, Cleland 2009, p. 133.
2. Such as on the Triptych of St Anne by Quinten Metsijs, from 1509 (Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. 2784), and on the retable of Auderghem (Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History, inv. 327), cf. Brussels 1976, p. 150, no. 49.
3. Examples at the Master of Frankfurt, cf. J.O. Hand 1982, pp. 43–54.
4. A thorough discussion of this group in Forti Grazzini 1990 B, pp. 42–43; also Delmarcel 1999, p. 75.
5. Poznan 1971, p. 14, fig. 7.

[16]

## THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, around 1520–1525  
Workshop unknown

Design here attributed to Bernard Van Orley (c. 1488–1541)

Wool, silk, silver and gold thread; 224 × 267 cm; 7 to 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 3378

Provenance: purchased in 1897 from Baron Erlanger, Paris;  
from the Berwick & Alba auction, Paris, 1877

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 38–39, no. 21; Averbode, 1967,  
pp. 51–52, cat. B 41; Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 64–66.

Christ stands totally naked with his feet in the water; he holds a cloth in the form of a perizoma (loincloth) and raises his right hand into the air. On his left, John the Baptist bends down to Him from the bank and pours water over Jesus' head with his right hand, while holding up his cloak with his left. On the left in the picture, an angel, dressed in a cope enriched with aurifrisiaie, is ready

to hand over a large robe to Christ, a motif that has its origins in early Christian art.<sup>1</sup> Above Christ, God the Father appears in the clouds, and sends forth rays of the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice from heaven spoke: "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Afterwards, Jesus avoided three temptations of Satan: turning stones into bread (here on the right, behind John), jumping down unharmed from the roof of the temple (above on the right), and being asked to worship Satan himself (above on the left).

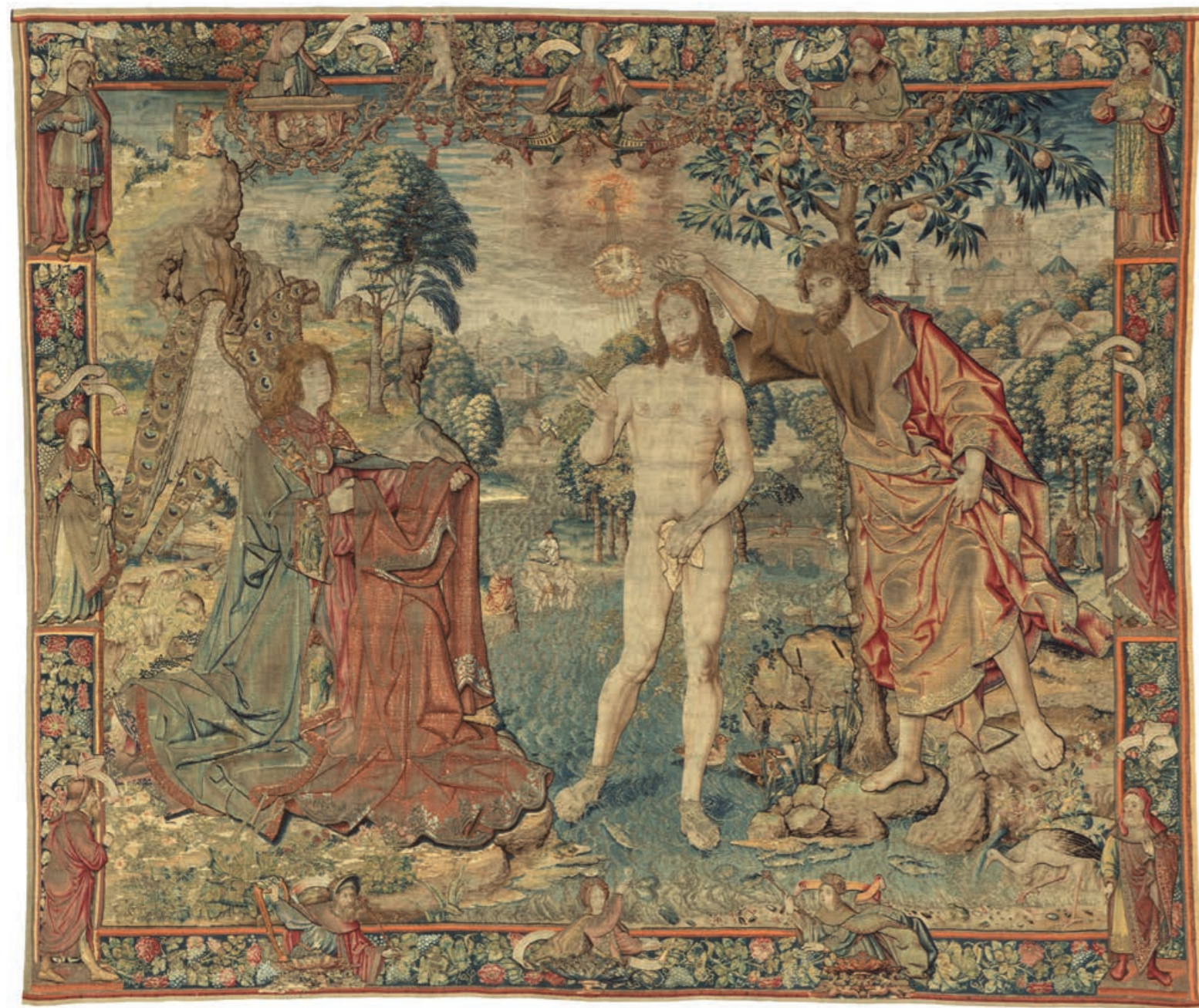
The scene takes place in a hilly and wooded landscape. Behind the main scene, other people are being baptised by John. In the foreground, nature is very accurately depicted, with the translucent water over Jesus' feet, in which fish, ducks and swans swim and a heron lies in wait for the fish in the right-hand corner.

The scene is surrounded by a border of bunches of grapes and roses, on which figures of prophets and sibyls look at Christ. They carry banderols with texts that have faded over the centuries. Only King David, at the bottom



[FIG. 1] Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Baptism of Christ*, fresco, 1485–1890.  
Capella Tornabuoni, Santa Maria Novella, Florence.





[16]

left, can still be identified by his harp. They predicted the coming of Christ, and are the forerunners of John, the last prophet.

#### Commentary

The composition of Christ, John and the angel is in keeping with the late-medieval iconography, which was given an archetype in Flemish painting of the fifteenth century by Rogier van de Weyden in his *St John's Triptychs* in Berlin and Frankfurt am Main, after which several individual tapestries were woven in around 1500 and later.<sup>2</sup> In contemporary painting, a parallel can be found in the triptych of Jan de Trompes by Gerard David (1502–1508, Groeninge Museum Bruges, inv. 035), in which the angel also wears a heavily decorated cope.<sup>3</sup>

The central group of Christ and John is drawn with a greater sense of naturalism than in other versions in contemporary series, as in the *Life of Christ* from Canterbury, now in Aix-en-Provence (c. 1510) or the *Life of John the Baptist*, both at Zaragoza (c. 1500, Museo de Tapices, series XIII/3), and at Madrid (1510–1515, Patrimonio Nacional, series 4/IV).<sup>4</sup> The highly elaborated anatomy of Christ on this tapestry, in which the perizoma has been replaced by a small cloth, already belongs to a type belonging to the early Renaissance, in connection with which Crick-Kuntziger referred to Jan Gossaert. It seems possible that, like the *Pieta* (cat. 18), an Italian example was followed, namely this scene painted by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the Capella Tornabuoni in Santa Maria Novella in Florence (1485–1490), where John is shown in a similar pose (fig. 1).

Several episodes from the public life of Jesus are depicted here in synchrony on a single tapestry, but compared to the main event, the other scenes are tiny and in the distance. Gerard David already applied this to his triptych mentioned above, but in Brussels tapestry art, such a composition method is found from around 1518 onwards, an example of which is the series of the “Square Passion” woven to designs by Bernard van Orley between 1518 and 1522.<sup>5</sup> The latter artist could also have been considered for the design, since his representations of the male nude testify to a thorough knowledge of anatomy, as can be seen on the Christ at the *Last Judgement* (Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 741–745), or by this one on the Lamentation of the *Haneton Triptych* (Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels, inv. 358).<sup>6</sup>

The depiction of prophets and sibyls in the border resumes an existing tradition. *A Baptism of Christ* from the end of the fifteenth century, now in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. XXX/2), derived from the Van der Weyden type, has the Tree of Jesse as its border decoration, and in the above-mentioned work from the *Life*

of *John the Baptist* from around 1500, in Zaragoza, the prophets Joel and Esdras are depicted in the corners with inscriptions on phylacteries.<sup>7</sup>

One cannot connect this tapestry with any series of the *Life of Jesus*, or of *John the Baptist*. Perhaps it was hung in the church near the baptismal font, to add lustre to baptisms. [GD]

1. Kirschbaum 1994, IV, col. 249: “Taufe Jesu”.
2. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Florence, Museo degli Argenti; formerly in Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institution, since 2014 in the Zaleksi collection; Abegg-Stiftung, Riggisberg. See Wyss 1977, pp. 46–49, and Delmarcel 1999, p. 48.
3. Van Schoutte & B. de Patoul 1994, p. 489.
4. Aix-en-Provence, 1977, p. 32; Zaragoza, Torra de Arana 1985, p. 216; Madrid, Junquera & Herrero 1986, p. 21; and Brussels 2000, pp. 58–61.
5. Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional, series 10, cf. Junquera & Herrero 1986, pp. 49–53; Brussels 2019, pp. 170–175.
6. Respectively in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, inv. 741–745, 1518–1525, and in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Brussels, inv. 358, around 1520; see Brussels 2019, pp. 82–83, 135–137.
7. Vienna, Wyss 1977, p. 49 and Forti Grazzini 2014, p. 146; Zaragoza, Torra de Arana 1985, p. 216.



## CHRIST APPEARS BEFORE PILATE

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, 1511–1527

Manufacture of Pieter van Aelst (c. 1450–1531/33)

Designer unknown

Wool, silk, gold thread, silver; 300 × 380 cm; 7 to 8 warps per cm

Inv. 9739

Provenance: 1962, acquired from the Ildebrando Bossi collection, Genoa

Literature: M. Calberg 1963; J.K. Steppe in Brussels 1976, pp. 67–73

(with lit.); M. Lupo in Castelnuovo 1990, pp. 186–207; Herrero 2004,

pp. 65–66.



[17]

This tapestry originally formed part of a series on the *Passion of Christ* in four parts, bought by Margaret of Austria before 1527, and given after her death by Emperor Charles V to his wife Isabella of Portugal. After her death in 1539, the series once more passed into the ownership of the Spanish crown. It contains the scenes of the *Washing of the Feet*, *Christ before Pilate*, and the *Road to Calvary and the Crucifixion*. In the nineteenth century, Queen Isabella II donated the first two tapestries to Baron Alberto Blanc before 1868. The *Washing of the Feet* was purchased by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1959.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus Christ appears here before Pilate, to whom he has been sent by Caiphas. The Jews demand that he be sentenced to death, but Pilate allows them to choose between Jesus and Barabbas. The Jews insist on his death, and Pilate yields to their demand, after which he washes his hands in a basin, declaring, “I am innocent of the death of this righteous man; it is your responsibility” (Matthew 27: 24). In addition to Pilate, his wife asks him not to have anything to do with this innocent person, because she had suffered much because of him in a dream that night (Matthew 27: 19). The central group is surrounded on the left by a number of soldiers and on the right by the Jewish high priest and assembled followers.

The uppermost area depicts scenes that took place after the main one. On the left, we see the Flagellation of Christ and the Mocking by Herod and on the right are depicted the Crown of Thorns and the *Ecce Homo*.

The borders are decorated with roses and bunches of grapes, symbols for the blood shed by Christ and for the institution of the Eucharist, as on the *Legend of Herkinbald* (cat. 10). There are also two pilasters with Renaissance motifs, such as genii and arabesques, along the inside of the picture plane.

*Commentary*

The composition of both the *Scourge* and the *Ecce Homo* are derived, in mirror image, from the woodcuts of the *Great Passion* by Albrecht Dürer from 1511 (figs. 1 and 2).

The figure of a man with an obese face and a hat is also borrowed from Dürer, namely from the *Martyrdom of John the Baptist* woodcut from the *Apocalypse* series of 1498 (fig. 3). The entire composition is delineated laterally by pilasters with early Renaissance motifs.

On the back of the canopy behind Pilate we also see the textile motif of the double birds and the lion lying in a halo, like on the *Legend of Herkinbald* (cat. 10), and the *Legend of Our Lady of the Sablon* (cat. 11.2).

On the lambrequins of the canopy, a number of uppercase letters have been woven in: I.N.O.S.V.M.E/F. E.A.V. Several attempts have been made to explain this in association with what is being depicted. Calberg and

Belpaire refer to the supplicatory prayer in the Psalms (86 Septuagint; 85 Vulgate): “Bow down your ear to me, Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and without defence: INO(PS) SVM E(T) PAV(PER)”.<sup>2</sup> This was disputed by Steppe, who referred to the Gospel of Matthew (27: 23–26): “In(NO) cens ego (SVM) a sanguine iusti huius, Jesum (AVT) em flagellatum tradidit”; the letters FE would refer, according to him, to a text of St John the Baptist. Augustine about Pilate: “he washed his hands and pleaded innocent, but he did it anyway: FECIT TAMEN”.<sup>3</sup> The question remains whether one should necessarily look for a hidden text in such an inscription, or whether this is merely an ornamental text.

On the *Road to Calvary and the Crucifixion*, in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional, series 6/1), two inscriptions can be read in the picture plane: the year “1507” on the collar of a hornblower, and the name “AELST” on the hem of the robe of Simon of Cyrene.<sup>4</sup> The name AELST is generally considered to be the signature of the Brussels tapestry manufacturer Pieter van Edingen, alias van Aelst, whose activity lasted from about 1490 to 1533. He was a purveyor to Philip the Handsome, then to the emperor Charles the Fifth and to Popes Leo X and Clemens VII.<sup>5</sup> The year 1507 most likely refers to the completion of the models, and possibly to the first woven edition. The derivations from Dürer’s prints prove that this tapestry, and



[FIG. 1] Albrecht Dürer, *The Scourge of Christ* (*The Great Passion*), woodcut, 1511. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. s.i. 13879.





[FIG. 2] Albrecht Dürer, *Ecce Homo (The Great Passion)*, woodcut, 1511. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. s.i. 13880.



[FIG. 3] Albrecht Dürer, *Martyrdom of John the Baptist (Apocalypse Series)*, woodcut, 1498. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. s.i. 2047.

the others in the series, were woven in 1511 at the earliest, and are therefore a later edition of these cartoons. The indirect proof is provided by a *Descent from the Cross*, also in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional, series 7/IV) to the same model as P.N. series 6/II, but with inner borders in the form of Gothic pinnacles, and no Renaissance pilasters, which means that it is a relic of an older series<sup>6</sup> that has been lost.

Another edition of the series, which was purchased by Cardinal Bernardo Cles (1484–1539) in 1531 in Cologne and is preserved in the Museo Diocesano in Trento, also incorporates pilasters of this type. In this series, the compositions, which correspond to the Madrid-Amsterdam-Brussels series, are smaller and less elaborate. On the corresponding tapestry depicting *Christ Before Pilate* in Trento (242 x 290 cm), the Crowning of Thorns has been moved rather awkwardly to the top left, the Mockery by Herod has been omitted, and the canopy above Pilate has been shortened.<sup>7</sup> These and other elements lead us to conclude that the series from Trento is younger than the Madrid-Amsterdam-Brussels group. The Trento series is not an order, but was partly in stock on the art market, and was expanded to include the *Nativity of Jesus* and *Jesus Before Caiphaz*, perhaps at the request of Cardinal Cles.<sup>8</sup> [GD]

1. Hartkamp & Smit 2004, pp. 58–61.
2. Calberg 1962, p. 98.
3. Steppe in Brussels 1976, p. 68.
4. Junquera 1986, I, p. 28.
5. For Pieter van Aelst, cf. Schneeberg 1969; Delmarcel 1993, pp. 45–57; G. Delmarcel in Castelnuovo-Lupo 1990, pp. 19–34.
6. Junquera 1986, I, p. 34, series 7/IV.
7. See Lupo in Castelnuovo-Lupo 1990, pp. 168–169, 186–207, with many detailed pictures.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 107–110.

[18]

## THE LAMENTATION OVER THE DEAD CHRIST

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, 1510–1520

Possibly from the workshop of Pieter van Aelst

Designer unknown

Wool, silk, silver and gold thread; 298 × 328 cm;

8 to 9 warps per cm

Inv. 858

Provenance: 1861, purchased from the estate of

Mrs Van Antwerpen, Brussels

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 37–38, no. 20 (with lit.);

Paris 1973–74, pp. 180–182; G. Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, no. 17,

p. 73, and no. 31, p. 133; T. Campbell in New York 2002, pp. 156–162.



[18]





[FIG. 1] Paolo Perugino, *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, oil on canvas, 1493–97. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 n. 8365 / 00193925.

In an open landscape at the foot of the cross, the dead Christ lies on his mother Mary's lap. His shoulders are supported by a young man, the Apostle John, and his feet rest on the knees of a young woman, one of the three Marys (Mary Salome, Mary Magdalene and Mary Mother of James) who accompany the Mother of God. This scene, known as the Lamentation of Christ by Mary, or Pietà, is not described in the canonical gospels but comes from apocryphal writings such as the so-called *Acta Pilati* and was explored in depth during the Middle Ages, especially in the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* from the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the usual representations of the Lamentation, this scene is exceptionally densely populated. One normally expects the characters to be Mary, the three other Marys, the apostle John, Simon of Cyrene and Nicodemus. Here, the core group of the four women and John is surrounded by no fewer than twelve men and two women, all in early sixteenth-century dress. The man in the front on the far left wears the beret of a theologian, and his face has the appearance of a portrait. It is Nicodemus and the grey-haired man next to him is Simon of Cyrene; they are repeated at the top right at the Entombment. The man standing behind John wears a red cap, the edge of which bears the inscription PHILIEP (fig. 3).

A young man descends from the ladder of the cross, holding the crown of thorns in a cloth with his right hand. At the bottom left, a young woman stands ready to receive the crown in a white cloth that she is holding out. Behind the cross, a group of five men are engaged in a conversation. At the top left, the risen Christ stands before

the gate of hell, from which he has come to liberate the righteous from the Old Testament, the foremost of which being Adam and Eve. At the top right, the dead Christ is laid in the tomb by Mary and two men, Nicodemus and Simon of Cyrene, accompanied by the three Marys, John and two other men and women.

The whole border is decorated with roses between which numerous small birds fly.

#### Commentary

The central group with Jesus, Mary, Mary Magdalene and John is a Flemish reworking of the Pietà painted by Perugino in 1493–97 for the convent of San Giusto alle Mure in Florence, and now preserved in the Uffizi (fig. 1).

Another version of this work is known, which is now kept in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. There, however, the figure of Magdalene is looking upwards, which is not the case in the work preserved in Florence. Consequently, a painter from the North must have seen the work in Florence and copied the composition used there. A visit to the aforementioned monastery may have been prompted by the fact that the monks of the order of the Jesuati made pigments and sold them to painters.<sup>2</sup> The first painter from our region to be mentioned as having made a trip to Italy is Jan Gossaert (c. 1478–1532), who accompanied his patron, Philip of Burgundy (1464–1524), Bishop of Utrecht, Admiral of the Netherlands (1498–1517) on a trip to Rome from October 1508 to January 1509.

In earlier literature, there has been much conjecture concerning the meaning of the woven inscription PHILIEP (fig. 3). It was thought to refer either to the artist-cartoon designer, or to the tapestry weaver, in analogy to similar inscriptions in contemporary tapestries, such as KNOEST, which refers to the cartoonist Lenaart Knoest on the *Discovery of the Cross* (cat. 19). The otherwise anonymous “Philips the painter” of the *Legend of Herkinbald* (cat. 10) was thought to have been involved. Other suggestions were Filip de Mol or Filip van Orley, but not one of these theories is convincing.<sup>3</sup> The man with the inscription PHILIEP woven on his cap, is looking in the direction of ‘Nicodemus’ on the left. The latter figure possibly represents the portrait of the patron (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, this could also be Philip the Apostle, as his patron saint. The rich execution of the work, with a wealth of silk, silver and gold threads, suggests that it had been ordered by a prince. The aforementioned Philip of Burgundy is one of the possible candidates. May we suspect that the figure of the patron represents a portrait of that nobleman? The image of him preserved in the *Recueil d'Arras* does display a certain resemblance (fig. 4).<sup>5</sup> The young man leaning against ‘Philiep’ might also be thought to be Philip the Handsome (1478–1506).



[FIG. 2] Detail of the left side.



[FIG. 3] Detail with inscription PHILIEP.

The side scenes, with, on the left, the Descent into Hell, and on the right, the Entombment, are almost identical to these compositions on two tapestries depicting the *Descent from the Cross*, dated 1507 for the cartoons, and now in the Patrimonio Nacional Madrid, series 7/IV (Gothic pinnacle) and 6/II (Renaissance pilasters).<sup>6</sup> One of the two series (series 6) also contains the inscription AELST, which is considered to be the signature of Pieter

van Edingen, alias van Aelst (cat. 17). Given the high technical and artistic quality of the piece discussed here, it cannot be ruled out that it was made in this workshop, where Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* for Pope Leo X and *Los Honores* for Emperor Charles V were also made.

The style and the pose of the figures can be found on several contemporary works, such as the *Triumphs of Petrarch* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), *Vespasian and Veronica* (ibid., Lehman Collection),<sup>7</sup> the *Legend of Trajan* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston),<sup>8</sup> etc. The resemblance to portrait-like figures on a contemporary *Descent from the Cross* in Milan, Museo del Duomo, also points to a common designer.<sup>9</sup>

During a conservation treatment at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage in 1982–84, an additional painting on the carnations was discovered; it possibly refers to the chalk touch-up allowed in the past by the ‘retouchers’. [GD]



[FIG. 4] Jacques Le Boucq, *Portrait of Philip of Burgundy* (1464–1524), drawing in the “Recueil d'Arras”, folio 98, mid-sixteenth century. Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 266, Arras.

1. Kirschbaum 1994, I, col. 278–282.
2. Paatz 1955, II, pp. 277, 282.
3. Destrée 1904, pp. 10–13; a critical review by Steppe in Brussels 1976, pp. 224–225, and by Campbell in New York 2002, p. 161.
4. See the portrait of Charles d'Amboise on a *Descent from the Cross* from c. 1510 in the Opera del Duomo di Milano, in Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 14–15, and idem 1990 B, pp. 44–45.
5. Châtelet 2007, p. 275, f°98.
6. Junquera 1986, I, pp. 29, 34; Mechelen 1993, pp. 54–55; Herrero 2004, pp. 117–118.
7. Mayer Thurman 2001, p. 4.
8. Delmarcel 1999, pp. 70–71.
9. Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 14–15, 76–77.





[19]

[19]

## THE FINDING OF THE HOLY CROSS, OR SCENE AT A ROYAL COURT

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels, 1515–1525

Workshop unknown

Design by Lenaart Knoest (active c. 1501–c. 1544)

Wool and silk; 341 × 262 cm; 7 warps per cm

Inv. 2993

Provenance: December 1890, purchase from the Slaes collection

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 29–30, cat. 13 (with lit.); Delmarcel in Brussels 1976, pp. 76–78; Steppe in Brussels 1976, pp. 207–208; E. Duverger 1989; New York 2002, p. 138; Baert 2004, p. 284, no. 173.

In a loggia, a bearded elder with an imperial crown stands next to a noble lady and points with his right hand to the left part of the tapestry. There, a lady is kneeling looking at the sky, while behind her, a man is digging a well with a spade. Also behind and in front of the emperor, young men are pointing to the upper-left corner, and on the lower right, a kneeling man and a woman are also staring in that direction.

The borders are decorated with roses and daisies.

### Commentary

Because of the man with the spade, the tapestry is seen as an episode from the legend of the Finding of the Holy Cross.<sup>1</sup> Empress Helena (c. 248–c. 329 A.D.), mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great (c. 274/280–337), had gone to Jerusalem to find the true cross of Christ. After much insistence, she was able to persuade Judas, the Jew who knew the location of the cross, to show her that place. The man with a spade would represent Judas and the old man would be Constantius I Chlorus (c. 250–306), father of Constantine the Great and husband of Helena, who is standing next to him. The whole story is taken from medieval sources, of which the *Legenda Aurea*, compiled by Jacobus de Voragine at the end of the thirteenth century, is the most important.<sup>2</sup>

The scene in this work is apparently the right-hand section of a larger composition that is now lost. One may suppose that the True Cross appeared in heaven. The

tapestry is then thought to have belonged to a series with the Life of Helena, or of Constantine, or of the Legend of the Holy Cross. However, no such series can be found in Brussels during that period.

Aside from all of this, one must wonder whether this scene can actually form part of this legend. According to legend, the appearance of the cross to Constantine happened during the battle against Maxentius on the Milvian Bridge in 312 A.D. The exhumation of the cross by Judas, grandson of Zacchaeus, at the insistence of the Empress Helena, took place much later.

The figure of the crowned sovereign was almost literally applied to other contemporary tapestries, namely King David (Brussels City Museum) and Emperor Trajan (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).<sup>3</sup>

At the emperor's feet, on the front of the stage, the inscription K.N.O.E.S.T is woven in.

The signature of the cartoon painter is rightly recognised here: Lenaart Knoest from Cologne, who is mentioned in Brussels from 1501 onwards. In a 1516 lawsuit, he was protected by the tapestry producers because of his skill as a designer. He was wealthy and owned houses in Brussels. Around 1542, he moved to Antwerp and died there around 1544. His son, Lenaart Knoest the Younger, was registered as cartoon painter in the 'Liggeren' (archives) of the Guild of St Luke in Antwerp in 1544.<sup>4</sup> This tapestry is the only one that can be attributed to him with certainty. His style is very similar to that of Jan van Roome on the Herkinbald tapestry (cat. 10). [GD]

1. After Destrée & Van de Ven 1910, p. 24, no. 11.

2. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 29–30.

3. Brussels 1976, pp. 53, 249–50, also Crick-Kuntziger 1944, pl. 1, and Cavallo 1967, II, pl. 23 and 23a.

4. Crick-Kuntziger 1927; E. Duverger 1989; Roobaert 2002 B, pp. 25–32.



## STORY OF DAVID

Southern Netherlands, c. 1520  
Possibly woven by Jan de Roy (active c. 1491–after 1533), Brussels  
Possibly designed by Lenaart Knoest  
Wool and silk; 398 × 534 cm; 6 warps per cm  
Inv. 3347

Provenance: 1895 Cardon collection

Literature: J. Duverger 1934, p. 220; Crick-Kuntziger 1956,  
p. 36, no. 17; Roobaert 2002, p. 21.

The tapestry depicts various scenes of warfare, though their interrelation is not immediately clear. Identification is possible, however, thanks to another tapestry with the same representation, on which the names of the characters are indicated (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup>

These are episodes from the life of David, taken from the Bible (1 Samuel: 15–31). The warlord wearing a helmet on the left is David, who is receiving Abigail, the wife of Nabal, and will later ask her to marry him. In the front right, the same warrior grabs at his garment with both



hands, in a gesture of anger or despair, while in front of him, a falling young man who is raising a hand in defence is looking at a warrior who is threatening him with a sword. At the top left, a messenger kneels before David, surrounded by his army. While King Saul slept in his tent, David stole his lance and a drinking vessel (1 Samuel 26: 4–25). To the right of this scene, we see him taking those items back to his camp. At the top right, a warrior is stabbed with a sword; it is said to depict Saul's suicide.

The border around the tapestry is decorated with floral scrolls.

*Commentary*

It is now possible to insert this tapestry into an existing series. The falling figure of the young man is reminiscent of one on the series of the *Redemption of Mankind*, Brussels, from around 1500.<sup>2</sup> The distorted name/names on the collar of the uniform of the soldier in the middle can be read as “*Jan de Ro (xx)*”, and at the bottom on the collar: “*jan de ron*”, though apparently, this was adjusted later. An attribution to Jan van Roome, the designer of the Herkinbald tapestry, does not seem possible. Jan de Roy would be a more acceptable attribution. This Brussels producer, born around 1471, is known as a result of a lawsuit from 1520 in which he asked to be protected from the debts owed to many creditors. One of those was the pattern painter, Lenaart Knoest, whose signature appears on another tapestry in this collection (cat. 19). De Roy left Brussels in 1524 in order to escape from his creditors. He went to work in Germany for Count Palatine Ottheinrich (1502–1559). His monogram appears on the woven portrait of Philipp of the Palatinate, the brother of Ottheinrich, around 1535 (in Schloss Neuburg an der Donau). A namesake, perhaps his son, is mentioned there as tapestry producer to Ferdinand of Austria in 1530.<sup>3</sup> As far as can be judged from the present poor condition of this work, the style corresponds to the Brussels production of the years 1510–1525, as can be seen on several other tapestries in this collection. If ever a tapestry is found to have been woven by Jan de Roy, the pattern painter Lenaart Knoest may also have worked on that tapestry.

The tapestry shows many traces of later, clumsy restorations. [GD]

1. Sale Tajan, Paris, 28 June 2021, lot 70.

2. Cavallo 1993, p. 424.

3. On Jan de Roy, an extensive account is given in Roobaert 2002, passim; for information regarding his activity in Germany, see Hubach 2005, pp. 175–176.



[FIG. 1] *Story of David*, Brussels, c. 1520. Franses Gallery London.



[21]

## STORY OF JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels,  
first quarter of the sixteenth century  
Manufacturer and designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 335 x 390 cm; 6 to 7 warps per cm  
Inv. v 2916

Provenance: 1911, Bequest from Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 35, no. 16.

Three scenes depict the Biblical heroine Judith before she beheads Holofernes. It is a synthesis of the Book of Judith (8: 28–34; and 12: 15). At the top left, she combs herself, while a maid holds up a mirror and two others offer her cases of jewels. In front of her, once dressed, she receives the homage of Ozias and other people. Above, she shakes hands with Ozias as a sign of farewell. Her servant is holding a bag, into which she will later put Holofernes' head. To the rear, one can see the tents of the enemy camp.

The scenes are surrounded by baluster columns. The border is decorated with numerous flowers, such as iris, daisies, roses.

Other related tapestries from a series dedicated to Judith could not be found. The style belongs to the Brussels Early Renaissance, like various others in the collection. [GD]



[21]





[22]

[22]

## COURTLY SCENE

Southern Netherlands, possibly Brussels,  
 first quarter of the sixteenth century  
 Manufacturer and designer unknown  
 Wool and silk (?); 327 × 403 cm; 6 warps per cm  
 Inv. 9864

Provenance: 1963, purchased from Galerie Moderne, Brussels

Literature: Note by M. Calberg in *Acquisitions et dons de 1963*  
 (Bulletin of the Royal Museums of Art and History).

Three ladies with a king's crown on their heads sit on a throne, the two ladies on either side pointing to the one in the middle. At the foot of the podium, which is covered with a carpet, a woman offers a round object, apparently crafted from precious metal, to the lady in the centre. At the front left are two couples, one standing and one sitting. At the front right, two ladies are playing instruments, a harp and a dulcimer, respectively. Between them, a man looks thoughtfully ahead, holding a long recorder in his right hand. Behind him stands a lady, holding her hands on his shoulders. Behind this group, two men are talking. The one on the left, armed with a sword, points to the podium. In the upper-left corner, a couple in love is sitting in a bower; in the upper-right corner, a wedding is taking place under a canopy.

The picture is framed by a fine floral border. At the top in the centre is a banderole containing a text: "*ne faceret vindicta(m) dep(re)cave(ru)nt / fratres quod Joseph(um) ve(n)diderunt*" [the brothers who sold Joseph, remain unpunished]. The text was inserted here later, referring to an unknown series of the *Life of Joseph*.

By virtue of the drawing of the clothing and the imagery, this work forms part of the early Renaissance in Brussels, as do several other pieces in this collection. However, the meaning of what is depicted has not yet been clarified. Calberg suggested a scene from Christine de Pisan's *La Cité des Dames*, a series presented in Tournai in 1513 to Margaret of Austria. A very similar composition, also unidentified, is located in Hampton Court Palace.<sup>1</sup> A solution regarding this scene can perhaps be found by examining the seated flute player at the front right. He

is looking away from the main event and is leaning with his chin on his left hand: the latter is a representation of Melancholy in contemporary art. Moreover, his right foot is hidden under the robe of the servant in the middle. In a contemporary series of the *Life of Mestra* series, now present in Brussels and in Lerida, this character was recognised as Jason, who lost his right shoe while crossing a river.<sup>2</sup> Is this also a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, set in contemporary clothing? A very large number of such courtly gatherings have been preserved, in which the central event is surrounded by young couples in amorous conversation, or making music (cat. 12, 13). [GD]

1. Marillier 1962, p. 26 and pl. 20; Campbell 2007, p. 108.
2. A. van Ypersele in Brussels 1976, pp. 126–127 (Brussels); Garriga & Berlabé 2010, pp. 54–55 (Lerida).



[23]

## ARMORIAL CUSHION COVERS

Southern Netherlands, Leuven (?), early sixteenth century

Manufacturer and designer unknown

Wool; 6 warps per cm; 70 × 70 cm [23.1], 68 × 65 cm [23.2]

Inv. 6561, 6565

Provenance: April 1939, purchase from  
the H. Op de Beeck collection

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 27–28, nos. 10 and 11;  
Van Uytven 1960, pp. 12–14; Van Uytven 1972; Leuven 1970, p. 274;  
Brussels 1991, pp. 424–425.

Coat of arms suspended from rose branches. On the shield is an arm, emerging from a cloud, which is inserted into a round pyxis with an open lid. The motto “*Quand Dieu voudra*” seems to indicate Charity. The coat of arms was granted to the Charité family from the land of Aalst. A larger fragment with the same coat of arms is preserved in the Saint-Peter’s Hospital in Leuven. Both works are said to have belonged to the Great Hospital in Leuven, where they were still being referred to in 1892.<sup>1</sup> Since tapestry weavers were also active in Leuven around 1500, it could have been made there. The epigraphy of the motto, with a mixture of Gothic letters and Roman capitals, may point to the period around 1500. The ornamentation with roses can be found in works produced in several locations in the early sixteenth century. In 1536, in his residence in Brussels, Anthony de Lalaing owned tapestries and cushions woven in Enghien, incorporating a decor of this type.<sup>2</sup>

Here, a coat of arms stands amidst a flowerbed including carnations, roses, violets and snowdrops. The coat of arms is said to have belonged to the Van de Calsteren families from Leuven: “in red, a scalloped cross in silver”, and Van Huldenberg: “in gold with three sloping hammers”. [GD]

1. Leuven 1970, p. 274.

2. Delmarcel 2010 (Lalaing), pp. 15, 20: “Neuf pieces de tapiz a tout des roses rouges et trois coussins de mesme tout ouvrage denghien.”



[23.1]



[23.2]



## STORY OF JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES



[24]

Tournai, c. 1520

Workshop of Arnould Poissonnier

Design by Antoine Ferret

Wool and silk; 438 × 614 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm

Inv. 3646

Provenance: 1901, auction Léon de Somzée, no. 526

Literature: Göbel 1923, pp. 257–260; Crick-Kuntziger 1940 A;

Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 30–32, no. 14; Asselberghs 1968, pp. 32–33, nos. 27–28; Mechelen 2005, p. 107.

The tapestry shows two episodes, separated by a baluster column, from the life of the biblical heroine Judith, after the book of the same name in the Bible. Judith had managed to invite herself into the camp of Holofernes, general of Nebudkadnezzar, King of Assyria and enemy of the Jewish people. She is given permission to leave the camp at night and to pray outside (Judith 12: 5–6). Here Judith, above left, prays to the Virgin Mary and Jesus – the biblical story was used as a prefigurement of the Virgin who would overcome the devil. In front, Judith (“judich”), in full regalia, is introduced to Holofernes (“holoferne”) by his chamberlain Vagao (“vagiot”). Behind her comes her maid carrying a jar and a sack in her hand. Holofernes is surrounded by armed soldiers and in front by a small page, holding a small dog on a leash. At the back, two soldiers are guarding the sideboard filled with precious tableware. A text on a banderole at the top explains the scene: “*placuit holoferni illius pulchritudo et prudentia*” [Her beauty and wisdom pleased Holofernes] (Judith 10: 17 and 12: 16).

In the right-hand half of the tapestry, the banquet to which Judith has been invited is taking place. She sits to the left of the warlord. He raises the cup and invites her to drink, but she points to her maid who brings her own drink (Judith 12: 19). To the right of the general sits a courtier, dressed like the theologians of the sixteenth century. In front of the table, a servant is ready to cut the meat. At the front right, Vagao is inspecting the food, while two pourers fill the drinking bowls.

The inscription at the top does not refer to the banquet, but to the preceding events. “*Libera exiens fonte se*

*lavit (lavat) reversam Vagiote eunuchus ad epulas invitavit*” [Free to go outside, she washes herself at the well; on her return, the eunuch Vagiote invites her to the meal] (Judith 12: 5–7 and 10–12). The floor below these scenes is covered with tiles on which one can read individual characters; they are of decorative value only.<sup>1</sup>

The border includes flower sprigs placed back to back, stem to stem, and connected by a ribbon.

Commentary

The story is presented as a contemporary scene, with rich velvet clothing, the furniture and the arrangement of the table and tableware. This is in keeping with the depiction on earlier tapestries produced in Tournai in the final quarter of the fifteenth century, such as the *Story of Esther and Ahasverus* (La Seo, Zaragoza) and the *Story of Thebes* (Town Hall, Madrid), and from the beginning of the sixteenth century, with the *Story of Supper and Banquet* (Musée Lorrain, Nancy), each of which depicts a similar table ceremony.<sup>2</sup>

This work is associated with a series of six, woven by the Tournai manufacturer Arnould Poissonnier. After the occupation of Tournai by Henry VIII of England in 1513, an unspecified series by Poissonnier was given to him, and Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk was promised a series of Judith from his workshop, which was completed in 1517.<sup>3</sup> In the estate inventory after his death (on 4 June 1522), two more such series, one of six and another of seven pieces, are mentioned.<sup>4</sup> The designs are said to have been provided by the Tournai painter Antoine Ferret, who worked for Poissonnier.

Another piece from this series, now in the Museo del Palazzo Venezia in Rome, shows the continuation of the story, with the *Beheading of Holofernes* (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup>

Another edition of the left-hand section of the tapestry being discussed here has appeared on the art market.<sup>6</sup>

From the same designer, there is also a series with the story of *Daniel and Nabuchodonosor*. A copy kept in the Musée de Cluny in Paris shows the same hand and also features the same side borders. The upper border, with horse bells (“grelots”), is typical of Tournai works from the first decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup>





[FIG. 1] *The Beheading of Holofernes*, from *The Story of Judith and Holofernes*, Tournai, c. 1520. Museo di Palazzo Venezia, Rome, inv. 10686.

Like many other Biblical stories, the story of Judith and Holofernes was depicted in tapestries from an early stage. Rinaldus Boteram, a merchant and weaver from the north, sold such series to Borso d'Este, Lord of Ferrara, in 1457.<sup>8</sup> A rare piece from this period, depicting the *Beheading of Holofernes*, is preserved in The Cloisters, New York.<sup>9</sup>

Contemporary to this work is another Judith series consisting of four pieces, probably also made in Tournai but with a drawing that bears a resemblance to works produced in Brussels. It came into the possession of Cardinal Wolsey in 1520–21. One copy, with the arms of Wolsey, is still preserved in the cathedral of Sens.<sup>10</sup> [GD]

1. Because of the letters A and P, Crick-Kuntziger thought that this could possibly be the "signature" of Arnould Poissonnier, Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 31.
2. See Delmarcel 1999, pp. 32, 60; Campbell 2007, pp. 60, 76.
3. Göbel 1923, pp. 257–260; Campbell 2007, pp. 112–113.
4. When the inventory of his real estate was drawn up in 1539, this producer was also stated a citizen of Oudenaarde; his descendants settled there under the name De Visschere; cf. Vermeiren-Vanwelden 1997, pp. 126–136.
5. Inv. 10686, 418 x 617 cm; Brugnoli 1965.
6. Sale Sotheby's London, 17 May 2022, lot 6.
7. Joubert 1987, pp. 180–185.
8. Forti Grazzini 1982, p. 37; New York 2002, pp. 91–93.
9. Cavallo 1993, pp. 190–197.
10. Campbell 2007, p. 135, colour.

[25]

## THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

Southern Netherlands, possibly Tournai, 1515–1525  
Unknown manufacturer or designer  
Wool; 330 × 395 cm; 4 to 5 warps per cm  
Inv. 8667

Provenance: 1951, Department for Recovery Abroad

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 43, no. 23; Asselberghs 1968, p. 21, no. 13; Campbell 2004 A, pp. 376–385.

On top of a triumphal chariot, pulled by four winged horses, sits Cupid, the god of Love, depicted here as a winged and blindfolded genius with a bow and arrow in hand. Four other horses are mounted on the left by three kings: Jupiter ("jupiter") with a fire bowl in his hand and an eagle at his feet, Neptune ("neptunus") with a sceptre in his hand and a sea monster before him, and Pluto ("pluto") with a sceptre and, at his feet, the three-headed

Cerberus. At the bottom right, those same three gods are being trampled on by the horses of the chariot. On both sides of the chariot are the vices linked to Love, including Cowardice (*dissolution*), and two others with illegible names. The procession passes a temple with a (partly visible) statue of Venus, the mother of Cupid, placed on a pedestal in front of a niche in shell form.

The tapestry has been cut off at the top and sides. The left part is probably partly preserved on another piece, where Cupid shoots his arrows from a pedestal, on which flames erupt (private collection; fig. 1). He is apparently aiming at famous lovers from world history at the front: David, Bathsheba, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra.

The borders were removed at a later time.

### Commentary

The work belongs to a now scattered and partly preserved series depicting the *Triumphs of Petrarch*. Another



[FIG. 1] *Triumph of Love*, from *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, left-part fragment, Southern Netherlands, possibly Tournai, 1515–1525. Private collection.



[FIG. 2] *Triumph of Fame*, from *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, Southern Netherlands, possibly Tournai, 1515–1525. Private collection.





[FIG. 3] *Triumph of Time* (fragment), from *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, Southern Netherlands, possibly Tournai, 1515–1525. Private collection.

piece belonging to this series, the *Triumph of Fame*<sup>1</sup> (private collection, fig. 2), is still surrounded by its original border, decorated with flowers, bunches of grapes and vases in precious metal. This ornament is closely related to the border around the tapestry depicting *Daniel and Nabuchodonosor* (Musée de Cluny, Paris), which almost certainly originates from Tournai (see also cat. 24).<sup>2</sup>

A fragment with the *Triumph of Time* (336 x 244 cm; private collection, fig. 3) shows the same type of titulus as the aforementioned *Triumph of Fame*.

The rather coarse drawing and weave, together with the vivid colours, suggest that it originated in a centre outside Brussels. Tournai was put forward, but the comparative material for this is scarce; an equally valid possibility would also be Bruges. The ornaments on the little temple on the left indicate an early Renaissance repertory. [GD]

1. Auction de Somzée 1901, no. 538; auction at Christie's, New York, 26 April 1990, lot 1.  
2. Joubert 1987, pp. 180–181.





## THE TRIUMPH OF FAME

Probably Paris, around 1510  
 Workshop and designer unknown  
 Wool, silk; 318 × 490 cm; 5 warps per cm  
 Inv. no. 3648

Provenance: 1901, auction Léon de Somzée, no. 539

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, no. 22; Scheicher 1971, pp. 32–33; Cavallo 1993, pp. 463–469.

A triumphal chariot, surrounded by seven characters, is travelling from left to right. The personification of Fame (“*renommée*”) stands on top, blowing a four-ended

trumpet, symbol for the four points of the compass. She has wings on her shoulders and around her middle hang ostrich feathers on which eyes and tongues are depicted: Fame proclaims both good and bad fame, which is spread by hearing, sight and speech. The chariot is being pulled by two white elephants, symbols of endurance, and in front of them fly a rooster and a bat. They lead the chariot by day and by night, for fame works without interruption.

The seven men accompanying the chariot are all persons associated with fame. In front, the philosopher Plato (“*platon*”) leads the procession, followed by Saint Louis of France (“*s.loys*”). To the right of the chariot, Charlemagne (“*charlemagne*”) steps out in great imperial garb. Four authors of antiquity, through whose writings



[26]



[FIG. 1] *Triumph of Fame*, from *The Triumphs of Petrarch*, probably Paris, c. 1510. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. CII/4.

Fame was passed on, complete the procession. Aristotle (“*aristote*”) is engaged in conversation with Saint Louis. Behind the chariot, Homer (“*omere*”) and Cicero (“*cicero*”) are shaking hands, while Virgil (“*virgile*”) looks on. Under Charlemagne’s feet lie three women. They are the “*Parcae*” or Fates, symbols of Death that has been vanquished here. Part of the dress worn by Clotho (“*clotho*”) is still visible, while further along we see Atropos (“*atropos*”) in a reclined position looking towards the third fate, Lachesis.

The original borders have been lost. At the bottom left, part of the tapestry has been rewoven. New parts have also been inserted at the top and beside the figure of Fame.

#### Commentary

As with the previous work (cat. 25), this tapestry belongs to a (now lost) series dedicated to the *Trionfi*, according to a poem by Petrarch. First comes Love, overcome by Chastity, self suppressed by Death, and the latter supplanted by Fame. Fame will be driven out by Time, which must finally give way to Eternity. All six subjects are united in a series now in Vienna, in which the complete composition of the Fame described here is preserved (Kunsthistorisches Museum, series CII/4) (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> A French inscription on two banderoles explains the programme: “From earth comes the high Fame to avenge herself on Atropos and her two sisters, for she wished to avenge Chastity by her power as an honourable lady.”<sup>2</sup>

A fragmentary subject is still preserved in New York.<sup>3</sup> On the example in Vienna, the man behind Plato bears

the name “*Alexander*”, but this has been replaced here by “*S.Loys*”. Crick-Kuntziger suggested that this might be the portrait of King Louis XII of France (†1515), which would immediately give a *terminus ante quem*.

The weaving centre, the maker and the designer are all unknown. It is generally accepted in the literature that the models must have originated around 1510, and that the series with Triumphs of this type were made in French workshops, after models that are similar to the French book illuminations from the time of Louis XII.<sup>4</sup> Crick-Kuntziger suggested Bruges, where many French models were woven, but it remains a tempting hypothesis in the absence of certain documents.

This series after French inspiration is contemporary to a much larger version, most probably woven in Brussels, and now known in some editions especially associated with the court of Henry VIII of England and Cardinal Wolsey (London, V&A, and Hampton Court Palace).<sup>5</sup> These tapestries contain much longer tituli, both in Latin and in French. [GD]

1. Scheicher 1971, p. 11.
2. “De terre vient la haulte renommée. Pour Atropos et des deux seurs venger. Car Chastete elle a voulu venger Par son pouvoir somme dame extimee”.
3. Cavallo 1993, pp. 463–469.
4. Scheicher 1971, pp. 32–33; Cavallo 1993, pp. 463–469.
5. Campbell 2004 A and B; Campbell 2007, pp. 149–154.





- III -

THE HIGH RENAISSANCE  
& MANNERISM



WITH THE TEN-PART *Life of Jacob* (cat. 27), we immediately enter the High Renaissance. The designer Bernard van Orley (1488–1541), who had already drawn the Sablon legend (cat. 11) in 1516, now followed the Italian example of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles*, which was woven in Brussels in 1517–1521 and destined for the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. The characters acquire a monumental allure, the landscape becomes realistic, and the architectural components follow Italian art. In Raphael's wake, tapestry series were also woven after models by his collaborator Giulio Romano (1499–1546), such as the *Battle of the Caenini* (cat. 30), and from his surroundings emerged the series of the *Fructus Belli* in 1547–49, commissioned by Ferrante Gonzaga (cat. 29). The Italian tradition is also noticeable in the representations of Atlas and of Fortuna on the *Arms of Grimaldi* (cat. 28). The classical stories culminate in the eight-part *Life of Romulus* (cat. 32) and classical mythology in the four *Labours of Hercules* (cat. 31).

In these last two series, a different setting also comes to fruition. In the borders, small characteristic scenes were inserted in cartouches or under pergolas. These mostly contain moral allegories, not necessarily related to the central scene. The *Labours of Hercules* (cat. 31) draws its inspiration from prints of the older works of Hieronymus Bosch, or Pieter Bruegel the Elder.



[27]



[29]



[31]



[47]

In addition to these renaissance subjects, local traditions continued, especially in the smaller centres. In Enghien and Geraardsbergen, countless *Verdures* were created (cat. 33 and 34), and Oudenaarde provided original depictions of the *Life of David* (cat. 36).

The last decades of the century show a decline in the creativity of new cartoons. Older models were adapted into new compositions. Good examples of this include the *Deeds of Scipio* (cat. 40) and *Vertumnus and Pomona* (cat. 41) from the workshop of Maarten II Reymbouts.

After the Iconoclasm and during the subsequent warfare between the Spanish troops and the rebels in the Northern and Southern Netherlands, many tapestry weavers emigrated abroad. The museum's collection offers a nice sample of their production. In Wolfenbüttel (Central Germany), Baudouin van Brussel wove beautiful table carpets for the local rulers (cat. 43). Frans Spiering from Antwerp relocated to Delft and in 1609 produced *Scipio* tapestries based on models by Karel van Mander (cat. 45). Frans Tons moved to Pastrana (Spain) and also produced heraldic tapestries there in 1622 (cat. 47). The most important emigration of tapestry producers was that of Marc Comans and Frans van der Planken to Paris in 1601. In their large workshops in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel, *Diana and Endymion* (46) was woven in 1620–25. [GD]



## THE STORY OF JACOB



[27.1]

Ten tapestries

Brussels, before 1534

Workshop of Willem de Kempeneer (active c. 1530–c. 1565)

City mark of Brussels and monogram W4 on six tapestries

Designs by Bernard van Orley (c. 1487/1490–1541)

Wool and silk; 6 to 7 warps per cm

Inv. nos. 8584 to 8593

Provenance: 1950, acquired from the Tiele-Winckler family, Meggen (Switzerland)

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1954 c; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 42–48, nos. 24–33; Calberg & Pauwels 1961; Joos 1985; Campbell 2007, pp. 220–222; Sassu 2010; Meoni 2012, p. 43; Cleland & Karafel 2019, pp. 488–493, nr. 107; De Meüter in Brussels 2019, pp. 286–289.

### History

On 1 January 1534, the Brussels tapestry entrepreneur Willem de Kempeneer sold a series depicting the *Life of Jacob*, at that time still unfinished, to the art dealer Joris Vezeleer.<sup>1</sup> He in turn is then said to have sold the series, between 1534 and 1539, to Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggi (1474–1539).<sup>2</sup> As the series had been kept in the Campeggi Palace in Bologna since 1842, it was deduced that they came from this cardinal. The series was present in the Palazzo Malvezzi-Campeggi in Bologna from 1842 to 1883. After being sold, between 1898 and 1900, to Count Franz Hubert von Tiele Winckler (1857–1922) in Moschen (Germany), it was transferred to Meggen (Switzerland) in 1917.

This series is a contemporary of the other great series designed by Bernard van Orley: the *Battle of Pavia* (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, 1525–1531) and the *Hunts of Charles V* (Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1528–1533). The canon of life-sized characters in the foreground, introduced from Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* (woven 1517–1521, Vatican Museums) is also applied here. The series also continues the Flemish tradition, in which different episodes are depicted synchronously on one tapestry. Under the influence of the Italian Renaissance, particularly the

*Acts of the Apostles*, this division into registers was subsequently abandoned in favour of an operation in depth, with a main scene in front and other scenes preceding or following the main event, and with characters on a much smaller scale at the back of the landscape. This is already noticeable from the series of the *Square Passion* of Margaret of Austria, from 1518–1522 onwards (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, series 10).

A special feature of this series is the alternation of indoor and outdoor scenes, in which the architectures are presented as open galleries (see cat. nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 10). The monumental elements of these buildings, with their decorated columns and pilasters and their elaborate basements and entablatures, belong to the vocabulary that Van Orley also uses in his paintings.<sup>3</sup> This alternation was adopted on the *Life of Abraham*, also woven by Willem de Kempeneer (Hampton Court Palace), and the *Life of Tobias* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, series IV).

If the designs can be attributed to Van Orley, which is confirmed by his signature on the final piece, one can nevertheless distinguish several hands in the execution. The first four pieces and the final one display great stylistic unity in the arrangement of the image and in the figures. The fifth tapestry (the Departure) shows a more mannerist approach to the figures, and the four following works (6 to 9) have a more dispersed arrangement of the figures, and a juxtaposition of the episodes.

As the oldest mention of the series dates back to 1534, the artistic creation (designs and cartoons) may have started in 1532 at the latest. It is one of the early biblical series of the High Renaissance. Its only counterparts are the *Life of Saint Paul* by Pieter Coecke, already delivered to Francis I of France in 1533, also by Vezeleer, and the *Life of Joshua*, also designed by Pieter Coecke and delivered to Francis I in October 1538.<sup>4</sup> The Jacob series is the predecessor of the *Life of Abraham*, also produced by Willem de Kempeneer, probably after a project by Bernard van Orley, and further elaborated after his death by Pieter Coecke and Michiel Coxcie.<sup>5</sup>

The borders are decorated with flowers and bunches of fruit, tied together by bows. In the middle of the upper border is a banderole, in which an explanation of the scene is woven in Roman capitals on a red ground. These



take the form of elegiac distichs (couplets), in quatrain form. Some texts do not correspond exactly to the story that is depicted. At 27.7 it refers to an episode that is not depicted, and at 27.9 it anticipates the next tapestry. These texts were undoubtedly written by a contemporary theologian.

The total surface area of the series is 420 cm x 6829 cm, which is equivalent to 585 square ells (of 70 cm)

[27.1]

#### THE BLESSING OF JACOB

Inv. 8584

420 x 780 cm

City mark of Brussels and monogram of Willem de Kempeneer

Inscription: VT PATRIARCHA SENEX IACOB BENEDIXIT  
ESAV / INSIDIAS FRATRI OB PREMIA CAPTA PARAT / CAVTA  
FVGAM SVADET MATER REBECCA FIDELIS / NE NATO  
NOCEANT INVIDA TELA TIMET [From the moment the  
old patriarch blessed Jacob / Esau prepares traps for his  
brother because of the benefits he received / As a precau-  
tion, Rebecca, who remains faithful to Jacob, convinces  
him / So that no envious arrows may harm her son]

The story goes from the birth of Jacob until his blessing  
by Isaac, according to Genesis, chapters 25 and 27. At the  
top left, Jacob is born, holding the foot of his twin brother



[FIG. 1] Jan Gossaert, *Cain Slaying Abel*,  
woodcut, 1517. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels,  
inv. s.IV.12467.

Esau (Genesis 25: 25). Below left, Rebecca discusses how  
Jacob can gain his father's favour. At the top right, next  
to the birth scene, Esau sells his birthright as first-born  
to Jacob, while further to the right, he goes hunting to  
catch the game requested by Isaac. In the foreground to  
the right of the pillar, Rebecca receives the goat kids, and  
above that, she prepares the dish. Finally, Jacob brings the  
dish to the blind Isaac and obtains his blessing (Genesis  
27: 19–29).

The medallion of the pillar on the right shows a war-  
rior threatening another warrior, lying on the ground,  
with a weapon. It may be an allusion to Cain's murder of  
Abel, another fraternal dispute, and it can be related to  
the woodcut by Jan Gossaert from 1517 (fig. 1). The reclin-  
ing figure also recalls the pose of the rich man in hell, on  
Van Orley's *Job* triptych of 1521.<sup>6</sup>

[27.2]

#### THE DEPARTURE AND DREAM OF JACOB

Inv. 8585

425 x 737 cm

Monogram of Willem de Kempeneer

GLORIA VISA DEI PROFVGO EST SPECTATA CATERVA /  
ANGELICA HV(N)C SIGNAT MYSTICA PETRA LOCVM /  
MAGNA VIE PROMISSA LEVA(N)T TENVA(N)TQ(VE)  
LABOREM / PROPHETAM SANCTVM NIL PIGET EXILII  
[The glory of God appears to the refugee / A flight of  
angels appears (and) marks the place of the mystic rock /  
Great promises ease and reduce the burden of the jour-  
ney / Nothing about the exile disgusts the holy prophet]

At the top left, in an upper loggia, Esau stands furiously  
before his father when he learns how Jacob has deceived  
him (Genesis 27: 30–40). Here, he walks with a man,  
perhaps to plan the murder of his brother (Genesis 28:  
41–42). In front, Rebecca, who has learned of Esau's mur-  
derous plans, urges Jacob to flee to his uncle Laban in  
Mesopotamia (Genesis 27: 42–46). Isaac, who is blind,  
raises his arms in a gesture of despair. On the right, Jacob  
sleeps along the way, and the dream of the angels climb-  
ing the ladder appears to him (Genesis 28: 11–15). Behind  
this, he pours oil on the stone on which his head slept  
at night (Genesis 28: 18–22). In the rear, shepherds point  
out to him his cousin Rachel, who is herding the sheep  
(Genesis 29: 4–6).

On a sill above Isaac are an albarello, and a book above  
which appears the inscription: BOOK GEN. On the shelf  
above are two plants, on the left a palm branch, and on  
the right a branch bearing dates.<sup>7</sup> This is a possible allu-  
sion to Isaac and Jacob, and their action on this tapestry,  
after Psalm 92: 13–15.<sup>8</sup>



[27.2]





[27.3]



[27.4]

[27.3]  
THE MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL

Inv. 8586  
423 × 604 cm  
Monogram of Willem de Kempeneer

QVA(N)DOQ(VE) GREX POTAT LABAN COGNOSCITVR  
AGNO / SVMITVR INTER VERNAS JACOB FAMVLVS / SED  
PENSARE STIPEM RACHAELIS FORMA COEGIT / PRERIPVIT  
THALAMOS HVIC LYA LYPPA SOROR [And while the flock  
drinks, Laban is recognised thanks to the lamb / Jacob is  
taken up as a servant among his house slaves / But Rachel's  
beauty forces him to think of founding a family / Lia, the  
sister with the sickly eyes, snatches a marriage from him]

In front, Jacob opens the well to give water to Rachel's  
sheep (Genesis 29: 1–10). He reveals himself and they  
embrace each other (Genesis 29: 11–12). Laban warmly  
receives his nephew Jacob on the doorstep of his home,  
shown here as a palace (Genesis 29: 13–14). This is fol-  
lowed on the right by the marriage of Jacob and Rachel  
(Genesis 29: 22–24), a scene that was lost in the looting of  
Moschen castle in 1945, but which is still preserved in the  
Burrell Collection in Glasgow (inv. 46.110) (fig. 2) and in  
the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence.

[27.4]  
THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIVESTOCK

Inv. 8587  
427 × 608 cm  
Monogram of Willem de Kempeneer

INVISVS REMEARE STVDET / MANERE ROGATVR / DITATVR  
CONIVNX / VTRAQVE PROLE BEAT [Being unwelcome, he  
considers leaving / He is asked to stay / As a husband he  
becomes rich / He is happy through both descendants]

At the top left, in an open loggia, Rachel, surrounded by  
three women, gives birth to her son Joseph (Genesis 30:  
22–24). Alongside them, Jacob and Laban are in conversa-  
tion: Jacob had served him twice for two periods of seven  
years and he wants to leave his uncle, but he accepts to  
stay for another six years if he can get all the goats and  
sheep with a mixed-colour coat from the flock (Genesis  
30: 27–34). A little further to the right, Jacob places bark-  
less branches in the water troughs to encourage the flock  
to multiply (Genesis 37–39). In the foreground, they are  
separating the herds: Jacob drives his animals to the right,  
and Laban his smaller herds to the left. To the right of the  
large apple tree is a rural scene, with a shepherdess taking  
the food from the basket, a small shepherd preceding the  
flock and another playing the bagpipes. The latter is taken  
from an engraving by Albrecht Dürer from 1514 (fig. 3).



[FIG. 2] *The Meeting and the Marriage of Jacob and Rachel*, from *The Life of Jacob*,  
workshop of Willem de Kempeneer, Brussels, 1535–1540. The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, inv. 46110.





**[FIG. 3]** Albrecht Dürer, *The Bagpiper*, engraving, 1514. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. s.ii. 10928.

[27.5]

**JACOB LEAVES LABAN**

Inv. 8588  
425 × 590 cm  
Monogram of Willem de Kempeneer

NIL MALE SVCCESIT CREVERVNT RESQ(VE) PECVVSQ(VE) / NAMQ(VE) SECVNDABAT PROSPERA QVAEQ(VE) DEVS / VITAQ(VE) DVM SOCERI IVSTVM FASTIDIT INIQVA / AVFVGIVNT OMNES IMPIA TECTA PROCVL [Nothing turned out badly; business and herds increased / For God favoured every cause / Until the unjust life of the father-in-law disgusted the righteous / All fled from the wicked rooftops]

Laban and his sons became jealous of Jacob's wealth, and at Yahweh's command he hastily leaves his father-in-law to travel back to Canaan (Genesis 31: 1–20). The entire picture plane is taken up by the packing and loading onto mules of Jacob's goods and family. On the left, behind the column, Rachel leaves the house containing the idols of her father Laban. The latter angrily discusses this sudden departure in the window between two columns.

[27.6]

**THE ALLIANCE WITH LABAN**

Inv. 8589  
427 × 685 cm

POSTVLAT ABDVCTAS GNATAS IDOLA REQVIRIT / RIXATVR LABAN NON BENE PARTA QVERENS / IGNORAT STATVAS JACOB CRIMENQ(VE) REPELLIT / PACIS AMANS SOCERI FEDERA PACIS HABET [Laban demands the return of his abducted daughters and his household gods / He gets angry, complains about the goods not properly acquired / Jacob knows nothing about the idols and dismisses the allegation / Being a peace-loving person, he makes a peace treaty with his father-in-law]

On the left, Laban, who has caught up with the refugees and suspects them of having stolen his idols, vainly examines their travelling bags (Genesis 31: 33–35). On the right, Jacob and Laban solemnly make an alliance (Genesis 31: 44–53). At the top in the middle, Laban says goodbye to his children (Genesis 31: 55).

[27.7]

**THE RECONCILIATION OF JACOB AND ESAU**

Inv. 8590  
428 × 675 cm  
City mark of Brussels and monogram of Willem de Kempeneer

VXORESQVE VADVM ET PROLES TRADVCTO OUESQVE EVADANT SALTEM / SCITA PERICLA MANET EXPECTANS FRATREM LVCTATVR / NON SVPERATVR DICTVR ISRAEL NVMINE FORTIS HOMO OSCVLA LIBAVIT / FRATRI MANSVETVS ESAV MVNERA SVSCIPIENS FACTVS AMICVS ABIT [He brings his women, children and flocks across the mudflats / They at least escape from the known dangers / He stays, waits for his brother, he struggles but is not defeated. As a brave man, he is called Israel by God's will / Esau meekly embraces his brother. Accepting the gifts, he goes forth as a friend]

When Jacob learns that Esau is approaching with four hundred men, he is filled with terror, and in the centre foreground, he sends three servants to offer him some of his livestock for reconciliation, which is what is happening at the top right (Genesis 32: 6–21). In the middle at the very back, Jacob wrestles at night with a stranger, an envoy from God, who gives him the name Israel and blesses him (Genesis 32: 24–29).

At the front left, Jacob divides his wives and children into different groups, fearing an attack from Esau (Genesis 32: 8–22). Finally, on the right, the two brothers reconcile in the second plane of the tapestry (Genesis 33: 8–15).

It is striking in this tapestry that the historically most important scene, Jacob's struggle with the angel and his new name "Israel", is explained in detail in the inscription at the top, but in the picture plane it is almost imperceptibly represented at the back.



[27.5]



[27.6]





[27.7]



[27.8]

[27.8]  
**JACOB AND THE SHECHEMITES**

Inv. 8591  
 431 × 671 cm  
 City mark of Brussels

CAEDE SICHEM DINE PER FRATRES STVPR A PIANTVR  
 ISRAEL TRISTIS P(rae)DIA / LINQVIT HEMOR PONITVR  
 ARA BETHEL IMONDI IDOLA IVBENTVR / PULCHRA  
 CADIT RACHEL BENJAMIN PARIE(N)S BISSEPTEM HAC  
 JACOB LABAN / SERVIVERAT ANNOS MESTICIAM SANO  
 TERRA REVIS A LEVAT [The blemish of Dinah is repaid  
 by the murder of Shechem by her brothers / Sadly,  
 Israel leaves the domain of Hamor. An altar is set up in  
 Bethel, where the idols are hidden / The beautiful Rachel  
 dies giving birth to Benjamin / Twice seven years Jacob  
 served Laban for her sake. The rediscovered land consoles  
 his grief]

After the parting with Esau, Jacob goes to Sukkot and  
 builds a house there, which is pictured at the top left  
 (Genesis 33: 17). In addition, just outside the city of Sikem  
 in Canaan, at the front left, he buys a piece of land from  
 Hamor for 100 pieces of gold (Genesis 33: 18–20). At the  
 rear is the city of Shechem, where Jacob's sons, Simon and  
 Levi, are killing all the male Shechemites to avenge the  
 dishonour of their sister Dinah (Genesis 33: 25–27). Jacob  
 must therefore set out again, but first he buries his idols  
 at the foot of a terebinth tree (depicted here as an oak)  
 (Genesis 34: 8). His family runs after him. Further back,  
 Jacob pours oil on the monument of Bethel (Genesis 35:  
 14). On the right in the distance, Rachel dies on the road  
 to Ephrata, after giving birth to Benjamin (Genesis 35:  
 16–20).

It is not clear whether the beautiful group of women  
 and children, seated in the foreground, are opening the  
 money box for the purchase of the land on the left, or  
 for the removal of the idols, which are being buried on  
 the right.

[27.9]  
**JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS**

Inv. 8592  
 425 × 625 cm

AVCTAM PACE DOMVM GAVDET GENITORE SEPVLTO  
 SED FRATRV TVRBAT / LIVIDA TVRBA PATRE(m) VESTE  
 CRVENTATA FRATREM CECIDISSE FATENTVR / CIVIS  
 SVBSIDIVM PERCIPIAT ATRA FAMES OBLITOS FRATRIS  
 IVSTVS / COGNOVIT IOSEPH AVCTAQ(ue) MVNERIBVS  
 FARRA REFERRE IVBET [After burying his father, he enjoys

his house that grows in peace / But the ugly quarrel of  
 the brothers disturbs the father, and by the bloodstained  
 garment they confess the death of their brother, by whose  
 help a terrible famine had been relieved / The righteous  
 Joseph recognises his brothers who forgot him. He com-  
 mands them to bring grain and gifts]

At the top left, Jacob returns to his father Isaac, who  
 welcomes him to his home (Genesis 35: 27). In the same  
 building, Isaac is lying on his deathbed, with a staff (or  
 candle?) in his hand, which Jacob also touches. To the  
 right of the building, the burial is taking place in the dis-  
 tance (Genesis 35: 29). At the front left, Jacob's sons argue  
 with their father because they are envious of his prefer-  
 ence for Joseph (Genesis 37: 3–11). On the second plane,  
 Jacob sends little Joseph (the name JOSEPH appears on his  
 robe) to his brothers who are tending their flocks in the  
 land of Shechem (Genesis 37: 13–14). At the top right, at  
 the very back, Joseph is pulled out of the well and sold by  
 his brothers to Madianites travelling to Egypt (Genesis 37:  
 24–28). They then stain Joseph's cloak with the blood of  
 a goat and show it to Jacob to make him believe that the  
 boy had been killed by a wild animal. This forms the main  
 scene in the foreground, with Jacob and four of his wives  
 wringing their hands in sorrow (Genesis 37: 24–33). When  
 famine ensues, Jacob sends his sons to Egypt to buy grain  
 there (Genesis 42: 1–3).

The second part of the titulus refers to the following  
 tapestry, namely the meeting of Jacob and his sons with  
 Joseph.

[27.10]  
**MEETING OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.  
 DEATH OF JACOB**

Inv. 8593  
 425 × 672 cm

ADVOCAT ATQ(ue)PATREM BENJAMIN FRATRE RETENTO  
 SOMNIA QVID SIGNAT / INVIDIOSA VIDENT AEGYPTO AB  
 TOTA ISRAEL LAETVS VENERATVR / LAVDANS EXALTAT  
 PECTORE VOCE DEVM GRANDENVS TANDEM / FELICI  
 MORTE SOPITVR QVEM NATI REFERVNT AD PIA BVSTA  
 PATRV [He calls his father and his restrained brother  
 Benjamin. They see what those hateful dreams mean /  
 Israel is joyfully honoured throughout all Egypt / He  
 praises God with all his heart / The progenitor finally dies  
 a happy death. His children carry him to the sacred grave  
 of the ancestors]

VERA REFERT PICTVRA PIA HEC SED MYSTICA LECTOR /  
 ECCLESIAM ET CHRISTVM SANCTA FIGVRA TEGIT [Reader,  
 this pious but mystical representation rests on real facts /  
 The sacred image conceals Christ and the Church]





[FIG. 4] Detail of 27.10, figure at the far-right side.

At the top left, Jacob's sons come to tell him that Joseph is now in power in Egypt (Genesis 45: 25–28), and then Jacob goes to Egypt with all his family. In the foreground, Jacob, now old, is welcomed by his son Joseph (Genesis 46: 5–7). At the front right, Jacob is presented by Joseph to Pharaoh (Genesis 47: 7–10). At the top of the palace complex, from right to left, the final episodes of Jacob's life take place: he blesses the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48: 8–20), afterwards he dies, surrounded by his twelve sons (Genesis 49: 1–32), and his body is carried to the grave (Genesis 50: 1–13). The additional inscription on the right indicates the whole story as a prefiguration of Christ.

On the far right of the tapestry, on the back of the man's hat (fig. 4) is the cryptic signature of Bernard van Orley: (Bernard)VS A OR(ley).<sup>9</sup>

The figure of the pharaoh on the right, next to the man with the hat, has the same face and pose as King Numitor on the Munich drawing *Romulus and Remus Bringing the Head of Amulius*, by Bernard van Orley, dated 1524.<sup>10</sup>

In 1539–40, Willem de Kempeneer produced another Jacob series of thirteen pieces; 6 cubits high and a total of 504 *anas* (ells), for the Spaniard Diego d'Aranda, commissioner of Conde de Feria and/or Juan de Montalvo. It was also supposed to bear the coat of arms of the person who ordered it, but it is no longer identifiable. This, or another series, was mentioned in Madrid in 1623, but did not belong to the court.<sup>11</sup> Henry VIII of England had a series, which is mentioned in the inventory of 1547.<sup>12</sup>

The principal surviving edition is the group of six now in the Museo degli Uffizi in Florence, which also bears the mark of Willem de Kempeneer and is mentioned in the Medici collections from 1642, and initially consisting of eight pieces.<sup>13</sup> In the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, there is a complete edition of no. 3 *Meeting of Jacob and Rachel* (fig. 2). It shows the same vertical border as the piece in

Florence, no. 3, also with the mark of De Kempeneer. Another fragment with the *Marriage Feast* on the right-hand side belongs to an American private collection and is the only edition with gold thread.<sup>14</sup> Since the composition of the Marriage Feast is also fully present in Florence, in Glasgow, and in the fragment in Richmond, one can deduce that at least three editions with this scene were made in addition to the one in Brussels. In the Treasury of Tournai Cathedral, a further four fragments are preserved, bearing the embroidered coat of arms of Bishop Charles de Croÿ (1506–1564) and the year 1544.<sup>15</sup> These too were made after the cartoons of the edition discussed here.

Bernard van Orley's models for this series were subsequently copied and adapted for later Jacob series produced in Brussels up to the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> [GD]

1. For information about this important intermediary, see Buchanan 2015, pp. 21–22, 75–77 and *passim*.
2. Documents in Crick-Kuntziger 1955, pp. 39–40; see also De Meüter in Brussels 2015.
3. *Banquet of the Children of Job* – altarpiece 1521, Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Art; *Last Judgment* in Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts; the *Passion Relics*, at Brussels and Turin, around 1520, see Brussels 2019, cat. 8–9, p. 94, etc.
4. Delmarcel 2017 B, pp. 139–140.
5. In 1543–1544, two sets were already in the ownership of Henry VIII of England, see Campbell 2007, pp. 277–298; Cleland in New York 2014, p. 237.
6. Royal Museums for Fine Arts, Brussels, inv. 1822, see Brussels 2019, pp. 108–110.
7. With thanks to Pilar Bosqued Lacambra of Zaragoza for this identification.
8. “The righteous one grows like a palm, like a Cedar of Lebanon he rises up; They are planted in Yahweh's temple, and flourish in the courts of our God; They still bear fruit when they are old, and remain juicy and fresh”.
9. Joos 1985.
10. Munich, Staatl. Graphische Slg, inv. 979, see Brussels 2019, p. 141.
11. Crick-Kuntziger 1954 C, pp. 39–40.
12. Campbell 2007, pp. 220–222.
13. Inv. IA 1912-25, nos. 108–112, 420; Meoni 2018, pp. 32–35; the preserved documents are nos. 1, 2, 3 (in two parts), 7 and 10.
14. Cleland & Karafel 2019, p. 491.
15. Numbers 1, 7, 9 and 10, see Delmarcel 2016.
16. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 3 in a series by Jacob and Moses, bearing the mark of Frans Schavaert; Cudillero, collection of Selgas Fagalde, 3 pieces bearing the mark of Schavaert c. 1550; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, series LXXV, 8 pieces, by Maarten Reymbouts, c. 1600; Hospices de Beaune; 5 pieces, by Maarten Reymbouts; Lausanne, Fondation Toms-Pauli: 2 fragments, related to Reymbouts, c. 1600; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, series XLIV, 8 pieces, by Jacob Van Zeunen, mid-1650; Krakow, Wawel Cathedral, 8 pieces, Jacob van Zeunen; Laon Cathedral, 6 pieces, by Jacob Van Zeunen; Lyon, Cathedral St-Jean, 5 pieces, by Ydens & de Pannemaker, c. 1670.



[27.9]



[27.10]



## ARMORIAL TAPESTRY OF THE GRIMALDI



[28]

Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
second quarter of the sixteenth century  
Probably produced in the workshop of Christian de Visch  
Mark of Brussels (B B) at the bottom left and  
the weaver's monogram in the right-hand border  
Designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 275 × 260 cm; 7 warps per cm  
Inv. 2545

Provenance: 1882, bequest of E. de Biefve

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 50, no. 34; Boccardo 2006,  
pp. 122 (fig.), 128, 131 (note 47).

Two figures, a man on the left and a nude woman on the right, carry a coat of arms, which they are holding at a point near the crest of the helmet located on top of the coat of arms itself. The coat of arms is "chequered, silver and red, a gold shielded head laden with an eagle, tongued and with a silver lily on its breast". At the top, the sun casts its rays. On a banner at the bottom is the motto: "SVS. QVE. DE. QVE. FERRE". The man carries a globe, while the woman is standing on a similar globe. The scene takes place on the waves of a sea; the land is visible on the horizon.

The coat of arms is repeated in the four corners of the border, which is further richly decorated with flowers and fruit, wound around a staff with scales and suspended on metal circles.

#### Commentary

The coat of arms is attributed to the Grimaldi family, originally from Genoa, which indeed carries such lozenges of silver and red, but the eagle above would indicate a side branch, namely Grimaldi di Castro.<sup>1</sup> As is usual with armorial tapestries, several pieces were woven from the same cartoon and later dispersed. Copies were listed in old and recent collections and one is preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup>

The motto "*susque deque ferre*" ("bear and suffer") is taken from the *Noctes Atticae* by Aulus Gellius (175 AD)

and originally indicated a balanced state of mind.<sup>3</sup> Here, it is applied rather literally: the man on the left is carrying the globe and the woman on the right is standing on it. The bearer on the left was wrongly considered to be Hercules: he always carries the celestial sphere, not the globe, and is dressed in a lion skin. A similar image of the earth is depicted on a tapestry from the series of *Spheres* (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid) created in 1530–1535 on the order of King John III of Portugal and his wife Catherine of Habsburg.<sup>4</sup> It can also be found in the left-hand border of *Paul's Sermon in Athens*, in the series of the *Acts of the Apostles* after Raphael (Vatican Museums) and in the *Sacrifice of Lystra* in the editions nowadays preserved in Madrid and Mantua, and woven before 1557. There, the world map is displayed in mirror image.<sup>5</sup>

The woman on the right is a personification of the changing Fortuna, standing on an unstable ball and driven further by the wind. The image of this *Fortuna velata*, or *Fortuna marina*, appears in works of art from the beginning of the sixteenth century on engravings by Albrecht Dürer, Sebald Beham, Heinrich Aldegrever and others.<sup>6</sup> The two figures together indicate a desire for prosperity, if not possession, on earth and at sea. The whole composition therefore fits in well with a family involved in the sea trade, such as the Grimaldi family in Genoa.



[FIG. 1] Detail of weaver's mark



The monogram of the manufacture is only partially preserved on the right-hand border. A full drawing of it has been woven onto another copy, which appeared on the art market in 2004 (fig. 1).<sup>7</sup>

This monogram also appears on the series of the *Battle of Lepanto* (Palazzo del Principe, Genoa) of 1571, ordered in six pieces by Giovanni Andrea Doria (1540–1606) after cartoons painted by Luca Cambiaso in 1581–83, and delivered in 1591 by “Christiano de Voisch e Francesco Lendrich” in Brussels. They are probably the names of Christiaan de Vos/de Visch, and Frans Hendrickx. The letters C D V I in the monogram may indicate the former.<sup>8</sup> The monogram is also found on a series of *Hunting Tapestries*, with the coat of arms of the Vidoni family, now in the Palazzo di Venezia in Rome and in the castle of Laarne (Belgium), and apparently also originating from Genoa. In terms of style, these tapestries also date from the final quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The de Visch/de Vos workshop therefore had regular customers in Genoa. The Grimaldi tapestries are the oldest known of that workshop’s production and date from around 1550.

On another copy of this tapestry, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (inv. T 2-1956), there is a different mark, referring to the still-unknown Brussels workshop that produced the series of *Spheres* mentioned above, now in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional, series 15).<sup>10</sup> The cartoon of the Grimaldi tapestries was thus entrusted to several manufacturers, who probably wove them simultaneously in a joint venture.

The composition of the borders refers to the period 1530–1550 in Brussels tapestry art. The composition of cores in the form of scaly ‘palm-tree’ stumps, whether or not held up by metal discs, can be found in many variants including on contemporary series.<sup>11</sup> [GD]

1. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 50; see <https://www.armorial.org/produit/53092/grimaldi-di-castro.html>
2. Engel-Dolfus Mulhouse 1883, auction Castiglione Amsterdam 17–20 November 1925, lot 269; Christie’s London 28 April 1932, lot 32; Christie’s New York, 21 October 2004, lot 1010.
3. “Significat autem ‘susque deque ferre’ animo aequo esse et, quod accidit, non magni pendere atque interdum neglegere et contemnere et prope-modum id valet, quod dicitur Graece adiaphorein.” (Liber XVI, chap. 9).
4. Junquera & Herrero 1986 I, p. 193; New York 2002, p. 268.
5. De Strobel 2020, II, fasc. 10, p. 22 (Vatican); Junquera & Herrero 1986, I, p. 71 (Madrid); Mantua 2010, p. 74.
6. Lausanne 1981, pp. 52–53; Princeton University 1969, pp. 51–52, nos. 43–47; Pickering 1970, pp. 219–220.
7. Auction Christie’s New York, 21 October 2004, lot 1010.
8. Boccardo 2006, pp. 128–129; Stagno 2008, pp. 67–69.
9. Versyp 1971, pp. 35–37 (Laarne).
10. Junquera & Herrero 1986, I, pp. 100–104 and monogram p. 354.
11. *Life of Josuah* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); *Seven Deadly Sins* (Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid); *Life of Tobias* (Castle Museum, Gaasbeek); *Life of Paul* (Patrimonio Nacional Madrid).

[29]

## FRUCTUS BELLI. THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION

Brussels, 1545–1547

Workshop of Jan Boudewijns (Jehan Baudouyn)

No city or weaver’s marks.

Design from the circle of Giulio Romano

Wool and silk; 495 × 890 cm; 8 warps per cm

Inv. Tp. 14

Provenance: 1977, bought from the collection of Fernand Nédée

Literature: Vaucaire 1917; Delmarcel 1984; Delmarcel 1989; Forti Grazzini in Mantua 1989, p. 479; Delmarcel 1992; Brown & Delmarcel 1996, pp. 69–70, 158–173; Delmarcel 1999, p. 93; Delmarcel & Brown 2010, pp. 78–95.

Seated on a triumphal chariot pulled by four grey horses, an army commander rides to a city. Dressed in a pseudo-antique tunic, he holds a sceptre and an olive branch, the symbol of Peace. A winged genius holds a laurel wreath, the symbol of Victory, above his head. In front of him another genius floats, with a trumpet and laurel wreath, attributes of Fame. Alongside and behind him, armed warriors – also in antique clothing – are riding on horseback. In front of his chariot, prisoners are arraigned, and

servants are holding city models on standards. On and behind an embankment, the terrified population looks on in fear. The entire procession walks up to an open gate in the ramparts of a fortified city.

The scene is surrounded by a border, filled with trophies. In the middle of the upper border is a coat of arms, surrounded by the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece. A tablet, bearing the inscription “FRVCTVS BELLI” is being held up by two genii. In the middle of the right-hand border, a woman is writing on a shield, in a medallion, and below her one reads the inscription: “NON S (IN) E FAST (IDI)O” (“not without reluctance”).

This tapestry is the seventh in a series of eight, depicting military scenes under the motto “Fructus Belli”, “the Fruits of War”.<sup>1</sup> The coat of arms in the upper border allows the identification of the patron as Ferrante (Ferdinand) Gonzaga (1507–1557), Count of Guastalla and Knight of the Golden Fleece since 1531. He ordered the series from the Brussels producer Jan Boudewijns, also called Jehan Baudouyn, before his departure from Brussels to Milan, in June 1546. This has been established from a petition by Boudewijns to Ferrante on 31 August 1547, in order to complete the series.<sup>2</sup> The series is first mentioned in Ferrante’s residence in Milan on 1 January 1549, when the young



[FIG. 1] Circle of Giulio Romano, *The Triumphal Chariot*, body colour on paper, 1545–1547. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 3536.





[29]

Prince Philip, son of Charles V, was received there.<sup>3</sup> The eight different subjects are described in a chronicle of the marriage of Anna Isabella Gonzaga, from Guastalla, to her cousin Ferdinando Carlo in Mantua on 7 April 1671.<sup>4</sup> The series remained in this family until 1747 and was dispersed from 1805 onwards.

The series contains the following subjects: 1. *The Payment of the Soldier's Wages*; 2. *The March and the Camp*; 3. *The Burning City*; 4. *The Bombardment by the Artillery*; 5. *The Battlefield*; 6. *The Officers' Meal*; 7. *The Triumphal Procession*; 8. *Reward and Punishment*.

Of the first edition, with Ferrante's coat of arms, six pieces are preserved in addition to the work discussed here (no. 7): nos. 1 and 6 in the Musée de la Renaissance in Écouen (France), and nos. 3, 4 and 7 (middle) in the Edward James Foundation in West Dean, Chichester (UK). Nos. 2 and 3 are known from later editions.

Exceptionally, three original cartoons of the series have also been preserved, including the one for this tapestry (fig. 1), and also of nos. 3 and 4 (figs. 2 & 3), all in the Musée du Louvre in Paris.<sup>5</sup> They are attributed to various artists, but it is generally accepted that they must have been active in the wake of Giulio Romano (1499–1546) in Mantua. Romano was the main court artist to Duke Federico II Gonzaga (1500–1540), the older brother of Ferrante. In his aforementioned letter to Ferrante, Jan Boudewijns mentions that the execution had been inspected by Giambattista Lodi, an artist from Cremona who stayed in the Netherlands for a long time (1540–1552) and who possibly collaborated on the cartoons. He also advised Ferrante on the production of a series of the *Children's Games*, by Willem de Pannemaker, in 1552. Other contemporary series are attributed to the same artist, such as the *Life of Moses*, also woven for Ferrante and now in the Chateau de Châteaudun, and the *History of Mercury and Herse* (Madrid, Museo del Prado; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Spanish noble collections).<sup>6</sup> Benedetto Pagni (1503–1578), a collaborator of Giulio at the Palazzo Te in Mantua, has also been suggested by some as the designer.<sup>7</sup>

When Ferrante Gonzaga ordered this series, he had a long military career behind him. The youngest of the three sons of Isabella d'Este and Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, he was destined for military service from an early age. In 1523, barely sixteen years old, he was sent as a squire to the court of Madrid to learn the art of war. As a young officer, he witnessed the sacking of Rome in 1527, where, at his mother's request, he saved two tapestries from the famous series of the *Acts of the Apostles* in the Sistine Chapel. Afterwards he was on numerous battlefields (the siege of Florence in 1530, the siege of Tunis in 1535, and present as a negotiator at the Peace of Crépy 1544) until in 1546 he was appointed by Charles V as



[FIG. 2] Circle of Giulio Romano, *The Burning City*, body colour on paper, 1545–1547. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 3532.



[FIG. 3] Circle of Giulio Romano, *The Bombardment by the Artillery*, body colour on paper, 1545–1547. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 3531.

governor of Milan, and imperial lieutenant of Lombardy.

The motto "Fructus Belli" is in fact an irony of the military career, which the patron is looking back on: if this tapestry with the Triumphal Procession gives us the image of a proud victor, the other subjects mainly depict the misery of the war. This is further confirmed by the motto in the right-hand border: "NON SINE FASTIDIO" (woven with abbreviations), "not without repugnance". The inscription "s.v.s." in the lower border can be read as "*sic victor sum*" / "so am I victorious", or "*sic ultor sum*" / "so am I avenger".

A possible literary source of this attitude can be found in the writings of the Spanish humanist Fray Antonio de Guevara (c. 1481–1545), court preacher to Emperor Charles, with whom Ferrante may have come into contact. In his *Libro Aureo de Marco Aurelio emperador*, published in Spanish in 1528 and translated into Italian in 1542, he has the emperor-philosopher reasoning about the consequences of war and the vanity of triumph.<sup>8</sup>

A formal model for the tapestry discussed here was most likely found in the *Triumph of Scipio Africanus*, from





**[FIG. 4]** Giulio Romano, *The Triumph of Scipio Africanus*, drawing, c. 1533. Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 3533.

the series of Brussels tapestries of the same name woven from 1533 onwards to designs by Giulio Romano and Gian Francesco Penni (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins inv. 3536, fig. 4).

Other influences from the Scipio series can also be seen in this series.<sup>9</sup> The prototype, however, was already to be found in Mantua, namely in the paintings by Andrea Mantegna showing the *Triumph of Julius Caesar* (1478–1506), now in Hampton Court Palace.

The borders are decorated with bronze trophies of various motifs of antique and pseudo-antique weapons and armour, an ornament frequently used in Italy in works of art related to martial arts and military triumph. They were undoubtedly supplied by the workshop of Giulio Romano, whose assistants added an almost identical decoration around the windows of the Sala di Troia in the ducal palace of Mantua in 1538–39.<sup>10</sup> Some of the motifs are inspired by Trajan's Column in Rome, in the shadow of which Giulio was born and raised. The cartellino with the inscription "Fructus belli", held by two genii under the trophy border, refers to the base of the column, where two winged Victories above the entrance door are holding a tabula with a dedicatory inscription, and this amidst the weapons captured from the Dacians.<sup>11</sup> The two seated Victories in the middle of the side borders, writing the name of the victor on a shield, have been attributed to Giulio by virtue of the same figure, which, though upright, can be seen on the column.<sup>12</sup> A drawing by Giulio showing this figure writing Charles V's name on a shield may have served as a design for this border.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the series for Ferrante Gonzaga, Jan Baudewijns/Baudouyn wove another edition with the same cartoons and the same borders, probably for a

Spanish customer, if not for King Philip II. It was given to Mazarin in 1659 by Don Luis Mendez de Haro in the name of the King of Spain Philip IV on the occasion of the Peace of the Pyrenees. After Mazarin's death, it became part of the collection of Louis XIV. This series is now lost, but it was copied in the Gobelins in low warp in 1685–86; it therefore provides us with a mirror image of the original edition.<sup>14</sup> The cartoons were later sold to the Maarten Reymbouts workshop, which produced two complete series around 1600, nowadays kept in Vienna.<sup>15</sup> Three of them subsequently appeared in the possession of the English painter Richard Cosway, who gifted them to Louis XVI in 1786. These are now preserved in the Musée du Louvre. [GD]

1. For a detailed analysis, see Delmarcel 1989, and Delmarcel in Brown & Delmarcel 1996, pp. 158–173.
2. Brown & Delmarcel 1996, p. 96, doc. 19.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 99, doc. 24, from the chronicle of Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 134–135, docs. 69 and 70.
5. Département des Arts graphiques, inv. D 3531, 3532, 3533.
6. Forti Grazzini in Madrid 2010, pp. 47–59; Buchanan 2015 B.
7. Marinelli 2000, p. 79; Berzaghi 2014, pp. 271–272; Forti Grazzini in Madrid 2010, p. 57, who in my opinion rightly rejects this attribution.
8. Published in Delmarcel 1989, p. 199; with thanks to Nello Forti Grazzini for this clue.
9. Delmarcel 1989, pp. 182–184.
10. See Mantua 1989, pp. 406–411.
11. Zanker 1970, pp. 524 and 530.
12. T. Hoelscher, *Victoria Romana*, Mainz, 1967, p. 122 ff.
13. Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto dei disegni, inv. U 1492 E, see Mantua 1989, p. 499; Delmarcel & Brown 2010, p. 91.
14. Vittet & Brejon de Lavergnée 2010, pp. 312–313, with colour illustrations.
15. Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. series LXII and LXIII; Birk 1884, pp. 176–178.





## ROMULUS DEFEATS THE CAENINI



[30]

Brussels, second quarter of the sixteenth century  
Probably produced by Jan Boudewijns  
Design from the circle of Giulio Romano  
Wool and silk; 341 × 595 cm; 8 warps per cm  
No marks  
Inv. Tp 1

Provenance: 1966, Donation by Baron Louis Empain

Literature: Asselberghs 1971 A, pp. 16–17; Delmarcel 1974, no. 54;  
Franses 1986, pp. 19–21; Brown & Delmarcel 1996, pp. 202–203;  
Delmarcel 1997, pp. 391–392; Campbell 2007, p. 256.

The scenes for this tapestry are taken from the story by Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* 1, 10. After the Romans had kidnapped the Sabine virgins, the affected tribes met with the King of the Sabines (top-left corner), and the Caenini decided to attack immediately. In the foreground, the Caenini army is being defeated by the Romans. The King of the Caenini has already been wounded by a lance, and Romulus is about to deliver him the final blow with his sword. Afterwards, the Romans seize the city of Caenina (top-right corner).

The tapestry belongs to a series with the *Story of the Abduction of the Sabine Virgins*, originally in six pieces, four other parts of which have been preserved: *The Inter-*



[FIG. 1] *The Intervention of the Sabine Virgins*, from *The Story of the Abduction of the Sabine Virgins*, Brussels, 1525–1550. Town Hall, Brussels.

*vention of the Sabine Virgins* (Town Hall, Brussels, fig. 1); the *Abduction of the Sabine Virgins* (Castle of Azay-le-Ferron, near Tours); the *Treason of Tarpeia*, the *Capture of Rome by the Sabines and the Reconquest by the Romans* (Gallery Franses, London); and the *Reconciliation Between Romans and Sabines* (whereabouts unknown, formerly collection Brieze, New York). As on this piece, the first two bear the subsequently inserted coat of arms of the Doublet de Persan family of Normandy, in the upper border.

In the inventory of Louis XIV of France (1715), such a series in six pieces with gold thread is mentioned as having been woven in Brussels from a drawing by Giulio Romano (“*d’un dessein de Jules Romain, fabrique de Bruxelles, représentant l’histoire et l’Enlèvement des Sabines*”). It was bequeathed to him by Cardinal Mazarin in 1661, but was destroyed in 1797.<sup>1</sup> According to Jean Vittet, this series was probably identical to the set of *Romulus and Remus*, bought by King Francis I of France in Brussels between 1534 and 1537, and mentioned in the inventory post mortem of 1552. The dimensions and the description of the design of the borders are identical to the set analysed here.<sup>2</sup> Both the style of the figures and the drawing of the borders indicate that the series was produced in Brussels in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. These mainly military figures are indeed related to series created within the circle of Giulio Romano on behalf of the Gonzagas, such as the *Fructus Belli* (cat. 29) and the *Life of Moses* (Centre des Monuments Nationaux, Paris).<sup>3</sup>

The border with flowers around a central bar such as a palm stump is typical of Brussels tapestries around 1535 (*Hunts of Maximilian, Battle of Pavia*). The specimen in the Franses collection has a border with arabesques, as around the *Life of Moses* mentioned above, and it bears a monogram that can be attributed to Jan Boudewijns of Brussels, the maker of *Fructus Belli* (cat. 29).

The workshop of Pierre Lefèbvre in the Louvre made copies of it in around 1660 (a copy of which is located in the castle of Chambord).<sup>4</sup> [GD]

1. Michel 1999, p. 450; Vittet & Brejon 2010, p. 65.

2. With thanks to Jean Vittet, for his research in progress.

3. Brown & Delmarcel 1996, pp. 194–205.

4. Isabelle Denis in Chambord 1996, pp. 260–263.





[31.1]

[31]

## THE LABOURS OF HERCULES

Four tapestries

Brussels, workshop of Frans Schavaert, 1556 or later

Mark of the City of Brussels; workshop mark on inv. 8870

Design in the style of Michiel Coxcie (1499–1592)

Wool and silk; 7 to 8 warps per cm

Inv. 8867-8870

Provenance: 1953, purchase from the de Kerckhove de Denterghem family

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 49–51, nos. 35–38; Durian Ress 1981; Dumont-Fillon 1984; Delmarcel in Ghent 1987–88, p. 116, cat. 33; Roobaert 2010 A, pp. 25–36; Redin-Michaus 2015 and 2018; Laruelle 2019, I, pp. 316–330.

These four tapestries are part of a much larger whole, which probably originally included the Twelve Labours of Hercules.

In addition to the four subjects in Brussels, five others are noted for the formal similarity of their characters' drawings. Two works are surrounded by a similar border: *Juno Sends Snakes to the Young Hercules* (Brussels, auction Palais des Beaux-Arts, 8 December 1958; Swiss private collection); *Hercules Rescuing Hesione from the Sea Monster* (Madrid auction, Alcala gallery, December 2018). A *Hercules and the Hydra of Lerna*, without borders, a *Hercules Killing the Lions*, and a *Hercules Carrying the Globe*, each with a different border, undoubtedly also belong to this group.<sup>1</sup> The cartoons were certainly used to produce a further version, judging by the *Hercules and Diomedes* preserved in the Alba collection (Palacio de las Dueñas, Seville), with the same secondary scenes in the borders,<sup>2</sup> and a different *Juno Sends the Snakes*, without borders, now in the Val de Grâce in Paris.<sup>3</sup>

The weaver's monogram was found by Roobaert in 2010 in documents relating to the Brussels tapestry producer Frans Schavaert. Born around 1510, he became a citizen of Brussels in 1538. He is mentioned as merchant in 1556 and afterwards as a tapestry producer in 1557. The last report of his activity dates from 1576.<sup>4</sup> In 1553 and 1554, he was one of the judges for the weaving of the *Conquest of Tunis*, at the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker, commissioned

by Emperor Charles the Fifth.<sup>5</sup> No fewer than eight series bearing his monogram are known to date.

Schavaert sold a *Hercules* series to his colleague Cornelis de Ronde in 1560. On 18 October 1560, the series was not yet completed, but it was delivered on 1 November 1561. The number of pieces is not mentioned, but for a series with at least seven fabrics, one may assume that it was not made until early 1559 at the earliest.

In the description of the feast for the wedding of Margaret of Parma's son Alexander Farnese to Mary of Portugal in Brussels in November 1565, the chronicler Francesco de Marchi reports that the waiting rooms of her apartment contained fourteen tapestries of forest landscapes, with silver and gold thread, depicting the *Labours of Hercules*.<sup>6</sup> In Margaret's inventories after her death in 1568, there is a mention of another series, this time in eight pieces.<sup>7</sup>

The year 1556 may serve as a *terminus ante quem non* on the grounds of borrowing from a print with the *Temptation of St Anthony*, by Pieter van der Heyden, after a model by Pieter Bruegel, dated 1556, the most active cartoon designer in Brussels at the time, and this attribution is strengthened by the similarities in the natural elements of this series with those of the *Genesis*, now in the Wawel Castle in Krakow, which is also attributed to Coxcie.

The designer is unknown. Crick-Kuntziger argues in favour of Michiel Coxcie (1499–1592), the most active cartoon designer in Brussels at the time, and this attribution is strengthened by the similarities in the natural elements of this series with those of the *Genesis*, now in the Wawel Castle in Krakow, which is also attributed to Coxcie.

The scenes in this series have been developed according to the descriptions in Raoul Le Fèvre's novel, *Le Livre du fort Hercules*, part II of his *Recueil des Histoires de Troie*, published in 1464.<sup>8</sup> They are set in the forest, where there are also numerous animals: these may have served as symbols of good and evil, according to the medieval bestiary.<sup>9</sup>

[31.1]

### HERCULES AND HIPPODAMEIA

Inv. 8867

425 × 672 cm

Hippodameia, daughter of the King of Argos, married Pirithous, King of the Lapiths. Their wedding feast was





[31.2]



[31.3]





[31.4]

disturbed by the Centaurs, their enemies, and in the process the Centaurs were nearly all killed. This is going on in the background. Here, Hercules rescues Hippodameia, who has been kidnapped by a Centaur. During this battle, according to Le Fèvre, Hercules had pierced and killed another Centaur with an arrow through his hand and face, which is shown in the foreground on the right.<sup>10</sup> Among the animals in the forest, an ostrich kills a viper, as a symbol of justice. The monkey and the mole in front represent the animal and evil.<sup>11</sup>

[31.2]  
**HERCULES AND CACUS**

Inv. 8868  
425 × 610 cm

Cacus, son of Vulcanus, had robbed Hercules of a herd of cattle, and he draws them backwards into a cavern (background, centre) to deceive Hercules. But the latter hears the lowing of the herd in a cave and discovers them under a tree which he uproots. This last detail is borrowed from Le Fèvre.<sup>12</sup> In the foreground is the fire-breathing Cacus, felled and defeated by Hercules. The deer on the left are the symbolic opposite of the owl and the snake in the tree on the right.

[31.3]  
**HERCULES AND ANTHEUS**

Inv. 8869  
425 × 410 cm

One of the Labours of Hercules was to steal the golden apples of the Hesperides, in Libya. On that journey, he

meets the giant Antheus, son of Neptune and Tellus (the earth goddess). Antheus gained new powers each time he touched the earth. Hercules could only overpower him by lifting him off the earth. In this case, the deer in the background, a symbol of the soul, is possibly intended to represent a contrast to the leopards, and the ram in the foreground heralds the spring.<sup>13</sup>

[31.4]  
**HERCULES AND DIOMEDES**

Inv. 8870  
425 × 590 cm

Diomedes was King of Thrace and was accompanied by four bloodthirsty mares. Hercules was given the eighth task of taming these man-eating horses and bringing them to Mycenae. He defeated Diomedes and fed him to his own animals. Here, Hercules is pulling Diomedes off his horse with his left leg. This follows the literal description from Le Fèvre.<sup>14</sup>

The borders are decorated in the four corners with an *aediculum*, in which antique deities are depicted: in the top left and right, Juno with the peacock, in the bottom left Jupiter with lightning and an eagle, and to the right, Mercury with caduceus and talaria. The *aedicula* are inspired by prints by Cornelis Bos from 1548.<sup>15</sup>

For the lower scene on *Hercules and Diomedes*, with the *Temptation of St Anthony*, the cartoon designers used an engraving by Pieter van der Heyden, after a model by Pieter Bruegel, dated 1556 (Royal Library, Brussels, inv. S.I. 7602 [I/II]) (fig. 1).



[FIG. 1] *Temptation of St Anthony*, engraving by Pieter van der Heyden after a model by Pieter Bruegel, dated 1556. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. S.I. 7602.



[FIG. 2] *Patientia*, engraving by Pieter van der Heyden after a model by Pieter Bruegel, dated 1557. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. S.II. 117509.



For scenes in the right border of both *Hercules and Antheus* and *Hercules and Diomedes*, they borrowed representations from the print *Patientia*, also by Pieter van der Heyden, modelled after Pieter Bruegel, and dated 1557 (Royal Library, Brussels, inv. 31216 [I/III]) (fig. 2).<sup>17</sup>

The outline of these borders is taken up again by Schavaert himself on a series depicting the *Life of Jacob* (collection Selgas Fagalde, Cudillero)<sup>18</sup> and afterwards in other workshops, including the *Life of St Paul* and the *Planets*, traceable from 1563 onwards, both of which are in the Bayersisches Nationalmuseum, Munich. The monochrome scenes are always different: Dürer's *Apocalypse* for *St Paul*, and unknown models for the *Planets*. [GD]

1. Dumont-Fillon 1984, pp. 84, 85, 89; Duverger 1986 A, pp. 167–169; Laruelle 2019, III, pp. 93–106, cat. 20–26.
2. Redin Michaus 2015: pp. 349–366; Redin Michaus 2018, pp. 37–57 (Hercules: 52–55).
3. Laruelle 2019, n° 22, pp. 97–98.
4. The identification of Schavaert and his activity was discovered and described by Roobaert 2010, pp. 25–35.
5. Horn 1989, pp. 400–403.
6. “e dove sta la guardia di Su Altezza vi erano quattordici pezzi di tapezzaria di bosaglia di seta et oro, ne'quali erano tutte le prodezze, o come volgarmente si chiamano, Forze di Ercole” (Bertini 1997, pp. 101–102), see also Laruelle 2019, I, pp. 316, 353–355.
7. Bertini 1999, pp. 127–142, here 130 and passim.
8. Dumont-Fillon 1984, p. 86; abstracts in Laruelle 2019, II, pp. 396–405.
9. Ferrero Viale 1973.
10. Laruelle 2019, I, p. 321.
11. Dumont-Fillon 1984, p. 90.
12. Laruelle 2019, I, p. 324.
13. Idem.
14. Ibid., p. 325.
15. Durian Ress 1981, p. 233, after Sune Schéle, *Cornelis Bos*, Stockholm 1965, fig. 133, table 39.
16. Lebeer 1969, pp. 52–55, no. 14.
17. Lebeer 1969, pp. 55–57, no. 15; Van Grieken, 2019, pp. 124–125, 132. For other models in the borders, cf. Redin Michaus 2015, pp. 359–363, and Van Heesch 2019, pp. 191–199.
18. Garcia Calvo 2009A, pp. 33–42.
19. Durian Ress 1981 and Schmitz von Ledebur 2009, passim.

[32]

## THE STORY OF ROMULUS AND REMUS

Series of eight tapestries

Brussels, third quarter of the sixteenth century

Workshop of Antoine Leyniers (active c. 1550–1570)

Fragment of mark AL on inv. 2967

Designs in the style of Michiel Coxcie (1499–1592) or

Nicolaas van Orley (active 1570–1585)

Wool, silk, metal thread; 7 warps per cm

Inv. 2966-2973

Provenance: 1889, purchased from Léon Gauchez

Literature: Wauters 1890; Crick-Kuntziger 1948, pp. 50–78;

Mahl 1965, pp. 26–28; De Tervarent 1968; E. Duverger in Ghent

1987–88, pp. 62–71, nos. 21 and 22; Brussels 1994 B, pp. 50–52;

Delmarcel 1999, pp. 117 and 155–163.

The story of Romulus and Remus, or the foundation of Rome, occupied a special place in the Flemish Renaissance tapestry. As early as 1529, King Henry VIII of England bought a series on that theme, which is now lost.<sup>1</sup> Dated 1524, a contemporary Brussels series in six pieces in the Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, which bears an affinity to drawings by Bernard van Orley, has however been preserved (series 14).<sup>2</sup> Of later date is a series purchased by Philip II of Spain in 1550, of which two pieces are still in existence in the Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, woven by Willem de Pannemaker and attributed to Michiel Coxcie (series 20).<sup>3</sup> Models of this last series were adopted and expanded in two series of eight, woven in the Brussels workshop of Frans Geubels in the third quarter of the century, and now preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (series VIII and XXI).<sup>4</sup>

In the older literature, Giulio Romano was presented as a designer, though without any basis. An association with the series purchased by Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este in Antwerp in 1543 is no longer tenable.<sup>5</sup>

Compared to the older series of this story, nowadays located in Madrid and in Vienna, both the compositions and the characters point to Italianate designers in the wake of Michiel Coxcie. Elisabeth Mahl rightly drew comparisons with a number of tapestries on biblical themes woven for Duke Christoph of Württemberg by Jacob de

Carmes, who left the country, between 1566 and 1571, based on models by Nicholas van Orley, Bernard's nephew, who had also left the country.<sup>6</sup> It can be concluded that it originated in the period 1560–1570.

Due to the presence of the city mark of Brussels and the monogram AL in the border of inv. 2967, the series is attributed to the Brussels workshop of Antoon Leyniers. In 1552, he was already a councillor in the city's administration, in 1555 he was sworn in as a craftsman and mentions of him have been found up to the year 1570.<sup>7</sup> Other series with his monogram are not known.

The imagery is sometimes quite unexpected. The main scene, or at least the most important events according to Livy, always takes place in the background and the story continues in the foreground. This is a Mannerist method of image construction.

[32.1]

### THE DISCOVERY AND EDUCATION OF ROMULUS AND REMUS

Inv. 2966

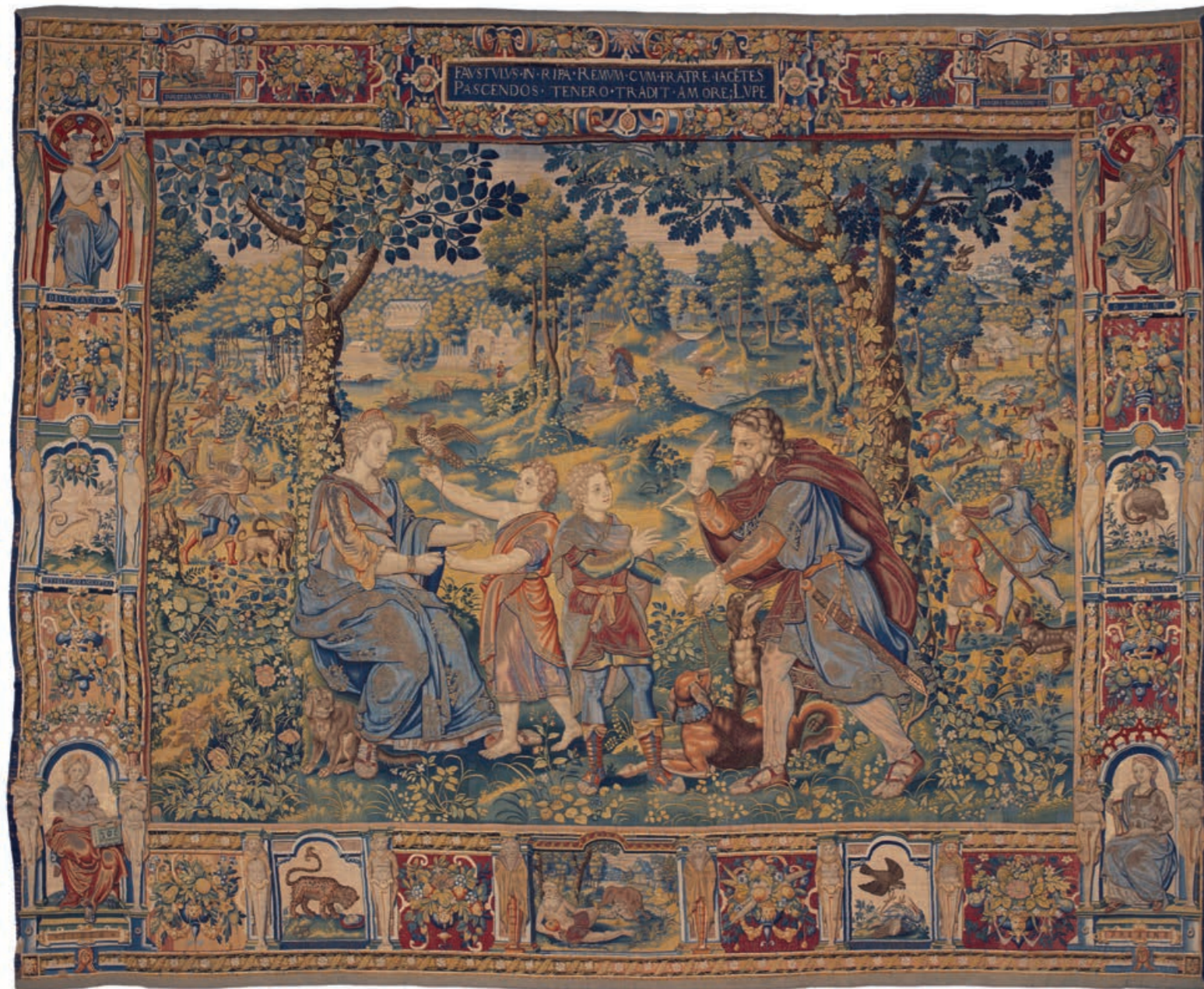
430 cm × 510 cm

FAVSTVLVS.IN. RIPA.REMVM.CVM FRATRE. IACE(N)TES / PASCENDOS.TENERO.TRADIT.AMORE.LUP(A)E [Faustulus, having found Remus and his brother on the riverbank / Entrusts them, for their upbringing, to the loving care of the she-wolf]

The story of the birth and upbringing of the twins, according to Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, Liber I, Chapter 4 is pictured here.

The god Mars had fathered twins with Rhea Silvia, daughter of Numitor, King of Alba Longa. After she brought them to life, she was forced to relinquish them by Amulius, brother and opponent of Numitor, and the boys were thrown into the Tiber (top left in the background). They are, however, saved by Faustulus, the king's stable master, who entrusts them to his wife Larentia, also known as Lupa (back in the middle). The allusion to the lactating wolf can be seen in the middle tableau of the bottom border, behind the personification of the Tiber.





[32.1]

In the foreground, Faustulus and Larentia (LUPA, on the hem of her robe) are busy raising the twins. Faustulus gives two hounds to one of them, and on the left he goes hunting with the hounds. Larentia gives the other one a hunting falcon.

[32.2]  
**ROMULUS AND REMUS  
 SEIZING AMULIUS' TREASURE**

Inv. 2967  
 424 × 400 cm

QVAM.FAMVLI.PREDA(M).VIGILES.MOLIV(N)TVR.AMVLI / ROMVLVS.ET.REMVS.CORRIPVERE.SIBI [Romulus and Remus seize the treasure / which Amulius' bodyguards have amassed]

Procas Silvius, King of Alba Longa, had transferred power to his son Numitor, but gave his treasure to the other son Amulius. Romulus and Remus, the grandsons of Numitor, seize the treasure of Amulius, according to the inscription. In the background, a battle is raging for a fortified castle, perhaps the storming of Numitor's palace by shepherds who came from different directions, according to Livy I: 5–6. Here, they have been replaced by warriors. On one of the flags is a half-moon between two stars.

[32.3]  
**FOUNDATION OF ROME. ROMULUS AS LEGISLATOR**

Inv. 2968  
 427 × 465 cm

ROMVLVS.ET.REMVS.CONDVNT.SVB.FOEDERE.ROMA(M) / POST.REMVM.MISERO.ROMVLLVS.ENSE.NECAT [Romulus and Remus found Rome by common agreement / Later on, Romulus kills Remus by dealing him a deadly strike with a sword]

The twins decide to found a new city, but during an argument about the omens of who would rule, Romulus kills his twin brother in a scuffle. This happens, in very small format, on the second level behind the court scene at the front right. On the left part of the tapestry, the construction of the new city is proceeding under Romulus' supervision. In the main scene, Romulus sits on the throne as king, and he has the new laws read out. He is assisted by a lictor carrying the fasces or bundle of wooden rods. Two other lictors rush to the palace at the front right, while a third is seated at the front, stroking a dog with outstretched paw. It is perhaps a personification of Allegiance, here to the new king.

In the other version of the series, now in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, series CVI and in St Peter's Abbey in Salzburg), an entire tapestry is dedicated to the construction of Rome. The scene of Romulus at the building site is recreated there.<sup>8</sup>

[32.4]  
**THE ABDUCTION  
 OF THE SABINE VIRGINS**

Inv. 2969  
 420 × 590 cm

ROMVLEOS.DVRI.LVDOS.PETERE.SABINI / QVIS.NATAS. IVVENES.ABRIPVERE.VAGI [The tough Sabines travel to the games instituted by Romulus / Where the young Romans, in a frenzy carry off and deprive them of their young women]

Romulus had invited the Sabines and their king to joint games, the Consualia. In the background, the two monarchs look down from a gallery at the people entering, including the Sabines. In front, the Romans try to cheat the Sabine virgins and they kill their opponents in the process (Livy I: 9). Strikingly, the enemies of Rome are depicted here as Ottomans with turbans and scimitars. This may refer to the contemporary wars taking place around the Mediterranean (the Siege of Malta of 1565 and the Battle of Lepanto of 1571).

[32.5]  
**THE CAPTURE OF ROME BY THE SABINES,  
 AND THE BATTLE AGAINST TATIUS**

Inv. 2970  
 430 × 653 cm

DAT.VIRGO.RIGIDIS.ARCEM.TARPEIA.SABINIS / HORRIDA. CVM.TATIO.ROMVLVS.ARMA.CAPIT [The virgin, Tarpeia, having yielded the fortress to the recalcitrant Sabines / Romulus launches an horrific battle against Tattius]

In the foreground, the battle between the Romans and the Sabines is ignited, after the latter had entered Rome due to the treachery of Tarpeia, according to the inscription at the top (after Livy I.1: 6–9). Most of the Romans here are overcome by the Sabines, who again are depicted as Ottomans. Above the Sabines, in easterly attire, flies a blue flag with a half-moon. In the middle zone, the Sabine spouses of the Romans arrive to separate the two camps.









[32.6]

[32.6]  
**ROMULUS CHOOSES HERSILIA**

Inv. 2971  
 430 × 455 cm

HERSILIAM . RELIQVIS . PRAEFERT . MVLIERIBVS .  
 EXPLENS / ROMVLVS . INNVMERIS . LAETA . TROPHAEA .  
 MODIS [Romulus, overwhelmed by his many and various  
 victories / prefers Hersilia to all other women]

According to the inscription, Romulus chose Hersilia as his wife, amidst the trophies of his countless victories. The scene is not immediately identifiable from the works of the ancient writers. Livy 1: 13 emphasises the affection of the Romans for their new Sabine spouses, after the latter had mediated in the battle.

Here, Romulus is listening to a lady playing the guitar. On the left, a Roman and a lady wield a tambourine; on the right, another plays a zither, accompanied by a soldier and a woman with a harp. At the back, a tournament is taking place in front of a palace.

[32.7]  
**PEACE WITH THE VEIENTINES,  
 AND THE TRIUMPH OF ROMULUS**

Inv. 2972  
 425 × 733 cm

ROMVLVS . VT . PACEM . DEDERAT . VEIENTIBVS . AMPLI /  
 DELECTVM . POPVLI . CORDE . SVPERBVS . AGIT [After grant-  
 ing peace to the Veientes, Romulus, his heart full of  
 pride / Recruited men from the densely populated town]

According to Crick-Kuntziger, the scene would represent the census of the growing population, following the victory over the Veientes (Livy 1: 14–15). The scribe in the middle, however, seems more likely to be a recruiting officer or a paymaster issuing the wages. Behind Romulus on horseback flutters a banner on which the profile of a double-headed eagle can be recognised, which is an allusion to the Habsburgs and the German Empire. The rider in front of Romulus, as well as a warrior beside his horse, is holding a long spear with the point turned to the ground. Perhaps these are the vanquished new allies, because the tack of the horse belonging to the rider on the right once again bears the half-moons of the Ottomans, which, on the previous tapestries in the series, represented the enemies of Rome.

[32.8]  
**BATTLE OF ANTIQUE WARRIORS**

Inv. 2973  
 423 × 576 cm

ROMVLVS . MAR(T)IS . ET . RHEA . SILVIA . FILIVS / CONDITOR .  
 ET . REX . PRIMVS . ROMAE . MMMCCL [Romulus, son of Mars  
 and of Rhea Silvia / The founder and first King of Rome.  
 3250]

This tapestry bears a general inscription, in an epigraphy different from the previous ones, which does not refer to any specific episode of the story of Romulus. Unlike the previous battle scenes in this series, all the warriors here are wearing “Roman” armour and weapons. The warrior in front is left-handed and carries his shield on his right arm. On the left in the background, a mast is being erected on a hill. On the city gate to the right, a flag is flying, depicting a crescent moon. This piece is apparently a later addition to the series.

This and the previous battle scenes are formally situated in the tradition that begins, as far as tapestries produced in Brussels are concerned, with the Deeds of Scipio, after Penni and Romano, around 1530, and continues with the Life of Joshua, 1544 (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, series XIX-7)<sup>9</sup> and the Life of Cyrus, after Coxcie, around 1555 (Patrimonio Nacional Madrid, series 39).<sup>10</sup> In the older series with the Life of Romulus (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, series VIII and XXI; Patrimonio Nacional Madrid series 20), such battle scenes are absent. In the now lost Romulus series, which was bought by Henry VIII of England in 1529, such a fight on horseback between Romulus and Amulius was included, judging by a later drawing.<sup>11</sup>

The layout and content of the scenes in the borders situate this series after that of Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, series XXI),<sup>12</sup> and in imitation of the borders of the *Life of Cyrus*, delivered to Philip II in 1558, now in Patrimonio Nacional Madrid (series 39).<sup>13</sup>

The borders are decorated with symmetrically placed niches, in which four different allegories and eleven different animal emblemata are presented. Between these niches hang beautiful flower arrangements on wrought iron, on a wine-red ground.

All eight tapestries show the same allegorical figures in the corners. At the top left is DELECTATIO, or Pleasure, a woman with bare chest and a heart in her right hand. At the top right is DAPHNE, a woman fleeing, and her right hand is turning into laurel. Below left is FIDES, or Faith,



a woman seated with a closed book on her knees. Below right is PRESENS, the Present Time, a woman holding an hourglass.

Several borders are similarly elaborated with emblematic scenes. On each bottom edge, the river god Tiber lies in the middle, and behind him are the twins who are being suckled by the wolf, the clear reference to the story of the entire series. On the three smaller edges (numbers 2, 3 and 6) this is the only scene. On the five wider ones (1, 4, 5, 7 and 8), the words DECIPIOR UMBRA appear on the left each time and the words EXITUS IN DUBIO EST on the right.

The upper borders carry two or four scenes respectively, symmetrically arranged on either side of the cartouche with titulus. On three tapestries (1, 3 and 6), the emblem PARCERE MAGNANIMI appears twice and on one (no. 2), we see the words NE CUIQUAM NOCEAT. On three broader pieces (nos. 4, 5 and 7), the aforementioned emblems are repeated, PARCERE at the ends and NE CUIQUAM second from the left; here PRO LACTE VENENUM is added as second from the right. Only tapestry no. 8 differs, with the words PARCERE and NE CUIQUAM appearing twice.

No less than five different emblemata adorn the side borders, three of them on the left borders, two others on the right. On the left, the words LETI EST CAUSA VOLUPTAS appear three times (on 1, 5 and 7), the words BELLA SEQUOR appear twice (on 2, 4 and 8) and the words MEUM IMMEDICABILE appear twice (on 3 and 6). On the right-hand side, the inscription INGENIO NATURA SUO appears six times (on 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8) and the words AGILIS QUIA SOBRIUS appear twice (on 4 and 5).

These emblemata with moralising animal stories go back to ancient sources, such as Aristotle's *Historia animalium*, Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, and Plutarch's *De sollertia animalium*, which come to a synthesis in the *Physiologus*, an anonymous treatise from the fifth century A.D.<sup>14</sup> They were elaborated upon in this form in Brussels tapestry art from the middle of the sixteenth century, and perhaps for the first time in the *Unicorn* series (Borromeo collection, Isola Bella) where they have a substantive relationship with each titulus. This relationship then fades in later series, but the form is established from the *Life of Cyrus*, 1556–1558, ordered by Philip II of Spain (Patrimonio Nacional Madrid, series 39), which contains no fewer than forty-nine different scenes.<sup>15</sup>

A short explanation of the emblems: Basilisk and bird: LETI EST CAUSA VOLUPTAS [Lust is the cause of death]. Despite their agility, according to Pliny, birds could not always escape snakes or monsters that sucked up and devoured birds.

Vulture: BELLA SEQUOR CUPIDINE PREDE [I follow the war, eager for booty]. The vultures follow the battles looking for corpses.

Deer: MEUM IMMEDICABILE [my (pain) is incurable]. A deer with an arrow in its chest is eating from a plant. Legend has it that a deer could rid himself of an arrow by eating a plant. Here, it would have been initially applied as a Christian symbol of God, who saves man but continues to feel the pain of salvation.

Ibis: INGENIO NATURA SUO [nature according to its own ability]. According to Pliny, the ibis was able to clean itself by inserting its beak into its anus.

Camel: AGILIS QUIA SOBRIUS [agile in its simplicity]. Its speed and simplicity make it comparable to a horse.

Cow and snake: PRO LACTE VENENUM [a snake suckles at a cow, but ungratefully gives her its venom in exchange]

Lion and deer: PARCERE MAGNANIMI [it is proper to spare/forgive the generous]. The lion spares the defeated opponent.

Stork and snake: NE CUIQUAM NOCEAT [so that it will not be harmful to anyone]. Killing storks was forbidden, because they themselves destroy poisonous snakes, thereby protecting the country.

Tigress: DECIPIOR UMBRA [I am deceived by a shadow]. A tigress looks into a mirror. According to the *Physiologus*, the hunters, after having caught a tiger cub, scatter mirrors behind them, so that the mother thinks she can recognise her cub in her reflection.

Falcon and heron: EXITUS IN DUBIO EST [the outcome is doubtful]. Herons were hunted with falcons, but these did not always succeed in killing their prey. [GD]

1. Campbell 2007, 195–198.
2. Junquera 1986 I, pp. 93–99, series 14; Delmarcel in Mechelen 1993, pp. 64–91.
3. Junquera 1986, I, 140–142, series 20; Campbell 2007, pp. 306–307; also Buchanan 1999, p. 133.
4. Mahl 1965; Delmarcel 1999, pp. 155–163.
5. Baratte 1973, p. 120.
6. Mahl 1965, pp. 26–29.
7. Crick-Kuntziger 1948, pp. 77–78; Roobaert 2010, p. 48 note 4.
8. Bauer in Salzburg 1987, p. 353.
9. Buchanan 2015, p. 165; idem in New York 2014, p. 218.
10. Junquera I, p. 283.
11. Campbell 2007, pp. 195–198.
12. Delmarcel 1999, pp. 155–163.
13. Delmarcel 2017.
14. For a detailed analysis, we refer to De Tervarent 1968 and Ferrero Viale 1973.
15. For Cyrus, see Delmarcel 2017, p. 182, etc.



[32.7]



[32.8]



## VERDURE

Enghien, middle to third quarter of the sixteenth century  
 Mark of Enghien and unknown workshop  
 Wool and silk; 315 × 225 cm; 6 warps per cm  
 Inv. 3661

Provenance: 1901, from Castle Heeswijk

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 54, no. 40; Delmarcel 1980, pp. 28–29, no. 8 and pp. 42–45 (Vienna); Delmarcel 2017 c, pp. 40–43.

The entire picture field is filled with flowers and plants, including acanthus blossoms, hollyhocks, irises and cornflowers. The borders are also decorated with flowers and fruits, possibly quinces. In the corners are women in various poses; the one at the top left is holding a palm branch, a symbol of the Victoria.

The partly decayed mark is probably the town mark of Enghien, where many such tapestries were made in the course of the sixteenth century. The city mark became obligatory from 1544, the *terminus post quem* in the case of this work. The same mark of the unknown manufacturer is also found on two *Verdure* tapestries in landscape format, which are preserved in the Episcopal Palace at Como (Italy).<sup>1</sup>

The entire floral decor is related to a contemporary series of three tapestries bearing the mark of Claes de Dobbeleer (active between 1567 and 1618), which are preserved in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, series XC1). The designers of such *Verdures* are not known. The arrangement of the plants, which overlap each other in depth, is similar to that on the Brussels *Arms of Emperor Charles V*, now preserved in Vienna and Amsterdam. [GD]

1. Forti Grazzini 1986, pp. 89–93.  
 2. Buchanan 2015, pp. 169–179.





[34]  
LARGE-LEAFED VERDURE

Southern Netherlands, Geraardsbergen (?),  
second half of the sixteenth century  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 336 × 430 cm; 5 warps per cm  
Inv. 4206

Provenance: 1911, purchased from the art dealer  
Marco Stasi in Paris

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 54–55, no. 41.

This is a very typical example of the genre, commonly known as *cabbage-leaf verdures*, based on a variation of large leaves and topped with small flowers and birds as extra decoration. In the lower centre is a bouquet. In the sumptuous border, a column can be seen in the background against which large flower arrangements in vases, complete with fruit, have been placed. The plant growth spills over into the composition field. At the bottom and top, flowers and leaves are also growing within the picture field.



[34]



[FIG. 1] *Large-Leafed Verdure*, possibly Geraardsbergen, second half of the sixteenth century. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. s XCI/5.

The beautiful integration of the border into the picture field makes this a perfect specimen for this kind of tapestry.

*Commentary*

In the sixteenth century, the genre of foliage or *verdures* formed a substantial part of the production in all centres of weaving in the Southern Netherlands.

The tapestries depict large-leafed foliage that fills the entire picture field, with small flowers and plants as additional decoration. The borders often merge organically with the vegetation.

Just before the middle of the sixteenth century, a new genre of verdure emerged, with all kinds of enlarged leaves. Despite the designation of *cabbage-leaf verdure*, the shape of the leaves has nothing to do with cabbage leaves.<sup>1</sup> Often, they more closely resemble acanthus leaves, as is the case in this example.

The infill is distinctively plastic in nature. The lush, curly leaves are woven in shades of green and placed on a dark background. The foliage is enhanced by larger or smaller animals, birds and a variety of insects that provide great vibrancy. Only in very rare cases can human figures be seen among the greenery.

The growing interest in the study of plants throughout Europe in the second and third decade of the sixteenth century was certainly no stranger to this interest.<sup>2</sup> At the time, numerous books with woodcuts of plants were appearing on the market. Yet the representation of the

plants on the tapestries is not encyclopaedic, but rather serves to create an overall atmosphere.

All Flemish centres, whether in Brussels,<sup>3</sup> Bruges,<sup>4</sup> Enghien<sup>5</sup> (cat. 33), Geraardsbergen,<sup>6</sup> or Oudenaarde,<sup>7</sup> felt called upon to follow the new fashion and weave greenery of that type. Most of them do not carry marks, making it difficult to trace their origin. The models were interchangeable between all of the centres. Here, the composition, the arrangement of the curled leaves, and the elaboration of the border are similar to known examples bearing Geraardsbergen marks, including one in Vienna (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> But since only ten tapestries are known with this city mark, care must be taken when assigning an attribution. Moreover, fragments from various tapestries were incorporated into this example during restoration. [IDM]

1. Idem 1999, p. 205; Franses 2006.
2. Literature on the subject in Wingfield Digby & Hefford 1980, pp. 54–55; Hulst 1960, nos. 22 and 30; Franses 2006, pp. 10–11.
3. Examples being the coat of arms of Charles V preserved in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. T XXXIII, and Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. BK-17260-A.
4. Bruges 1987, p. 138.
5. Delmarcel 1980, pp. 26–49.
6. Standen 1985, p. 177; De Meüter 2012A, pp. 38–45.
7. Oudenaarde 1999, pp. 126–131; De Meüter 2012 A, pp. 46–59.
8. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. s XCI/4-5.



[35]

## HUNTERS IN A LANDSCAPE

Southern Netherlands, Brussels or Oudenaarde (?),  
final quarter of the sixteenth century  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 150 × 120 cm; 6 warps per cm  
Inv. 2547

Provenance: 1882, bequest by Mr Edouard de Biefve

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956: pp. 56–57, no. 46.

Hunters on foot and horseback, accompanied by dogs, are on their way. In the background is a schematic landscape, in which a river and windmill can be seen.

### Commentary

It is a small fragment without borders that was cut from the background of a typical tapestry from the end of the sixteenth century.

As so often in this period, landscapes or representations with figures are completed with a hunting scene in the background.

The larger entity from which this fragment was taken has not yet been found. [IDM]



[35]





[36]

[36]

## THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF DAVID WITH THE HEAD OF GOLIATH

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, 1550–60

City mark of Oudenaarde and two signatures of weavers

At the bottom right, the initials AC of Arnold Cobbaut or Anton van Coppenolle (active 1548–63) and at the top right, a stylised V-sign

Designers unknown

Wool and silk; 352 × 482 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm

Inv. 2020.0407

Provenance: 2019, purchased from the auction house Fernando Durán in Madrid<sup>1</sup>

Literature: De Meüter 2021.

### History

According to an old photograph, the tapestry was hanging in 1954 in Casa-Palacio de los Velasco in Vitoria, owned by the marquises de Fresno y Bellevedere.<sup>2</sup> Whether other tapestries from the series were kept and when the tapestry left that location is unknown.

In the foreground, a young David proudly brings the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. He is accompanied by warriors who carry the giant's bronze helmet in triumph. On Goliath's forehead, you can see the hollow where the stone hit him. David's weapon, the sling, is nowhere to be seen. Four women welcome David with music, as mentioned in the Bible. In the background, other soldiers are wearing the armour of the vanquished, and on the right, the entrance to the city can be seen, along with some curious inhabitants.

### Commentary

David was a young shepherd and the servant of Saul, the King of the Israelites. 1 Samuel 17: 01–54 tells the story of David and Goliath. The armies of the Israelites and the Philistines were facing each other. From the camp of the Philistines came a man, Goliath, who stood between the armies to challenge the Israelite army to a duel between himself and an Israelite champion. He was fearsomely tall and wore a helmet and armour made of bronze. For

forty days in a row, he challenged the enemy. If Goliath defeated the Israelite fighter in a duel, the Israelites would have to surrender and vice versa. No one dared stand up to him. On the fortieth day, however, David went to battle with him, in the name of Yahweh and armed only with a sling and stones. A stone fatally struck Goliath on the forehead and David beheaded Goliath with his own sword. He then brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem and took the weapons to his tent. In Jerusalem, he was welcomed with feasting and music.

In Brussels, the *Story of David* was also regularly taken up as the theme of a series. Versions of The Triumphal Entry with the Head of Goliath from the first half of the sixteenth century often show the same elements.<sup>3</sup> An interesting example with the Brussels city mark is preserved in the cathedral in Burgos.<sup>4</sup> Among the original seven tapestries, there is also a triumphal procession.<sup>5</sup> The series was bequeathed by will to the cathedral by Cardinal Íñigo Lopez de Mendoza in 1535.<sup>6</sup> Stylistically, the series was associated with Bernard van Orley, more specifically with cartoons from the *Story of Jacob* (cat. 27).<sup>7</sup> Here David carries the head of the giant, impaled on the colossal sword, while on the right he is received by a large company preceded by female musicians, as in the Oudenaarde version. However, his entourage includes horse riders and additional scenes are incorporated into the background. The same compositional scheme can be seen in another Brussels version preserved in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, s. LXIX, 4), but in that version, David carries the head in his right hand while holding the sword over his shoulder with his left.<sup>8</sup> The scene in the Oudenaarde edition is emptier and more static.

Only a small number of Oudenaarde tapestries with city and weaver's marks survived. A variation of the mark, AC, which appears on this example, was also found on other versions.<sup>9</sup> It is striking that people apparently did not take the presentation of the mark very seriously, because variants are found in one series preserved in Vienna (Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. T LXXXVII). This series contains scenes from the life of David along with other scenes from the Bible.<sup>10</sup> Stories from the Old Testament were a popular theme in Oudenaarde and elsewhere in the sixteenth century.





[FIG. 1] *David Rebuked by Nathan*, from *The Story of David*, Oudenaarde, 1550–1560. Private collection.

There are great similarities between the tapestry *The Triumphal Entry of David with the Head of Goliath* and the series in Vienna. The composition with the group of figures is supplemented at the front by smaller groups spread across the background. The landscape is characterised by a high horizon and bluish mountains, the group of trees on a hill and the vegetation with small bushes on the foreground and on the sand heaps covered with moss. The female faces adorned with headscarves and the men, often bearded and sometimes with turbans, are very similar. There are also similarities in the colour palette.<sup>11</sup>

Other Oudenaarde tapestries from the same period show the same stylistic features.<sup>12</sup> However, it has not been possible to associate them with the name of a specific designer.

It cannot be ruled out that the tapestry in the collection originally belonged to this series, just like the tapestry with Oudenaarde's city mark, which forms part of an unknown private collection and is only known from an old photograph (fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> What is more, the composition of the border of this piece is very similar.

Arnold Cobbaut is put forward as an attribution for the initials AC,<sup>14</sup> as that is a name found in a court document, probably dating from 1558.<sup>15</sup> But because the A also contains a V, another possible attribution would be Anton van Coppenolle (AVC). Traces of his activities can be found in documents from 1548 and 1563.<sup>16</sup>

As far as Oudenaarde tapestries are concerned, the design of the beautiful border is remarkable, as it is composed of a larger number of different elements than usual. As is typical of the mid-sixteenth century, bouquets of beautiful flowers, such as lilies with their leaves, and fruits, especially pomegranates, quinces and grapes, set the main tone. In the corners and centrally on the four edges, this decoration is interrupted by imitation metal

ornaments of masks and scroll and band work. The caryatids in the form of satyrs in the vertical borders and the putti in the horizontal borders are particularly striking. In Brussels tapestries from the same period, grotesque elements are also integrated into the border, but in different combinations.<sup>17</sup>

The overlapping of borders with items such as Goliath's bronze helmet with a nicely elaborated plume in the upper border is also applied in other Oudenaarde tapestries such as *Nathan's Reprimand* and the *Story of Moses*.<sup>18</sup> Elements overlapping from the borders to the blue reinforced edge at the top and bottom are also noticeable. They add a playful element to the composition. [IDM]

1. Madrid, Fernando Durán, 17 December 2019, no. 1002.
2. With thanks to my colleague Margarita Garcia Calvo for the information.
3. For images and more information on these Brussels series, see De Meüter 2021.
4. Beauvois-Faure 1969.
5. The series is in poor condition. In *The Triumphal Entry of David with the Head of Goliath*, two metres of the tapestry's entire width have been removed. A similar scene was found intact in a private collection in Los Angeles, see RMAH 1525.89. Tapestry from the Ffoulke collection, see Ffoulke 1913, p. 43.
6. Beauvois-Faure 1969, p. 31.
7. Idem, pp. 34–37.
8. Standen 1974, pp. 220–221; De Meüter 2021, p. 55.
9. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 137, 159, 265.
10. See idem, pp. 158–161 and De Meüter 2021, pp. 49, 51.
11. This tapestry has been particularly well cared for and displays interesting nuances of colour. The colours of the tapestry are very well preserved and no parts have ever been rewoven or repaired over the centuries.
12. For example, the series depicting the *Story of Solomon* and the *Story of Daniel* and the tapestry entitled *Jacob Being Presented to the Pharaoh*, see De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 147–158.
13. Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, photo B 206289, catalogued as property of the Galerie F. Janssens in Brussels in 1969. It is thought to have formed part of a private collection in Germany in 1978.
14. De Meüter 2021, p. 49.
15. Pinchart 1878–1884, p. 109; De Meüter 1997A, p. 158; and De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, p. 110.
16. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, p. 159.
17. For examples of pure grotesques, see New York 2002, pp. 452–457. Very often, however, these appear in combination with flowers and figures in pergola. The latter are absent here.
18. Idem, pp. 151, 153.





[37]  
CORONATION SCENE

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde,  
final quarter of the sixteenth century  
Oudenaarde city mark and the mark of Pieter van Kercken (?)  
Designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 338 × 332 cm; 4–5 warps per cm  
Inv. Tp 28

Provenance: 2001, purchased from the art dealer  
Vanderweeën in Oudenaarde<sup>1</sup>

Literature: De Meüter 2001, pp. 273–276.



[37]

On the left, a royal figure sits on a throne, surrounded by several courtiers. On top of a staff, one of them, on the right-hand side of the throne, is carrying a crown adorned by a cross. This is the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, whose shape refers to the imperial apple, which is symbolic of the world. A kneeling man is apparently being crowned by a priest, and receives from the king the royal insignia, sceptre and sword.

In the background two armies are on the march and between them two warriors on horseback are fighting. One of the armies has half-moons on its flag.

Within the segmented border, various decorative motifs, such as vases and small putti, alternate with elaborate scenes. Borders of this type were fashionable in the final quarter of the sixteenth century in all of the weaving centres of the Southern Netherlands, but the elaboration of this border is very rich and generally more interesting than the borders used to surround other tapestries from the same period.

*Commentary*

The depiction of a crowned figure on a throne with a man on his knees in front of him being crowned is difficult to interpret. It is possible that a historical event is being depicted here. The presence of the crown of the Holy Roman Empire may indicate this. One historical figure who should be considered is Emperor Charles V (1500–1558). A few years before this tapestry was made, the sovereign of the Southern Netherlands had transferred power over his kingdom to his son, Philip II. Examination of preserved engravings about the life of the prince show similarities with regard to certain points, but too few to make it possible to make a definitive statement with regard to what is being represented.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to the marks and the elaboration of the border, this tapestry plays a crucial role when attributing unmarked tapestries from the second half of the sixteenth century to Oudenaarde.

First of all, the same weaver's monogram, without city marks, was found on several tapestries. The same thing happened with identical borders surrounding unmarked tapestries. The fact that these tapestries were in turn linked to other tapestries meant that it was possible to assign a large group of tapestries to Oudenaarde with a high degree of certainty.

Identifying the weaver's monogram is not easy. There is a certain similarity to the mark of Pieter van Kercken as shown on a document from 1616.<sup>3</sup> Since the two marks are not identical, we cannot say with certainty that this tapestry was made in his workshop.

The same monogram is, for example, woven into a series of four tapestries depicting the *Story of Emperor*

*Aurelian* that forms part of the collection of the Spanish Bank Ibercaja in Zaragoza.<sup>4</sup> The style of the depiction and the border place this series at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a period in which Pieter van Kercken was certainly active.<sup>5</sup>

The elaboration of the border of the tapestry with *The Coronation Scene* is also very interesting. The elaborate scenes differ from the usual ones. These scenes in the middle of the horizontal and vertical borders refer to mythological stories. At the top we see the Judgement of Paris; below a pair of lovers, probably Venus and Adonis, in the company of Cupid; on the right, Orpheus is depicted playing on his lyre and surrounded by animals, while finally, on the left, Orpheus' wife, Eurydice, is bitten by a snake.

The allegorical corner figures in the vertical borders also have a specific meaning. The woman at the bottom, holding a flaming heart in her right hand before her breast and accompanied by a child, represents Charity, while the other woman at the top, holding a palm branch in her left hand, refers to Peace.

Two other tapestries depicting the Story of David surrounded by the same border were found in Belgian private collections.<sup>6</sup> These tapestries do not bear any marks but otherwise have all the stylistic characteristics of tapestries woven in Oudenaarde in the second half of the sixteenth century. Thanks to the tapestry with marks, both pieces can be attributed to Oudenaarde with certainty. Moreover, various replicas of both scenes from this Story of David are known to exist in private and public collections.<sup>7</sup> These pieces depict the same scenes but each with a different border and also without city or weaver's marks. Given the similarities with the signed tapestry, these tapestries can now also be attributed with certainty to Oudenaarde. [IDM]

1. Was auctioned in Milan, Finarte, 27 October 1999, no. 586.

2. De Meüter 2001 B, pp. 275–276.

3. Antwerp, S.A., Notary G. Le Rousseau (N2405), f° 187.

4. Inv. nos. NIG 190, NIG 210.

5. The series corresponds to tapestries such as *Hannibal's Brother Hasdrubal Captured by the Romans* from the collection of the town of Oudenaarde, see De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999: no. 41.

6. Material data: wool and silk, 4 to 5 warps per cm and the dimensions for the *Marriage of David and Bathsheba*: 320 x 380 and for *Bathsheba Called to King David*: 290 x 253, images in De Meüter 2001 B, figs. 10 and 11.

7. De Meüter 2001 B, p. 274.



[38]

## DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

Brussels, second half of the sixteenth century

City mark of Brussels on the lower selvage

Workshop and designer unknown

Wool and silk; 278 × 208 cm; 7 warps per cm

Inv. v 2922

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1926, pp. 62–64; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 55, no. 42.

The story of King David and Bathsheba is depicted here after Book II of Samuel, Chapter II. In the background left, David is looking from the balcony of his palace at Bathsheba, who was bathing in his garden – here she is, dressed, looking at the king. He sends his servant to summon her, and the meeting fills the front foreground. Bathsheba, followed by two servants, kneels reverently before the king. In the back on the right, her husband, Uriah, goes to war, at David's command.

The border is decorated with secondary scenes in medallions, and with characters at the corners, between flower vases. The corner figures are allegories of the elements: at the top left, Air; at the top right, Fire; at the bottom left, Water; and at the bottom right, Earth. In the two medallions of the horizontal borders, we may see the Farewell of Tobias to his father. In the middle scenes of the horizontal borders, a couple walks in a garden; on either side, an angel/genius offers a shield with a cross.

No other episodes of this story are so far known to exist in this version and with these borders and dimensions. The predominant yellow colours suggest that the tapestry was produced in Oudenaarde, but the work bears the city mark of Brussels.<sup>1</sup> [GD]

1. For similar yellow colours, see cat. D2.



[38]





[39]

[39]

## THE ABDUCTION OF HELENA

Brussels, c. 1600, workshop of Cornelis Mattens  
 City mark of Brussels in the lower selvage;  
 monogram CM in the right selvage  
 Designer unknown  
 Wool and silk; 375 × 530 cm; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. v 2923

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 56, no. 45;  
 Asselberghs in Culan 1971, pp. 20–21, no. 16.

monogram of Cornelis Mattens. Cornelis Mattens was born in Brussels in 1576 or 1577. He became dean of the Tapestry Weavers' Guild in 1614, is mentioned again in 1619, and died in 1640. Originally, the series must have included numerous tapestries. Copies with slightly different borders can be found at The Art Museum at Princeton University and on the art market.<sup>4</sup> [GD]

1. Asselberghs in Culan 1971, p. 21.
2. Standen 1974, pp. 224–225; Standen 1985, I, pp. 135–136.
3. Asselberghs 1974, p. 43.
4. Standen 1988, pp. 10–13.

In the midst of a large battlefield, a woman is led away by a man; several other ladies accompany her. This may be an episode from the story of the Trojan War. The Greek princess Helen was making a sacrifice to Venus in her temple on the Greek island of Cythaera (in the background), when she and her companions were abducted by the Trojan prince Paris during a raid by Trojan troops.<sup>1</sup> On the right, the ships are ready to take her to Troy.

In the right foreground, attention is drawn to a warrior ready to pierce a fallen opponent with his long lance. This group, in several variations, appears repeatedly on Brussels tapestries of the period, and was probably inspired by an engraving by Gerard de Jode, *Strenuitas* (Determination), a virtue attributed to Scipio Africanus.<sup>2</sup>

The borders are richly decorated with characters under arbours (pergolas) and in cartouches, filled with garden and hunting scenes. The meaning of the female allegories in the corners is not clear. At the top left, a woman with a palm branch (Victory?); at the top right, a woman with a quiver of arrows (Diana?) and a burning torch; below left, a woman with ears of corn (Ceres?); and below right, a woman in armour with lance and shield (Athena?). Between the niches are rich flower vases with genii. As is common in many Brussels tapestries of this period, there is no direct iconographic link between these scenes and the main scene. They may have served only to amuse those who view the tapestry.

This work belongs to a series with the *Story of Troy*, of which five others are preserved in the Virginia Museum of Art, Richmond (USA).<sup>3</sup> One of them also bears the



## SCIPIO AND MASSINISSA

Brussels, c. 1580–1610

City mark of Brussels, and monogram of Maarten Reymbouts  
(active 1570–1619)

Designs in the style of Michiel Coxcie (1499–1592)

Wool and silk; 330 × 265 cm; 6 to 7 warps per cm

Inv. 1770

Provenance: April 1868, purchase from the Gauchez collection

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 53–54, no. 39;

Cavallo 1967, I, pp. 109–112; Forti Grazzini 2003, pp. 51–63.

A man in antique military costume, also a commander, recognisable by his laurel wreath on his head and the commander's staff in his right hand, makes a threatening gesture to a younger soldier in front of him. At the back left, a soldier hands a cup to a woman seated in a tent. Behind the commander and to the rear on the left, lancers are lined up. The horizon is occupied by a fortified town and mountains.

The scene can be explained thanks to the inscription on an older version of the theme, now preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (acc. no. 19.59),<sup>1</sup> which reads: "The faithfulness of the Numidian is proven and he sends poison to Sophonisba, since no other hope remains for her."<sup>2</sup>

According to Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* (book 30, chapters 14 and 15), Scipio here blames Massinissa, a Numidian prince and ally of Rome, for his hasty marriage to the Carthaginian princess Sophonisba, daughter of Hasdrubal, who had been captured by the Romans along with her husband, the Numidian king, Syphax. Massinissa had promised her that he would not hand her over to anyone, and so he brings her the poison cup. This is taking place in the background of the tapestry.

This version by Martin Reymbouts, active from 1570 to 1619, reproduces the older model in Boston. The latter bears the monogram attributed to the Brussels workshop of Cornelis Tons, who was active between 1560 and 1576, and belongs to a series entitled the *Deeds of Scipio*, now dispersed across museums in Boston, Berlin, Cologne and a number of private collections.<sup>3</sup> The style of the characters

is related to the designs of Michiel Coxcie and his studio, and is in keeping with that of the series entitled the *Labours of Hercules* in this museum (cat. 31).

The borders are decorated with flower vases and with medallions, which contain scenes unrelated to the central scene. In the horizontal borders, a woman can be seen threatening a monster with her bow, possibly an allusion to Diana. In the side borders, a man is opening wide the mouth of a lion, which would refer to Hercules or Samson. In the upper corners stands a woman with a basket of flowers in her hands, probably meant to be Pomona, in the lower one a woman is seated with a shovel and a yoke, representing agriculture (*Agricultura*).

This tapestry belongs to an edition of which four other parts are preserved in the Fondazione Cini in Venice. Three of them bear the mark of Reymbouts, while a fourth carries the mark of Enghien and an unknown weaver's mark.<sup>4</sup> [GD]

1. Cavallo 1967, I, pp. 109–112, cat. no. 30; II, pl. 30.

2. "Arguitur Numidiae fides, mandatque Zophoni toxica, nec aliam spem superesse sibi." Another variant in the borders bearing the mark of Reymbouts, at Sotheby's New York, 26 May 1996, lot 221, from the North Carolina Museum of Arts.

3. Delmarcel 1988, p. 97.

4. Forti Grazzini 2003, pp. 51–63 for the reconstruction of this series.



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## VERTUMNUS AND POMONA

Brussels, first quarter of the seventeenth century  
 Workshop of Maarten Reymbouts (active 1570–1619)  
 Monogram of Reymbouts in the selvedge on the right  
 Design attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1502–1550)  
 Wool and silk; 420 × 455 cm; 6 to 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. no. 5998

Provenance: 1928, purchase from Heilbronner, Berlin

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1927 and 1929 A; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 58–59, no. 50; Van de Kerkhove 1972, p. 153.

In a garden with columns and herms, a young man with a ladder steps up to a young woman, who is holding a pruning knife. It is Vertumnus, god of the seasons, who wants to win the love of the nymph Pomona, protector of the orchards. Here, he is disguised as a fruit-picker. They act in front of a gallery of female herms and flute-playing satyrs. Behind a low fence, a garden with an arbour and a fountain is visible. Little genii are picking apples and others are picking them up.

The border depicts a varied decor. A battle of sea creatures decorates the bottom border. In cartouches on the sides, a personification of Victoria, with a wreath of palm and laurel, and one of Fama, with two trumpets, is depicted on the left. The four corners are filled with cartouches in scrollwork, with amorini above and sirens below. The interstices are filled with rich floral festoons.

The scene is the fifth episode in the story of Vertumnus and Pomona, according to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book XIV, verse 650. On two tapestries woven after the original models, now in the Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, and in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional, series 17/IV), one reads in a cartouche of the upper border: "*lecturu(m) hic poma putares*".<sup>1</sup> It is an abbreviation of the description by Ovid: "*Induerat scalas, lecturum poma putares*" ("With the ladder on the shoulder, you might think he is going to pick fruit").

This composition is a shortened, late variation on scenes from the original editions, created from around 1544, and now preserved in Madrid and in Lisbon. They were produced in the workshop of Willem de Pannemaker,

for customers including Philip II of Spain in 1560–62.<sup>2</sup> The cartoons were attributed to several artists, first to Jan Vermeyen, later also to Leonard Thiry and finally to Pieter Coecke van Aelst. The present author does not agree with that final attribution. The known works of Coecke bear witness to a stirring Mannerist style, which is not found here.

The fabric of Pomona's dress is decorated with the motif of a reclining lion with a halo, and with two little birds, which are to be found in Brussels tapestries from the second decade of the sixteenth century, as in the *Legend of Herkinbald* (cat. 10).

The female Caryatids behind the main figures are inspired by the frescoes of Dosso Dossi in the Villa Imperiale at Pesaro (1530), while the male fauns rely on an engraving by Cornelis Bos.<sup>3</sup> The central motif of the round arbour with fountain in the garden goes back to an illustration in the *Dream of Poliphilus*, from the French edition of 1546.<sup>4</sup> This version includes additional details such as the pheasant on the balustrade, and the vase of flowers between the two protagonists.

The workshop of Maarten Reymbouts was active from 1570 to 1619. He delivered two editions of this series to the Archduke Albert in Brussels in 1611 and 1614, possibly produced using cartoons like the one in this piece. Of this edition only one tapestry is known with the same border, namely *Vertumnus as Fisherman* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.<sup>5</sup>

The cartoons of the series were further used in the seventeenth century, with a different border, in an edition by Jan I Raes and Jacob Geubels, now spread across locations in Boston, Magdeburg and Lausanne.<sup>6</sup> [GD]

1. Junquera 1986, I, p. 120; New York 2014, pp. 287–288.
2. See Steppe 1981, pp. 125–140; Buchanan 2015, p. 225; New York 2014, pp. 286–289.
3. Paredes 1996, p. 60.
4. Idem, pp. 94–95.
5. Cavallo 1967, p. 115; New York 2014, p. 279.
6. Van de Kerkhove 1972; Delmarcel in Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, pp. 72–78.





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[42]

## ST FRANCIS RECEIVES THE STIGMATA

Southern Netherlands, late sixteenth to early seventeenth century  
 Manufacturer and designer unknown  
 Wool: 227 × 187 cm; 4 to 5 warps per cm  
 Inv. 6236

Provenance: November 1933, purchased from Mr Van Rijseghem.

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1934 A; idem 1956, pp. 54–55, pl. 55.

Saint Francis is kneeling before a tree, stretching his arms sideways as the rays of the winged seraph descend onto his hands, feet and chest, causing him to receive the stigmata. At his feet are a pilgrim's hat and a closed book. On the tree in front of the saint, a bird is sitting on a branch, a squirrel crawls along the trunk and at the bottom, a snake winds itself around the tree. Behind him sits another Franciscan monk. He looks up from reading a book to the apparition in the heavens. All kinds of animals are walking on the mountains to the left and in the distance one can see a city in a hilly landscape.

Saint Francis of Assisi (c. 1191–1226) is said to have received the stigmata on 24 September 1224 on Mount Alverna. From the earliest representations, he is often accompanied by a fellow brother as a silent witness, who does not, however, look with him at the heavenly apparition.<sup>1</sup> No actual model for this work could be identified. It does fit in with the representations of the scene in German art from the sixteenth century,<sup>2</sup> in which a tree is often standing next to the saint, such as in a woodcut by Albrecht Dürer (c. 1502), for example (fig. 1).

The work was probably intended for a Franciscan monastery. Other representations of this saint in tapestry are very rare. The best known is the so-called *Family Tree of the Franciscans*, donated by Pope Sixtus IV in 1479, which is preserved in Assisi.<sup>3</sup>

The symmetrical ornament of the borders is found in variants around tapestries produced in Oudenaarde during the third quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The colours and weave quality also point to a workshop in a provincial location. [GD]



[FIG. 1] Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Francis Receives the Stigmata*, woodcut, c. 1502. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. S.I. 13934.

1. Kirschbaum 1994, vol. 6, coll. 296.
2. Kurth 1963, no. 195 (Bartsch 110); Kurth 1963, no. 195; also in paintings by Albrecht Altdorfer and Lucas Cranach (1502, Oesterreichische Galerie, Belvedere, Vienna).
3. Cf. Campbell in New York 2002, pp. 65–69.
4. De Meûter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 134–143; the attribution to Enghien in Crick-Kuntziger 1934 A is no longer tenable.





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[43]  
**ARMORIAL TABLE CARPET  
 VON BRAUNSCHWEIG-LÜNEBURG**

Possibly Germany, Wolfenbüttel, dated 1610  
 Possibly by the workshop of Baudouin van Brussel  
 Designer unknown  
 Wool and silk; 260 × 338 cm: 7 to 8 warps per cm  
 Inv. v 2917

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 58, no. 49; Göbel III-2, pp. 94–98, and pl. 75.

Within a laurel wreath is the coat of arms of Ernst von Braunschweig-Lüneburg, underneath which is the inscription: “ERNST. H(er)Z(og) BRVN (schweig) V(nd) LVNB(urg) 1610”.

The coat of arms contains the badges of Braunschweig, Lüneburg, Eberstein, Homburg, divided old and new Buchhausen, Hoja, and Diepholz. The helmet insignia are those of Buchhausen, Braunschweig-Lüneburg, and Hoja.<sup>1</sup>

It refers to Duke Ernst II von Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1564–1611) and the date 1610 most likely refers to the so-called “Celler Familienvertrag” in which the indivisibility of the Duchy of Lüneburg was established between the Dukes of Braunschweig.<sup>2</sup>

The wreath is surrounded by symmetrical arabesques of flowers, mostly pink, on a green background. The borders are also decorated with roses and flowers in bud. The spiral-shaped outer frame recalls this motif on Brussels tapestries of the mid-sixteenth century.

The tapestry probably originated in Wolfenbüttel, a town located in the Duchy of Braunschweig. Under Duke Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel (1564–1613), Flemish tapestry weavers were already active there from before 1572. In 1590, the emigré “Boldewin von Brüssel” (Baudouin van Brussel?) obtained privileges to set up a workshop there and is mentioned until 1609. Of his production, and that of his imitators, mainly heraldic table carpets have survived. [GD]

1. Siebmacher's Wappenbuch, I, Nuremberg 1856.
2. See [https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB:Ernst\\_II.\\_\(Herzog\\_von\\_Braunschweig-L%C3%BCneburg\)](https://de.wikisource.org/wiki/ADB:Ernst_II._(Herzog_von_Braunschweig-L%C3%BCneburg)); with thanks to Dr Hanns Hubach.



[44]  
TWO CUSHION COVERS

Two identical weavings  
Probably German, Wolfenbüttel, early seventeenth century  
Workshop and designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 48 × 45 cm each, 7 warps per cm  
Inv. v 2626 and 2927

Provenance: 1911, bequest from Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Göbel 1934, II, p. 97 and fig. 73 a;  
Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 55, nos. 43–44.

A vase with flowers, including tulips and daffodils, stands in front of a background of green leaves.

The borders are ornated with medallions in strapwork and stylised flowers.

Göbel pointed to the similarity of this ornament on the border of a *Sacrifice of Abraham* tapestry, formerly on the German art market, very probably woven in Wolfenbüttel around 1605. [GD]



[44]





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[45]

## THE MAGNANIMITY OF SCIPIO

Northern Netherlands, Delft, 1609  
 City mark of Delft HD (Holland-Delft) and the signature  
 FRANCISCVS. SPIRINGIVS. FECIT ANNO 1602<sup>1</sup> of the workshop  
 of François Spierings (c. 1550–1630)  
 Design attributed to Karel van Mander the Younger (1579–1623) (?)  
 Wool and silk; 410 × 327 cm; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. Tp 4

Provenance: 1968, gift from Baron van Zuylen

Literature: Delmarcel 1979, no. 55.

According to Livy (*Ab urbe condita*, book XXX), the Roman general Scipio shows clemency by releasing Massinissa's imprisoned nephew. Massinissa (c. 238 BC–148 BC) became the first king of Numidia.<sup>2</sup> Having fought on the side of Carthage in his younger years, he changed camps during the Second Punic War. This was prompted in part by the attitude of Scipio, who released Massinissa's nephew, Massiva, after he was captured. The foreground of the

picture shows the seated Scipio and at his right, the young Massiva being returned, accompanied by Massinissa. In the background, the sale of other Africans, by order of the victor.

### Commentary

This example formed part of the first edition, in eight copies, of the series ordered in 1609 by Thomas Howard.<sup>3</sup> Another preserved copy of this series, *The Surrender of Carthage*, has been in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam since 1972<sup>4</sup> (fig. 1). The composition of both tapestries is very similar.

The arms woven into the top border are the allied coats of arms of Suffolk and Knyvet. They refer to the purchaser Thomas Howard (1561–1626), from 1603 onwards the first Earl of Suffolk, and his wife Catharine Knyvet (1566?–1636).<sup>5</sup>

As Admiral of a substantial English fleet, he was an influential man who distinguished himself in the naval battle against the Armada. He was made a Knight in the



[FIG. 1] *The Surrender of Carthage*, from *The Story of Scipio*, workshop of François Spiering, Delft, 1609. Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. 1972-77.



Order of the Garter. King James I appointed him to the position of Great Chamberlain in 1603 and elevated him to the position of 1st Earl of Suffolk.<sup>6</sup> In 1610, the order was taken over by the States General, which decided to donate the eight tapestries. The intention was to honour Howard and appease him. The price was *f* 24 per square ell, which was a high price. When the series was completed in 1611, the States-General paid *f* 7,500 to the weaver.<sup>7</sup>

The series hung in Audley End House, Essex, one of the many residences of the Suffolk-Knyvet couple. In 1679, Suffolk's grandson sold the house and its tapestries to Charles II. The tapestries subsequently passed into the hands of the king and stadtholder William III, who became King of England in 1689. In 1701, the house was bought back by a descendant of Howard, but by then the tapestries had disappeared.<sup>8</sup>

Precisely who took the initiative with regard to the subject of the order, Spierings or Howard, cannot be made out, but there is certainly a parallel to be drawn in the battle between Rome and Carthage and the battle between England and Spain, in which the purchaser played a role. Already in the sixteenth century, the *Story of Scipio*, after a design by Giulio Romano (1499–1546), was a great success, and it got numerous re-weavings until late in the seventeenth century (cat. 49). The subject was suitable to serve as a model for any good warlord and statesman.

The series was woven by François Spierings (c. 1550–1630) from Antwerp, who settled in Delft around 1580, and who went on to play an important role in the development of the tapestry industry in the Northern Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> Spierings made several editions of this series. In 1613, the States General ordered a second edition for the daughter of James I, Elisabeth Stuart. In 1620, the King of Sweden, Gustav II Adolf (1594–1632), bought a series of thirteen pieces. His daughter Christina took the tapestries with her in 1654 when she settled in Rome.<sup>10</sup>

The cartoons for this series are attributed to another emigrant in Delft, Karel van Mander the Younger (c. 1579–1623), who was employed by Spierings in that period. A document from 1617 refers to his contribution to the cartoons for a Scipio series.<sup>11</sup> He received his training from his father and at the Haarlem Academy, and his style is in keeping with Romanism. A few large figures in the foreground attract attention and fill almost the entire surface. Sometimes, figures take up a mannerist stance.

No other editions of this subject are known.

The wide border is very specific. Against the originally bright, rust-coloured ground, it depicts widely swaying vines with bunches of grapes in shades of pink and blue to purple. They are overgrown with white-flowering bindweed, which attaches itself to the canes and is interspersed with ivy with blue-black berries. Amongst these, we see birds, butterflies, dragonflies and the occasional snail. In

the horizontal borders, the vines, starting from a bow in the middle, are arranged symmetrically. The arrangement in the vertical borders is the same on the left and right. The shadow effects are striking. This type of border was found in other series woven in Delft in the same period, such as *Orlando Furioso* and *Story of Alexander*.<sup>12</sup>

The nicely framed round medallions in the lower corners present the Roman she-wolf and the twins Romulus and Remus, referring to the theme of the series.

In the upper corners, the medallions contain two helmet insignia. On the left, a crowned red field with lion of gold within garter: Suffolk. On the right, a light blue field with a crowned dragon's head with spread wings of blue, resting on a ribbon: Knyvet. Centrally placed in the upper border are the coats of arms of Suffolk and Knyvet, which encroach into the field itself. [IDM]

1. The date was altered from 1609 to 1602, during restoration, see Delmarcel 1979, tapestries no. 55.
2. Another episode with these protagonists is cat. 40.
3. The lower half of the date was restored, probably changing the original date to 1602. See Delmarcel 1979, tapestries no. 55.
4. Inv. 1972-77. Mulder-Erkelen 1981; Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, cat. 53.
5. In this case, the coat of arms was, along with the date, altered during restoration, see Delmarcel 1979, tapestries no. 55.
6. Mulder-Erkelen 1981, p. 42.
7. Idem, pp. 36–37.
8. Idem, pp. 43–44.
9. van Ysselsteyn 1935–36, I, 63–108.
10. Mulder-Erkelen 1981, pp. 44–45; Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, p. 217.
11. van Ysselsteyn 1935–36, II, no. 298.
12. Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, cat. 54–55.

[46]

## DIANA AND ENDYMION

Paris, Faubourg Saint-Marcel (?), c. 1620–25 (?)

Designer unknown, possibly Toussaint Dubreuil (1561–1602)

Wool and silk; 403 × 265 cm; 7 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 21

Provenance: 1988, bought at the Royal Manufactory De Wit in Mechelen

Literature: Delmarcel 1988; Van Tichelen 1990.

The ancient mythology tells how Diana, goddess of the hunt, fell in love with the shepherd Endymion. Jupiter, however, had plunged him into an eternal sleep, allowing Diana to caress him at will.<sup>1</sup>

The sleeping Endymion, here represented as a shepherd with a dog at his feet and a staff in his hand, lies against a rock while he is being kissed by the goddess Diana, identified by the moon sickle on her head, and sitting on a cloud. They are watched by two cupids hovering above their heads in the crown of the trees.

### Commentary

Due to the lack of marks, the attribution to a French workshop at the beginning of the seventeenth century is based mainly on the colour blend and the composition of the border.

The various elements of the border, together or separately, appear in tapestries from Paris in the first half of the seventeenth century. Besides the series depicting the *Story of Diana*, connections can be made with the most important editions of this workshop, such as the *Story of Artemisia*, the *Story of Coriolanus* and the *Story of Constantine*. Some of these tapestries bear the marks of producers such as Frans van der Plancken (François de la Planche), Philip de Maecht and Hans Taye, all of whom were Flemish weavers who settled in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel in the French capital in 1601.<sup>2</sup> An attribution to the same production centre is therefore justified and a dating of 1620–25 appears to be correct.

Seventeen different editions of the Paris series with the *Story of Diana* were found with fourteen different types of



[FIG. 1] *The Death of Orion*, from *The Story of Diana*, workshop of Faubourg St Marcel, Paris, c. 1620–1625. Private collection.





[46]

border. Ten scenes often recur, but a different model was sometimes used during weaving. All these adjustments make studying the tapestries difficult.<sup>3</sup> However, no copies were found with the representation of Diana and Endymion. Their love story could no doubt be part of a series depicting the *Story of Diana*. A *Death of Orion* has the same border and bears the monogram of François de la Planche (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup>

This framed border, common in this period in France, was made up of several elements. The two narrow frames, in this case with a leaf motif on the inside and a string of pearls on the outside, together create a play of light and shadow, providing depth to the border. The decoration between the frames is very colourful and refined.

The vertical borders consist mainly of beautiful arabesques with a bouquet in the corners, on a tobacco-coloured ground. The bouquet on the left differs from the one on the right. In between, centrally, to the left and right, is a medallion with a Medusa's head surmounted by a bronze dog's head and ribbons. In the middle of the horizontal borders is a large cartouche with handcuffed prisoners of war and armorial trophies, worked out in grisaille. To the left and right, the cartouche is enclosed by two female grotesques.

As mentioned, these different elements were found elsewhere in other tapestries, combined with different motifs.

Several inventories relating to the company mention finished tapestries or cartoons from the series, but none of them depict the love affair between Diana and Endymion.<sup>5</sup> Neither can any mention of that subject be found in the inventory of Louis XIV where several of these series of Diana are mentioned.<sup>6</sup> A series of eight is still preserved in the Mobilier National in Paris (inv. GMTT 15/1-8). The theme of Diana was very popular in France and is frequently linked with political motives, but the subject was also widespread in the Netherlands.<sup>7</sup>

Toussaint Dubreuil (1561-1602) is mentioned as the designer of this pre-Gobelin series. He belonged to the second school of Fontainebleau, which followed the Italian mannerists. As a painter at the court of the French king, Henry IV, he received several important commissions at Fontainebleau and in the Tuileries. One of his design drawings for the Diana series is preserved in the Louvre (inv. Cabinet des Dessins, no. 26250 recto). It is assumed that he provided the first eight designs. Whether he is also the author of the *Diana and Endymion* that was added subsequently, cannot be determined. There is a certain similarity to a fresco with the same subject by Annibale Carracci in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome.<sup>8</sup> The fresco was painted around 1597 and may have been distributed by means of engravings.

The love story is popular in Italian and French literature around 1620. It is possible that the subject was added at that time.<sup>9</sup> [IDM]

1. See, amongst others, Ovid, *Amores*, 1, 13, v. 43 and Cicero, *Tusculanarum Disputationum*, 1, v. 92.
2. Van Tichelen 1990, pp. 137-141.
3. Idem, pp. 143-144.
4. Auction at Christie's, London, 11 November 2004, no. 66.
5. Van Tichelen 1990, pp. 146.
6. Vittet & Brejon de Lavergnée 2010, nos. 17, 18, 22 (OR); 15 (LS).
7. Van Tichelen 1990, pp. 148-149.
8. Delmarcel 1988, p. 131.
9. Van Tichelen 1990, pp. 151.



[47]  
**ARMORIAL TAPESTRY OF  
 DIEGO DE GUZMAN Y BENAVIDES**

Pastrana (Spain), 1622

Workshop of Frans (Francisco) Tons (1576–1633)

Mark of Pastrana, monogram of the workshop,

signature in the lower border: FRANCISCO TONS INVEN.1622

Model by Frans Tons, after older examples

Wool and silk; 450 × 295 cm; 7 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 5

Provenance: 1970, purchased from the art gallery

Loriano Lupi, Florence

Literature: Asselberghs, Delmarcel & Garcia Calvo 1985;

Garcia Calvo 2006; Ferrer Gonzalez & Ramirez Ruiz 2007,

pp. 195–204.



[47]



**[FIG. 1]** *Armorial of the Conde Duque de Olivares*, workshop of François Tons, Pastrana, c. 1622. Hostal de San Marcos, Leon.

Under a yellow-green bishop's hat with ten tassels on each side is the coat of arms of don Diego de Guzman y Benavides, chaplain to King Philip IV of Spain, patriarch of the Indies, archbishop of Seville in 1625, and cardinal in 1629. He died while on a journey in Ancona on 22 January 1631.<sup>1</sup> The coat of arms hovers, as it were, between an apple tree and an oak tree, in front of a wooded landscape in the distance.

The border is formed by a hollow frame on which medallions have been placed in the corners and middle of the borders, depicting naked putti playing and making music. The cartouches in scrollwork in the corners, contain shells and gorgons' heads (or Medusa heads).

The tapestry belongs to a group of heraldic works in portrait format, woven in the workshop of Frans Tons in Pastrana. Born in Brussels in February 1576 as the son of the tapestry maker Willem Tons, he was listed among the group of the nine leading producers in Brussels in 1613, but as a result of debts, he ended up in prison in 1616. In 1621, he requested privileges from the King of Spain to establish a workshop in the town of Pastrana in Castile. He ultimately settled there in 1622, where he ran a workshop that remained active until his death in 1633.<sup>2</sup>

The location chosen was not arbitrary: Morisques (Muslims converted to Christianity) worked there in silk-weaving mills until their expulsion from Spain in 1616. The Duke of Pastrana, don Ruy Gomez de Silva y Mendoza (who held the position of Duke from 1596 to 1626) probably wanted to revive the local textile industry. The tapestry discussed here was therefore created at the

time when this workshop first started its production. At the same time they made armorial tapestries for related members of the Duke's family, such as the *Armorial of the Conde Duque de Olivares*, nowadays in the Hostal de San Marcos in Leon (fig. 1).

According to the signature on the lower border, Francisco Tons was not only the weaver but also the designer (*invenit*).

As a descendant of the cartoon painter, Jan Tons – who had designed the flora for the so-called *Hunts of Charles V* (Paris, Musée du Louvre) in the 1530s – he probably had models brought from Brussels. This may explain the drawing of the large trees next to the coat of arms. On the other hand, Tons also had contacts with the Flemish producers in Paris. He referred in 1621 to the privileges they had received in France, which he also claimed. The drawing of the borders of this work is closely related to that of series woven in Paris in the same period, including the *Life of Coriolanus*, which was produced by Frans van der Plancken between 1601 and 1627.<sup>3</sup> They were also used by Tons for six tapestries with scenes derived from the *Borromeo Unicorn* series, two of which are preserved in the Bilbao museum.<sup>4</sup>

Following the custom in the Spanish Netherlands, Tons also designed a town mark here, with the P of Pastrana within the heraldic castle tower of Castile. [GD]

1. J. Alonso Morgado, *Prelados sevillanos, o Episcopologio*, Sevilla, 1906, pp. 504–507.
2. For the history and production of Frans Tons, see Asselberghs, Delmarcel & Garcia Calvo 1985, and Garcia Calvo 2006 (Bilbao).
3. Cavallo 1956.
4. Garcia Calvo 2006.



[48]  
 THE ENTRY OF THE ANIMALS  
 IN NOAH'S ARK

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1620 or later  
 Designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 407 × 495 cm; 8 to 9 warps per cm  
 Inv. 7923

Provenance: 26 February 1946: Purchase at an auction  
 at the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1947; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 61, no. 52.



[48]



[FIG. 1] Attributed to Michel Coxcie, *The Entry of the Animals in Noah's Ark*,  
 tempera on paper fixed on canvas, c. 1567. Patrimonio Nacional, Madrid, inv. 10007058.

According to the book of Genesis, Yahweh wanted to punish sinful mankind by means of a flood. Only the righteous Noah and his family would escape in a ship, along with seven pairs of each species. Here, Noah points out to his wife the procession of animals walking in pairs towards the Ark in the background on the right (Genesis 7: 1–5). The birds approach in the sky. His sons and daughters-in-law gather, left behind, the valuables they wish to save. On the left in the background, one can see the start of the flood with the high waves and the torrential rain. People are desperate and climb onto the banks and into the trees.

*Commentary*

This scene from Genesis goes back to a composition in the *Life of Noah*, to the design by Michiel Coxcie (1499–1592), woven around 1550 in the workshop of Pieter van Aelst the Younger, now in the Wawel Castle in Krakow. This edition was ordered by King Sigismund August.<sup>1</sup> A reweaving of the cartoons was ordered by Philip II of Spain in 1568 from Willem de Pannemaker.<sup>2</sup> These models were re-woven many times up to the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The piece discussed here differs greatly from the original composition in Krakow. The image is mirrored, and the procession of animals and the group of helpers have been redrawn. An almost identical composition was already used for a tapestry from a *Genesis* series, woven between 1564 and 1567 by Jacob de Carmes, probably for the Stuttgart castle of Duke Christoph von Württemberg (1515–1568) (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. ICIII/1).<sup>4</sup> The cartoon painter for this series is probably Nicolaas van Orley, the nephew of Bernard van Orley, who left Brussels in 1566 and settled in Stuttgart.<sup>5</sup>

Both of the tapestries in Brussels and Stuttgart are in turn related to a cartoon preserved in Madrid. That mirror-image cartoon is closely related to the tapestry in the Vienna series, more so than to the Brussels edition (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> Michel Coxcie or his son Raphael have been put forward as the designers of the cartoon.<sup>7</sup>

Thanks to the ornamentation of the borders, the work discussed here can be dated to the first third of the seventeenth century. The shells, dolphins and cartouches in the corner motifs are derived copies of the borders used for the first editions of the *Life of Decius Mus*, after P.P. Rubens, woven by Jan II Raes in Brussels in 1616–18.<sup>8</sup>

In the centre of the four borders are cartouches with scenes illustrating fables: at the top, the tortoise and the hare, on the left and right, the fox and the grapes, and at the bottom, the wolf and the sheep with a raven on its back.<sup>9</sup> [GD]

1. For Krakow, see Szablowksi 1973, pp. 126–127, and Hennel Bernasikowa & Piwocka 2017, p. 116.
2. Only four pieces from this edition have been preserved, see Junquera & Herrero 1986, series 37.
3. A detailed overview can be found in Piwocka 2015, pp. 88–90, for the series by Paulus van Nieuwenhove (1628–1640) in the Toms collection, Lausanne, see Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, cat. 17–31.
4. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. ICIII/1; for the history, see Bauer 2002, pp. 71–82, and the illustration by Vervoort 2001, p. 88.
5. Idem, pp. 99–100; Bauer 2002, p. 75.
6. Patrimonio Nacional, now in the convent of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, inv. 10007058. Junquera de Vega 1973, pp. 169–171; Herrero 2019, pp. 409–416. The cartoon was offered to the museum in 1929, see Crick-Kuntziger 1930 B.
7. Herrero 2019, p. 415; Vervoort 2001, p. 101, see also Crick-Kuntziger 1930 B, and Crick-Kuntziger 1947, p. 25.
8. Baumstark & Delmarcel 2019, 1, p. 272.
9. The latter is said to be a fable written by Marie de France in the second half of the twelfth century, see Crick-Kuntziger 1947, p. 21.





-IV-

THE BAROQUE &  
THE FRENCH STYLE



THE NUMBER OF seventeenth-century tapestries in the collection is considerable. After a dip, production in the Southern Netherlands resumed at the end of the sixteenth century with the help of the Court. Sometimes old cartoons were used, as in the *Story of Scipio and Hannibal* (cat. 49) and *Noah's Ark* (cat. 48), but the creative input of well-known artists such as Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Jacques Jordaens (1593–1678) took on a role of importance. Rubens' dynamic style with strong colours and contrasts between light and shadow was just what the Brussels workshops needed to breathe new life into their production. His designs were woven for a long time. Both the scenes with the *Story of Achilles* (cat. 53) and the *Death of Decius Mus* (cat. 54) were therefore realised around the middle of the seventeenth century. Sometimes, his work was used as inspiration for new creations, such as in the *Hunting Scenes*. This series, however, is mainly indebted to the engravings of Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630) (cat. 61).

Alongside Rubens, Jacques Jordaens (1593–1678) was the most productive artist to be involved in the designing of tapestry series. Both the tapestry from the series *Scenes of Country Life* (cat. 50) and the successful series *The Riding School* (cat. 55) are fine examples of his style. Another example from the Antwerp school is the *Acts of the Apostles* after Abraham van Diepenbeeck (cat. 63).

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the innovative elements from the preceding period were developed further. This is clear to see in the late Baroque series depicting the *Story of Zenobia* (cat. 62). Justus van Egmont (1602–74) worked in Paris, first with Rubens and then with the French



[53]



[50]



[62]



[59]

tapestry designer Simon Vouet (1590–1649). On his return to the Southern Netherlands, he established himself as a cartoon painter.

Slightly less bombastic is the depiction of *The Grape Harvest* (cat. 59), which was woven in Bruges in 1644. A typical feature of Bruges production is the striking colour palette, as can also be seen in an example of *Our Lady with the Child Jesus* (cat. 60).

The museum's collection also contains examples of smaller applications of laid-in weaving. Fine examples of tablecloths have been preserved (cat. 52 and 58). Special editions from the Northern Netherlands include a strip to decorate a bed or a fireplace (cat. 57) and a tapestry dated 1648 depicting the *Battle of Nieuwpoort* (cat. 51).

Important for the introduction of the new French style in tapestry art was *The Story of Alexander*, designed by Charles Lebrun (1619–90) for the Gobelins manufacturer in Paris. With the help of engravings, the scenes found their way to the workshops in Brussels and Oudenaarde. One of the workshops in Brussels produced the dramatic tableau of *A Wounded Poros is Brought Before Alexander* (cat. 69).

One of the most important designers at the end of the seventeenth century was Lodewijk van Schoor (c. 1650–1702), a figure painter who simultaneously supplied patterns to workshops in Brussels, Oudenaarde and Antwerp. For this he worked together with various landscape painters. He was influenced both iconographically and stylistically by French tapestry designers. There are many tapestries in the collection that display the characteristic style elements of his work (cat. 67, 68, 71 and 76). [IDM]





[49.1]

[49]

## THE STORY OF SCIPIO AND HANNIBAL

Two tapestries  
 Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1625  
 Brussels town mark and F. V. MAELSAECK,  
 signature of the workshop of Frans van Maelsaek († 1638)  
 Designer unknown  
 Wool and silk; 7 warps per cm

Provenance: 1952, purchased at auction in Brussels<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1953, pp. 13–16;  
 Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 62, nos. 53–54.

Previously, these tapestries were in the collection of Marquess Curzon of Kedleston. They were offered in a series of five pieces at Christie's in London, 25 June 1931, no. 147, in one lot. The series was divided into five lots offered for sale once again at American Art Association-Anderson Galleries in New York, 22 April 1932, nos. 66–70.

### Commentary

The story of Scipio was frequently told in series of tapestries. Also in the collection of the Royal Museums of Art and History are several examples depicting scenes from the Punic Wars (cat. 40, 45).

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, before the contribution of P.P. Rubens to tapestry art, Brussels workshops re-used old cartoons and revived existing themes. It is not known who painted the cartoons of this baroque edition.<sup>2</sup> Very few of the original patterns from the sixteenth-century series can be found. The most similarities can be found in the *Conference Between Scipio and Hannibal*.<sup>3</sup> In both versions, the two warlords face each other on the shores in a final attempt to avoid combat before the start of the battle of Zama. They adopt similar postures and are accompanied by their waiting troops. In general, the seventeenth-century compositions are much simpler and the number of characters is severely limited. There is much less dynamism and drama in the scenes. The elaboration of the action and the characters is rather stiff and somewhat clumsy.

Both tapestries bear the monogram, and cat. 49.1 also

the name of Frans van Maelsaek, whose work is documented from 1614<sup>4</sup> until his death in 1638.<sup>5</sup> He was granted privileges in 1629.<sup>6</sup> That same year, he is also mentioned in a contract with the Antwerp merchant Jacques de Moor for the delivery of two or three series, each in eight parts, with the *'Historie van Scipio ende hannibal'*, one of which was already on the loom.<sup>7</sup>

Only a few tapestries can be attributed to him.<sup>8</sup> The *Story of Scipio* is the only one of which copies are known.

Thanks to the auction catalogues for the years 1931–32, a piece preserved in the Museu de Arte de São Paulo in São Paulo, and pieces subsequently offered for sale in the art trade, the eight scenes of the series can be identified.<sup>9</sup>

The same cartoons were also used later by Andries van den Driessche, who was active between 1635 and 1671, but with totally different borders.<sup>10</sup>

The wide borders belong to the new baroque style in Brussels tapestry. The four mythological corner figures look like stone sculptures. The figure at the top left represents Venus, accompanied by Cupid; on the other side at the top, Jupiter is depicted with a crown and the eagle beside him. At the bottom left, we see Bacchus with the grapes next to him and opposite is Flora with the horn of plenty and a rose in her hand.

From these figures, on both sides, stumps of laurel are covered with garlands of beautifully crafted flowers and fruits that look like horns of plenty.

The borders are interrupted in the middle by a cartouche containing a landscape with animals, referring to the fables of the Greek poet Aesop (c. 620–560 B.C.): at the top are the wolf and the lamb, at the bottom the lion and the fox, on the right the snake and the hedgehog and on the left the cockerel and the dog.

All of the tapestries in the series have the same corner figures and scenes.

[49.1]

### THE CONFERENCE BETWEEN HANNIBAL AND SCIPIO

Inv. 8853  
 City mark of Brussels and the signature F. V. MAELSAECK  
 410 × 470 cm



Hannibal Barkas from Carthage suggested a meeting with Scipio Africanus Maior in a last attempt of reconciliation, before they started the battle at Zama. The scene is described by Livy, *Ab Urbe condita*, Book 30, Chapter 30.

On the left bank, Hannibal stands adorned with a turban and behind him his troops, a striking feature being the characteristic elephants. On the other bank stands Scipio and his second. In the background, horsemen and footmen wait in battle order.

No other version woven by Maelsaeck after this cartoon has been found. The later edition with the mark of Andries van den Driessche is identical but narrower.

[49.2]

**HANNIBAL DURING THE BATTLE OF ZAMA**

Inv. 8854

City mark of Brussels and monogram of Frans van Maelsaeck

420 × 470 cm

The decisive battle that ended the Second Punic War was fought at Zama, a city near Carthage (Livy, Book 30, Chapter 33). In the background, both armies are in full battle. The elephants on the left once more form a striking feature. The central figure with turban and scimitar, in full action on his horse, attracts all attention. This is Hannibal on the run.

No other version woven by Maelsaeck after this cartoon has been found. [IDM]

belonged to the collection of the dealer Paul de Grande in Jabbeke, see London, Sotheby's, 9 May 1994, no. 101 (not sold). The two other pieces, published in D. Boccara 1971, pp. 130–131 and J. Boccara 1988, pp. 146–148, were once part of French & Co. They are now in the Château de Tarascon, see Chambord 1996, pp. 58–61. According to the photo archive in The Getty Research Institute (nos. 0237585 and 0237587), both pieces came from the art dealership of J. Klausner & Sohn. This dealer is also mentioned with the piece published by Göbel, see Note 43. The three tapestries probably belonged to the same edition.

10. Wauters 1878, p. 270. A series of four pieces was in Mertoun in the Scottish Borders around 1930 in the collection of John, the Fourth Earl of Ellesmere, now in the Paço dos Duces at Guimarães, Portugal. The borders are narrow flower borders. At the centre of the upper border are cartouches containing the title of the series, see the Marillier archive in the V&A Museum.



[49.2]

1. Brussels, Galerie Moderne, 6 May 1952.
2. It is possible that the young Lanceloot Lefebure, who was 65 years old in 1650, was involved in its production. Born around 1585 he may have supplied cartoons in around 1625. The stylistic similarities are not pronounced, but the series attributed to him are of an entirely different nature to this subject and only date from much later, circa 1650, see Brosens & De Laet 2009.
3. Idem, p. 89–93.
4. Mentioned in 1614 at a trial, see Crick-Kuntziger 1936 A, p. 179.
5. Göbel 1923, p. 367, pl. 320 already suggested this identification with regard to the monogram. The tapestry in the Berlin art dealership of J. Klausner & Sohn has the same border as the *Story of Scipio* and is most likely one of the eight subjects of the series.
6. Wauters 1878, pp. 303–304.
7. E. Duverger 1960, p. 38 and doc. XXXII.
8. Another tapestry from the *Story of Ulysses* series with his monogram was sold at Parke-Bernet in 1957, but with no illustration in the catalogue, see E. Duverger 1971 A, p. 84. The French & Co. archive at the Getty Research Institute includes a piece that is said to have Maelsaeck's name woven in and has a completely different drawing (no. 0237338). The peculiar combination of a pergola with battle scenes in between, together with a typical border from the end of the sixteenth century, situates this piece much earlier than the dates known from the documents concerning his professional activity.
9. In 1974–75, two different dealers offered specimens with the same history, but the museum ultimately did not purchase them. The two owned by E. Mullendorff in Antwerp even came from the same series as this one in the museum. Later, one of the two depicting *The Conquest of Carthage*



## THE LUTE PLAYER AND A LADY

Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
second quarter of the seventeenth century  
Brussels city mark and monogram of the workshop  
of Conrad van der Bruggen (who was a master in 1622)  
Design by Jacques Jordaens (1593–1678), around 1628–29  
Wool and silk; 374 × 320 cm; 7 to 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 6300

Provenance: 1938, purchased from the M. Stettiner collection,  
Paris.

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1940 B, pp. 116–120; Crick-Kuntziger  
1956, pp. 62–63, no. 55; Bauer in Brussels 1994, pp. 59–61.

The elegant couple stands under the arch of a loggia whose architecture is continued in the borders. The trompe l'oeil effect is accentuated by the colourful floor carpet hanging over the balustrade. Just like the parrot and the dog, this attribute frequently reappears in Jordaens' work. Many details used in the elaboration can be associated with love or refer to Bacchus, lust and fertility, but also to loyalty, thanks to the inclusion of the little dog at the front.<sup>1</sup>

The couple is clearly distinguished by virtue of the lady, who is dressed very nicely with a plume fan in her hand and adorned with a broad-brimmed hat while her companion wears similar headgear. The man's lute is also considered a symbol of seduction and/or harmony in love.<sup>2</sup>



[50]



[FIG. 1] Jacques Jordaens or workshop, *The Lute Player and a Lady*, brown ink on paper, c. 1635.  
The British Museum, London, inv. 1900,0824.139.

It is remarkable that this is the only tapestry in the series where the light enters from the left.<sup>3</sup>

Commentary

The depiction of a nobleman playing the lute to a lady in a loggia is the fourth scene in the eight-part series of *Scenes from Country Life*. It was designed by Jordaens at the earliest around 1628–29.<sup>4</sup> Alongside Rubens, Jacques Jordaens (1593–1678) was the most productive artist to be involved in the designing of tapestry series in the first half of the seventeenth century. He was certainly influenced by Rubens' designs. In this scene, both the border scheme with architectural elements and the trompe l'oeil effect were adopted from Rubens' designs for the series of the *Triumph of the Eucharist*, from 1626–27. Along the four sides, there is a heavy architectural border with a beautifully sculpted frieze at the bottom, an architrave decorated with satyrs and putti at the top, and extra decorated columns on the left and right. All these details refer to the theme of Love.

In this tapestry series, Jordaens depicts folk scenes and outdoor life,<sup>5</sup> but exactly what is being represented is not entirely clear. It was recently suggested that the iconographic programme for the series presents allegories of the *Elements and Humors or Temperaments*. The plume fan in the scene on the balcony would then refer to *Air*.<sup>6</sup> In this case, it is combined with *Blood*, one of the four humours, with references to fertility and procreation.<sup>7</sup>

Four more sketches of this series subsist, although not entirely identical to the preserved tapestries.<sup>8</sup> On a drawing attributed to an assistant of Jordaens (British Museum, London), the middle part shows a similar scene, while the architecture has been completed on the left and right (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup>

The Van der Bruggen family had already been active in Brussels since the sixteenth century, but there is little information about their activities.<sup>10</sup> Conrad and Gaspar are the best known and their monograms have been identified.

A complete set of eight pieces is kept in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. T C).<sup>11</sup> That series is of high quality and was woven by Conrad Van der Bruggen and Henry I Reydamas around 1635. Another complete edition, possibly the oldest one, is kept in Hardwick Hall (Derbyshire, U.K.).<sup>12</sup> The tapestries bear the signature 'Jacq Geubels', which refers to Jacques II Geubels (c. 1599–c. 1629/1633) (cat. D2). Additional monograms were also applied, including this one of Conrad van der Bruggen. These weavers worked as subcontractors to Geubels.<sup>13</sup>

Many additional examples have also been preserved in a variety of locations.<sup>14</sup> As there are almost no differences between all these editions, they must have been woven from the same cartoon or from exact copies of it. [IDM]

1. Nelson, p. 92; Mulherron 2012, p. 8.

2. Idem.

3. Idem, p. 28.

4. Nelson 1998, p. 30. No preparatory drawing has been preserved for this design.

5. R.A. d'Hulst has shown that some of the scenes should not be read as mere illustrations of country life, but that they refer, amongst other things, to proverbs, see Hulst 1982, p. 292.

6. Mulherron 2012, p. 6.

7. Idem, p. 8.

8. Antwerp 1993, vol. II, pp. 32–35; Nelson 1998, p. 92.

9. Inv. 1900,0824,139, drawing brown ink on paper, see Brussels 1994, p. 61.

10. Brussels 1977, p. 20.

11. Idem, nos. 1–8 and New York 2007, pp. 234–40.

12. Mulherron 2012.

13. Idem, p. 5. The monogram of Geubels and an unknown monogram occur.

14. Idem, pp. 20–21.



## THE BATTLE OF NIEUWPOORT

Northern Netherlands, Delft, c. 1647–48  
 Workshop of Maximiliaan van der Gucht (1603–1689)  
 Design by Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne (1589–1662)  
 Wool and silk; 167 × 789 cm; 8 to 9 warps per cm  
 Inv. 832

Provenance: 1895, bought at an auction

Literature: Van Ysselsteijn 1936, II, pp. 309, 443, p. LXX–LXXI, figs. 145–146; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 64–65, no. 57; Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, p. 185–186; Hennel 1994, pp. 65 and 157; Roylton-Kisch 1987, pp. 63–78; Buijsen 2018, 1, p. 32 and fig. 0.7.

*History*

The contract relating to the order of the piece from Maximiliaan van der Gucht by the Polish nobleman Seweryn de Goluchowski has been preserved. It is dated 12 September 1647.<sup>1</sup> In that contract, the purchaser is stated to be an ensign of the Groningen guard of His Royal Highness. This was probably Stadtholder Frederick Hendrik, who died in March 1647.

A meeting with Goluchowski is mentioned in the travel diary of the later king of Poland, Jan III Sobieski, and his brother, in Groningen in 1646.<sup>2</sup>

This battle took place at Nieuwpoort on 2 July 1600 between the Spanish troops of Archduke Albert and those of the Northern Republic under Prince Maurits.<sup>3</sup> The battle extends across the entire width of the piece, in front of the dunes. On the left is the town of Nieuwpoort, on the right is the village of Westende and in the rear, the

Dutch fleet. In the foreground we see the cavalry and to the left and right, the horsemen sounding their trumpets. In the centre, the troops of Prince Maurice fight against those of Archduke Albert, seated on his white horse.

The capital cities of the seventeen provinces are indicated by an inscription with their Latin names. At the top, from left to right: Bruxella, Limburgum, Luxemburgum, Antwerpia, Amstelodamum, Novimagum, Middelburgum, and Zutphania. At the bottom, from left to right: Atrebatum, Mons, Hannoniae, Namurcum, Mechlinia, Gandavum, Lewardum, Ultraiectum, Daventria, and Groninga.

The arms are clarified by Latin inscriptions. At the top, from left to right: Brabantia, Limburgum, Luxemburgum, Geldria, Artesia, Hannonia, Hollandia, and Zelandia. At the bottom, from left to right: Namurra, Zuthania, March. S.Imperii, Friesia, Mechlinia, Traiectum, Transisulunia, and Groninga.

At the top in the middle of the frame, the cartouche surrounded by banners depicts an allegorical scene: on either side of a river, two horsemen with Archduke Albert on the left and Prince Maurice on the right. With each of them pulling on their side, they are tearing up a map of the Netherlands. Above them, a hand appears from the clouds, holding a pair of scales. The bowl with a hat with broad brims, symbolising the United Provinces, carries more weight than the bowl filled with a crown, a sceptre and a sword, allusions to Spanish power. The other hand holds a laurel wreath above the victor Maurice of Nassau.

In the vertical borders, on the left, the Palace of the Dukes of Brabant on the Coudenberg with the inscription Palatium Brabantia, and on the right, a view of the Binnenhof in The Hague with the inscription Palatium Hollandiae.

*Commentary*

The dimensions of the tapestry are quite exceptional. Its low height in contrast to its exceptional length suggests that the tapestry was intended to be placed above a piece of furniture, such as a sofa or panelling. This custom is less common in the Netherlands than in Italy.

The depiction of a battle and views of cities are a less frequent theme, certainly in the Southern Netherlands, where one well-known example, the series depicting the battles of Archduke Albert from the design of Otto van Veen, was woven in Brussels in 1597–99.<sup>4</sup> In the Northern Netherlands, people were more interested in depicting more or less contemporary events, such as the *Naval Battles of Zeeland Against the Spaniards* at Middelburg, or a variety of maps.<sup>5</sup>

The reason for the battle was that the Northern Provinces refused to submit to the authority of the newly appointed Archduke for the Netherlands, Archduke Albrecht. The Spanish troops ingloriously lost this battle. The comparison with early descriptions of the battle<sup>6</sup> makes it clear that the depiction on the tapestry is a





mixture of reality and artistic interpretation.<sup>7</sup> In reality, the fighting took place mainly in the dunes, making an overview of the troops, as depicted on the tapestry, impossible. In the tapestry, the action mainly takes place between the two troops on the beach, nicely positioned opposite each other, with the dunes and the ships on the North Sea behind them.

The cities represented around the battlefield in the horizontal strips are the administrative capitals of the seventeen provinces, alternating with their coats of arms, and, in the left border, the Palace on the Coudenberg of the Dukes of Burgundy and on the right, the Binnenhof in The Hague. Similar cityscapes were incorporated into political maps from the end of the sixteenth century onwards.<sup>8</sup>

It has not been established why the purchaser chose this particular battle as the subject of a tapestry.<sup>9</sup> Was it in honour of the death of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik in that year? Or was it to ask a favour of the new stadtholder William II?<sup>10</sup>

The tapestry is not signed, but because of the preserved contract there is no doubt that Maximiliaan van der Gucht was the weaver. This weaver was also active in Gouda, but in Delft in 1637 he took over the most successful workshop in the Northern Netherlands from the Flemish immigrant François Aertsz. Spiering (cat. 45). He received some of the most prestigious orders in the Northern Netherlands from various authorities around the middle of the century. His customers also included several Polish noblemen<sup>11</sup> and he therefore delivered work of high quality. The tapestry is very fine with a high number of warp threads and a lot of silk for the weft.<sup>12</sup> This fineness justifies the rather high cost of the order.

The workshops in the Northern Netherlands had to rely on their own designers for this genre. No designer is mentioned in the contract, but recent research allows us to put forward the Northern Dutch painter Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne. In the biography of van de Venne, published by Cornelis De Bie in his *Het Gulden Cabinet* of 1661, he refers to “*een wonder fray stuck van 12 ellen lanck dare in den slach van Vlaenderen bij Nieupoort uytgedrukt is*” (a wonderfully splendid piece that is 12 ells long and depicts the Battle of Flanders at Nieuwpoort). The representation of the cities is also mentioned, together with the purchaser, a Polish count. Since the dimensions given correspond to the length of the tapestry, De Bie is referring to the tapestry or perhaps to the cartoon, but not to a first sketch.<sup>13</sup>

Van de Venne was born in 1589 in Delft from parents who came from Lier. He married and worked in Middelburg from 1614, but moved to The Hague as early as 1624. There, he sold Orangist prints, among other things, whereas beforehand, he received the commission

to engrave portraits of Princes Maurice and Frederik Hendrik.<sup>14</sup> A subject such as *The Battle of Nieuwpoort* is therefore in keeping with his oeuvre.

The lively elaboration of the figures bears a resemblance to an engraving commemorating the victory of Frederik Hendrik in 's-Hertogenbosch in 1629. A similar characteristic is found in his album of miniatures, preserved in the British Museum and dated 1626.<sup>15</sup>

The 1640s have been put forward as the date of the design, taking into account the date of weaving. Adriaen van de Venne was very versatile. Besides being a painter, he was also active as a print designer, illustrator, poet and as a seller of books and prints.<sup>16</sup>

The horizontal borders were sewn on instead of woven on, but are from the same period and have the same density. They were probably applied by the same workshop at the time of delivery. The reason for this rather unusual way of working remains unknown. They are decorated with various festoons composed of fruits and flowers and enlivened with different types of birds, including parrots, and squirrels. The vertical borders are also composed of flowers and fruits, but are contiguous instead of organised in festoons. [IDM]

1. Van Ysselsteyn 1936, I: 139 and II: 271, no. 598.

2. Information in a letter from Magdalena Piwocka, Krakow, dated 10 November 1984.

3. Vlaminc 1981

4. New York 2007, pp. 54–59.

5. Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, pp. 183–187.

6. Blau 1649: *De slag bij Nieupoort* (The Battle of Nieuwpoort).

7. Royalton-Kisch 1987, p. 73.

8. Crick-Kuntziger n.d.: 64; Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, p. 186.

9. Royalton-Kisch 1987, p. 75.

10. Hartkamp-Jonxis 2004, p. 186.

11. Van Ysselsteyn 1936, I, pp. 133–140.

12. It is precisely the use of a large amount of fine silk thread that has been detrimental to the long-term preservation of the tapestry.

13. Royalton-Kisch 1987, pp. 70–71. The fact that De Bie refers to the tapestry is most likely because the cartoon should have been painted in mirror image, and therefore the names of the cities would also stand out, though he says nothing about that.

14. Buijsen, 2018, pp. 29–34.

15. Royalton-Kisch 1987, pp. 68–70.

16. Buijsen, 2018, p. 32.







[52]

[52]

## TABLE CARPET WITH THE ARMS OF ALBERT DE TAMISON

Southern Netherlands, Enghien, 1640–before 1657  
 City mark of Enghien and monogram of the workshop  
 of Hendrik van der Cammen (1603–76)  
 Designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 310 × 320 cm; 8 warps per cm  
 Inv. 4149

Provenance: 1904, exchanged from the collection of  
 Count A. de Limburg-Stirum for a tapestry from Oudenaarde  
 that was in the collection of the museum<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Destrée 1895; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 66, no. 59;  
 Asselberghs 1964, no. 16; Delmarcel 1980: no. 6.

### History

Before it came into the collection of Count A. de Limburg-Stirum, it was situated in the De Zetrud-Lumay castle (Brabant) and the original coats of arms were painted over in oil with the arms of the French d'Albon family who owned Zetrud-Lumay in the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

The coat of arms of the nobleman Albert de Tamison was woven into the borders in two places. He came from Namur where he was an alderman, but where he subsequently got into trouble. In 1628, he was restored to honour and twelve years later he was knighted. In 1640, he relocated from Namur to Enghien and became governor of the town and seigniory of Enghien. He continued in this position until his death in 1657.<sup>3</sup>

The section on the table is a large central motif with an abundance of fruits and vegetables, including melons and asparagus. Loose flowers are scattered around those. The central part is framed by a non-symmetrical secondary motif. This is made up of volutes, angels' heads and fruit festoons. All of these are presented in rich colours on a light-blue background.

The wide borders are meant to hang down along the sides of the table and all four are equally composed and images of full fruits also play a prominent role.

### Commentary

The table carpet itself is purely decorative, without figurative representations, and its shape is clearly predestined for a square table. Table carpets were often woven in the seventeenth century as a form of interior decoration (cat. 43 and 58). The main suppliers were centres of weaving in the Northern Netherlands,<sup>4</sup> but these types of decorations were also woven in the Southern Netherlands. By the mid-seventeenth century, table carpets of this type were an exponent of luxury home culture.

The tapestry bears the town mark of Enghien, one of the smaller weaving centres in the Southern Netherlands (cat. 33). The mark of the weaver Hendrik van der Cammen is also woven into the reinforced edge. The monogram has been identified thanks to other tapestries on which it appears alongside his full name.<sup>5</sup> The weaver Van der Cammen is mentioned in documents from the second quarter of the seventeenth century. He collaborated with the Brussels weaver François van den Hecke on a series of portières. Van der Cammen possibly moved to Brussels later on.<sup>6</sup>

Portraits have been placed in cartouches in the corners that hang down. The two female portraits are identical, while the male pair, one of which has a laurel wreath, are different. The long sides are decorated with the same rich fruits and some flowers as the central part. Along two opposite sides, these festoons are held up by two angels arranged around a cartouche containing a landscape. On the other two sides, the angels are replaced by female grotesques around a cartouche containing the coat of arms of Albert de Tamison. [IDM]

1. File 471 in the archive of the RMAH. Correspondence since 1902 reads "Le musée possède deux verdure d'Audenarde représentant le même paysage". An exchange was therefore possible. The value of the Oudenaarde tapestry was estimated to be higher and therefore the owner had to purchase a piece for the museum for the value of 500 frs. This was done in 1906 with the donation of a relic.

2. Destrée 1895, pp. 465–467.

3. Idem, pp. 467–468.

4. Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, pp. 273–274.

5. Enghien 1980, nos. 24–26.

6. Blazkova & Duverger 1970, pp. 20–21.



## THE STORY OF ACHILLES

Five tapestries  
Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1650–53  
Attributed to the workshop of Frans Raes  
(born 1607–active until c. 1658)  
Design by Peter Paul Rubens (1570–1640)  
Wool and silk; 8 to 9 warps per cm  
Inv. 2107-2111

Provenance: 1875, purchased at the auction  
at the Hôtel Van Susteren-Dubois in Antwerp<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1934; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 68–70,  
nos. 62–66; Brussels 1977, nos. 33–37; Antwerp 1997, pp. 106–125.

History

Originally consisting of six pieces, the series was ordered by the Milanese merchant Giacomo Antonio de Carena for his patrician residence (Huis Osterrieth) on the Meir in Antwerp, which he bought in 1649. The coats of arms appearing in the middle of the lower border were applied after 30 December 1655, which is the date on which Carena was raised to the nobility, and before 9 March 1669, when the series is mentioned in his will. One of the pieces was lost in the eighteenth century.

Commentary

The *Story of Achilles* is the last of the four series designed by Rubens.<sup>2</sup> It is generally assumed that he designed them for Daniel Fourment, the father of his second wife, Helena Fourment, a wealthy Antwerp merchant in silk and tapestries. Based on stylistic comparisons, its origins could therefore be situated after the marriage in 1630 and before 1635.<sup>3</sup> Recently, the dates 1638–39 have been put forward, taking into account the activities of the weaver Eggermans.<sup>4</sup> The estate inventory after the death of the merchant Fourment in 1643 mentions eight sketches on panel with the *Story of Achilles* and a tapestry series consisting of ten pieces on the same theme.<sup>5</sup>

It has not been determined whether Fourment ordered the designs for his own commercial activities or acted as

an intermediary for a client.<sup>6</sup> It is possible that this person had a hand in choosing the subject. As with other designs by Rubens, this one is unusual in its elaboration. The theme is based on Homer's *Iliad*, but supplemented with more contemporary interpretations.<sup>7</sup> From the story of the Greek hero in the War of Troy, the first three tapestries were reserved for events in his youth. The others are set during the Trojan War and Achilles' love life plays a central part. Homer told very little about Achilles' life outside the battle, and the scenes are therefore mainly the product of Rubens' imagination. He wanted to give his vision of the hero by choosing moments from his life that showed both the human and heroic side of his character.<sup>8</sup> Once again, Rubens' knowledge of antique descriptions and depictions comes to the fore in these designs.<sup>9</sup>

The eight small designs, the bozzetti,<sup>10</sup> and the modelli<sup>11</sup> have survived until now. The paper cartoons have not survived, but they were mentioned in correspondence.<sup>12</sup> The first dateable order was in 1642 and the cartoons were last mentioned in 1685. It is striking that the cartoons and the modelli remained together until the end of the seventeenth century and were always owned by a merchant. Initially, they were the property of the trading company of Peter Fourment, the son of Daniel, and Peter van Hecke the Younger, and later, in 1653, by the Antwerp merchant Hendrik Lenaerts and the Brussels weavers Jan Van Leefdael and Gerard van der Strecken, each of whom owned a third. The owner was free to distribute the cartoons among different weavers according to the order. Most of the editions date from after Rubens' death, and no single edition has survived in its entirety.<sup>13</sup>

The first woven edition may have been owned by the French king Louis Philippe (1773–1850). It was sold publicly after his death in 1852. Afterwards it was distributed in private collections and four tapestries are now in the palace of Vila Viçosa in Portugal. The tapestry *The Wrath of Achilles* became part of the collection of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, inv. MBT 60 (fig. 1). The edition was the work of the Brussels weaver Daniël Eggermans.<sup>14</sup> He followed Rubens' drawings very closely and used silver thread for the weaving. As in the *Triumph of the Eucharist*, Rubens designed a border as an architectural frame for the scene.<sup>15</sup> When hung border to border,



**[FIG. 1]** *The Wrath of Achilles*, from *The Story of Achilles*, Brussels, workshop of Daniel Eggermans, 1639–1642. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. MBT 60.

the tapestries formed a gallery with terminal caryatids, architraves and lower borders, within which the scenes of Achilles' life were enacted.<sup>16</sup>

After Eggermans, various other weavers from Brussels produced editions of the series. The first archival mention of a woven set of twelve pieces for a Spanish merchant was provided by Jan I Raes (1574–1651) in 1642. The Raes family also had the other designs by Rubens on their looms, with the exception of the French *Story of Constantine*. The preserved series and single Achilles pieces by Raes were woven before 1653 at the latest, when the cartoons changed hands.<sup>17</sup> In view of the biographical details of the purchaser, Giacomo Antonio de Carena, the lower border with his coat of arms must have been added later.

This series bears no manufacturer's mark, but the borders are identical to those of a documented series of eight *Landscapes with Small Figures*, now in the castle at Nachod (Czech Republic). They were designed by Lucas van Uden (1595–1672), and commissioned in August 1649 by Octavio Piccolomini (1599–1656) from the Antwerp dealer Luigi Malo. Malo in turn commissioned the series from the Brussels weaver Jan Raes. Raes wrote that he was working on the design of the border. Despite the small differences, the comparison makes it clear that the border comes from the same workshop.<sup>18</sup>

Because the drawing of the lower border does not continue in the vertical borders, it is possible that the lower

border was only applied, at the time of ordering, to a series that was already in stock.<sup>19</sup> The series could therefore have been woven earlier than 1655 but after 1649, the first edition of the border, but there is no conclusive evidence for this.

It is difficult to determine which individual from the famous family of weavers actually produced the series. Since Jan II had already died in 1639, his father Jan I (1574–1651) and his son Frans (born in 1607 and active until c. 1658) are possible candidates.<sup>20</sup> Both weavers, who were active around 1650, left their marks on the editions of the Achilles series.<sup>21</sup>

The beautiful border is composed of several festoons of fruits and flowers, complemented by other decorative elements. In the upper border, two putti stand around the empty cartouche, and in the corners, an eagle is holding horizontal and vertical garlands. In the centre of the vertical borders, a medallion depicting a parrot has been applied and they end at a lion bust on a volute. In the lower border, the cartouche with the coat of arms of Carena is surrounded by eagles.

[53.1]

**THETIS DIPPING ACHILLES IN THE STYX**

Inv. 2107  
423 × 348 cm

Achilles was born the son of the mortal king Peleus and the immortal Nereid, Thetis. To make her son also immortal, Thetis dipped little Achilles into the Styx, the river of the underworld. The newborn therefore became invulnerable, except in the part of his body with which his mother held him, namely his sole or, according to others, his heel.<sup>22</sup>

Thetis is assisted by an old woman, holding a distaff in her belt. She is one of the three Parcae or Fates, who spin the course of man's life and cut the thread at his death. The old Fate is holding a torch with which she illuminates the scene along the bank of the subterranean river, over which the dead are ferried to the underworld by the boatman Charon. In the background, the flames of the underworld flare up, with a gallows and a wheel in front of them. Two bats flutter around in the light of the torch. On the right is Cerberus, the three-headed guard dog of the kingdom of the dead, with one head asleep, one head awake, and another head barking.

Achilles' invulnerability as a result of his immersion is not mentioned in Homer, but only in works by later writers such as Statius' *Achilleis* (45–96 AD). This was taken up again by late antique and medieval mythographers, especially Fulgentius and his *Mitologiae* (fifth century AD) and Boccaccio in his *Genealogia deorum* (1350–75).





[53-1]



[53-2]





[FIG. 2] P.P. Rubens, *Thetis Dipping Achilles in the Styx*, oil on panel, 1638-1639. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 1760.



[FIG. 3] P.P. Rubens, *The Education of Achilles by the Centaur Chiron*, oil on panel, 1638-1639. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 1760a.

The geography and appearance of the underworld largely go back to the description in Virgil's *Aeneid* (VI. 295-316).

In his original oil sketch (Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, inv. 1760) (fig. 2) and the modello (Ringling Museum, Sarasota), Rubens framed this scene with the pillar busts or herms of Hades and Persephone, the gods of the underworld. At the bottom is a plinth, on which he placed Cerberus in between the herms. Thetis' arm and Achilles' submerged body stood as a central axis within the composition. This composition was also preserved in the first edition by Eggermans. Due to the fact that in the later version, the architectural frame disappeared, Cerberus moved to the bank of the Styx. As a result, the new cartoon designers and weavers somewhat disrupted this axis. A strange monster was also added to the Styx.<sup>23</sup>

[53.2]

**THE EDUCATION OF ACHILLES  
BY THE CENTAUR CHIRON**

Inv. 2108  
423 × 255 cm

The wise centaur Chiron, half horse and half human, was the educator of many a Greek hero. Peleus decided that his son Achilles would be apprenticed to this master in medicine, music, riding and hunting. Here, Chiron is giving his student a riding lesson. Music and hunting are evoked by the lyre, suspended from a branch, and by the hound that walks at Chiron's feet.

Rubens probably based the depiction on the description of the *Imagines* by Philostratus (third century AD). For the group of Chiron and Achilles, he used as a model a marble Roman copy of a lost Hellenistic bronze statue, the so-called Borghese centaur. He owned no fewer than six drawings of this antique statue.<sup>24</sup>

The original design (Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, inv. 1760a) (fig. 3) puts more emphasis on this didactic program. The dogs and the trophies in the foreground on the plinth refer to hunting. The flanking herms depict the physician Aesculapius and one of the Muses. The landscape of the first sketch was changed in the modello by Rubens. A middle plane was created by adding a hill and an open forest with a dirt road to the right of Achilles.<sup>25</sup>

On this narrower version, there is no more room for the hounds, however a small dog was added between the centaur's legs. In the foreground, there is also more vegetation and at the back a village view has been added on the hill. A new cartoon must also have been painted for this scene.



[FIG. 4] P.P. Rubens, *The Wrath of Achilles*, oil on panel, 1638-1639. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 1760b.

[53.3]

**THE WRATH OF ACHILLES**

Inv. 2109  
423 × 376 cm

After besieging Troy for nine years, the Greeks had made little progress. Their army was crippled by the plague and the seer Calchas announced that the favour of the gods would only be won if the commander-in-chief Agamemnon would return his slave girl Chryseis to her father Chryses. Agamemnon agreed on the condition that he be given Briseis, Achilles' own beloved slave girl. At this, Achilles flew into a rage, and the quarrel can be found in the opening scene of Homer's *Iliad* (I, 193-200), which was Rubens' direct source for this scene. In front of Agamemnon's throne, in his tent, Achilles is about to draw his sword. At that moment, the goddess Pallas Athena appears behind him, sent by Hera, and she stops the outraged hero by the hair. Achilles turns around and sees the goddess alone. To the bystanders, including old Nestor holding Agamemnon's arm and Diomedes in the foreground, she is invisible.

On the sketch (Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, inv. 1760b) (fig. 4), both Athena and the (four) bystanders emerge from behind the lateral herm statues, the personifications of Blind Anger and Discord. In the modello (now Courtauld Institute, London, inv. PG 374), only three additional bystanders appear, just like in the

woven versions. A large chained and roaring lion, symbolising the curbed wrath, depicted in the foreground of the sketch and modello on the plinth, is omitted on most woven editions, as is the case here. In this version, a greyhound has been added in front of the steps.

[53.4]

**THE RETURN OF BRISEIS**

Inv. 2110  
City mark of Brussels  
416 × 593 cm

When his best friend Patroclus was killed in battle, Achilles decided to avenge him and take up arms again. Agamemnon sent him the gifts he had promised before and had him bring back Briseis. At the back of the tent, the dead Patroclus is lamented. In the foreground, Achilles joyfully greets Briseis and her retinue, brought back by Nestor. Nestor seems to be pushing her forward. In his account of the return, Rubens essentially followed the *Iliad* and was the first to portray this version since antiquity.

In the design, the herms on the left and right are busts of Mercury and of Concordia. On the plinth are the horn of plenty, the caduceus and a palm branch. By omitting the original framing, this version eliminates any reference to Peace or Harmony.<sup>26</sup>

Some elements of the painted sketch (Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 53,356) (fig. 5) and modello (Museo del Prado, Madrid, inv. 2566) were left out on this tapestry. In the rear plane, between Briseis and Nestor, a female servant and one horse are omitted. Of the three horses on the far right, only two were included.



[FIG. 5] P.P. Rubens, *The Return of Briseis*, oil on panel, 1638-1639. The Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 53.356.





[53-3]



[53-4]





[53-5]

[53-5]  
THE DEATH OF ACHILLES

Inv. 2111  
418 × 390 cm

The final subject of the series is the death of the Greek hero. According to legend, Achilles had fallen in love with Polyxena, a sister of Hector and daughter of the Trojan monarchs, Priam and Hecuba. Paris succeeded in luring him into a trap. Polyxena was promised to him if he would go unarmed and secretly at night to the temple of Apollo Thymbraseus to bless this union. When Achilles acceded to this and knelt before the altar, Paris, son of Priam, emerges from a hiding place and shoots an arrow, guided by Apollo, through Achilles' sole, his only vulnerable spot. On the tapestry, Achilles' helper and the two priests are stunned by the event.<sup>27</sup>

The literary source of this version of Achilles' death may be Servius Grammaticus, a late antique mythographer (fourth century A.D.) who is mentioned in *Boccaccio's Genealogia deorum* and later in the mythological dictionary of Natale Conti.<sup>28</sup>

On the sketch (Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, inv. 1760e) (fig. 6), the Greek hero's downfall due to his misplaced love for an enemy's daughter and the treacherous ambush of the Trojans is symbolically emphasised by the herm figures of Aphrodite, goddess of love, and Apollo, protector of the Trojans, and the animal group on the front plinth, where a fox kills an eagle.



[FIG. 6] P.P. Rubens, *The Death of Achilles*, oil on panel, 1638–1639. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 1760e.

This is a further explanation of the scene: cunning overcomes strength. On the first woven edition (Paço Ducal, Vila Viçosa), these references remain. In the various later editions, the same composition was maintained, but the background in Raes' version is granted more space: the arch of the niche on the left is clearer and the view through to the landscape on the right is also wider.<sup>29</sup> In the present version, as in the second tapestry (cat. 53.2), a small dog was added on the right.<sup>30</sup> [IDM]

1. Auction of 18 January 1875.
2. The monograph by Haverkamp Begemann in the 1975 series, *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, provides the most complete information. For an overview of the series by Rubens, see De Meüter 2019, pp. 56–71.
3. Haverkamp-Begemann 1975, pp. 15–19.
4. Brosens 2010, p. 28.
5. Delmarcel in Rotterdam 2003, p. 33.
6. Lemmertse in Rotterdam 2003, p. 14.
7. Haverkamp-Begemann 1975, pp. 20–41.
8. Haely in Rotterdam 2003, pp. 43–46.
9. Idem, pp. 47–48.
10. Seven oil sketches on panel (44 × 36 to 67) are still together in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the eighth is in the Detroit Institute of Arts, see Rotterdam 2003, 59–60; Haverkamp-Begemann 1975, pp. 42–56.
11. The oil paintings on panel (108 × 81 to 162) are in four different collections, see Haverkamp-Begemann 1975, pp. 57–66; Rotterdam 2003, pp. 61–63.
12. Haverkamp Begemann 1975, pp. 67–70; Rotterdam 2003, pp. 24–25, 33–34, 61–63.
13. Haverkamp-Begemann 1975, pp. 72–81.
14. Delmarcel in Rotterdam 2003, pp. 33–37.
15. Idem, pp. 37–41.
16. Idem, pp. 37–38, and Healy in Rotterdam 2013, pp. 50–52.
17. Delmarcel in Rotterdam 2003, pp. 35–37.
18. De Meüter 2012 B, pp. 245–247.
19. Brussels 1977, pp. 105–106.
20. K. Brosens drew up a new family tree of the Raes family on the basis of the parish registers and clarified their relationships, see Brosens 2010, pp. 23–28.
21. Brussels 1977, p. 106.
22. The descriptions and commentaries concerning the five pieces were largely taken from Guy Delmarcel in Brussels 1977.
23. Rotterdam 2003, pp. 64–73.
24. Idem, p. 76.
25. Idem, pp. 74–83.
26. Idem, pp. 106–115.
27. Idem, pp. 136–145.
28. Brussels 1977, p. 116.
29. Rotterdam 2003, pp. 144–145, 33.



## THE DEATH OF DECIUS MUS

Southern Netherlands, mid-seventeenth century  
 Design by Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)  
 Wool and silk; 300 × 480 cm; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. 8860

Provenance: 1953, purchased from Sam Menning

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 59, no. 51;  
 Baumstark & Delmarcel 2020, vol. 1, pp. 398–423.

In a battle with warriors in ancient costumes, a warrior is pierced in the neck by an enemy and falls from his horse, while another rider is ready to strike him with his scimitar. This is the death of the Roman consul Publius Decius Mus (340 B.C.), who – according to Livy – sacrificed himself in battle to make possible the victory of the Romans over the Latins.<sup>1</sup> This subject is the fifth in the series of six with the *Story of Decius Mus*, designed by Peter Paul Rubens at the end of 1616 for the Brussels-Antwerp entrepreneurs



[54]



[FIG. 1] P.P. Rubens, *The Death of Decius Mus*, oil on canvas, 1617. The Princely Liechtenstein Collection, Vienna, inv. G 51.

Jan Raes and Frans Sweerts, and subsequently woven into dozens of versions up to the end of the century.<sup>2</sup>

According to Livy, Decius Mus was killed by a “rain of arrows” while his troops were victoriously pursuing the Latins (“*corruit obrutus telis*”). Here, he is struck by a spear, perhaps referring to the “spears of Mars” (“*hasta Martis*”), the weapons in the Regia that the army commanders came to touch before they left for battle.<sup>3</sup>

For the group of fighting horsemen with jumping horses, Rubens took his inspiration from numerous late-Roman sarcophagi and from a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci for the lost fresco of the Battle of Anghiari in Florence, which he himself updated (Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, Paris).<sup>4</sup> His version of the head of the dying Decius Mus was inspired by a Roman statue, the so-called “dying Alexander”, now in the Uffizi in Florence.<sup>5</sup>

The present tapestry quite closely follows the composition worked out by Rubens on the sketch on panel (Museo del Prado, Madrid)<sup>6</sup> and on the life-size painting on canvas, now in the Liechtenstein collection, Vienna (fig. 1),<sup>7</sup> both of which were executed in mirror image due to the subsequent weaving in low warp.

The weapons of the horsemen, both the sword on the left and the lance on the right, are partly omitted under the heavy cartouche, carried by genii, in the upper border.

In the absence of city or weaver’s marks, this tapestry can only be situated in the production of the series, thanks to its appearance and especially its borders. The bottom

border is missing. The side borders are covered by large, twisted columns. These refer back to Lorenzo Bernini’s canopy for the Basilica of St Peter in Rome (1624–1633) and were introduced into tapestry art by Rubens in his series of the *Triumph of the Eucharist*, 1625–1627. The upper border shows an empty round cartouche carried by two genii and a flower festoon. Other parts of this woven edition have not to date been found. An identical border adorns two *Forest Landscapes* in the Contini-Bonacossi collection in Florence, which do not bear any marks. Crick-Kuntziger refers to tapestries from the Brussels workshop of François van den Hecke (active c. 1600–1675), with similar but not identical borders.<sup>8</sup> Such works have also been attributed either to Oudenaarde<sup>9</sup> or to Antwerp,<sup>10</sup> but the question remains open. [GD]

1. Livy, *Ab Urbe condita*, Book VIII, chapters 6, 9 and 10.
2. Baumstark & Delmarcel 2020, vol. 1, pp. 398–423 – a detailed analysis by R. Baumstark of this tapestry, vol. 1, pp. 433–434.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 402–403.
4. Baumstark & Delmarcel 2020, II, p. 106, fig. 104.
5. *Ibid.*, II, p. 101, fig. 90.
6. Inv. 2456, 100 x 140 cm; Baumstark & Delmarcel 2020, I, fig. 113.
7. Inv. G 51; 288.50 x 499.8 cm; Baumstark & Delmarcel 2020, I, fig. 88.
8. See, among others, the *Torments of Cupid*, Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional, series 61 (Junquera 1986 I, p. 158).
9. J. Duverger 1974 B and E. Duverger in Ghent 1975, pp. 540–545.
10. Ferrero Viale 1971, pp. 63–66; Forti Grazzini 1988, pp. 60–63.



## NEPTUNE CREATING THE HORSE



[55]

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, mid-seventeenth century  
 City mark of Brussels and the signature H REYDAMS belonging to  
 the workshop of Hendrik Reydam the Elder (active 1629–1669)  
 Design by Jacques Jordaens (1593–1678)  
 Wool and silk; 377 × 507 cm; 9/10 warps per cm  
 Inv. 8666

Provenance: 1948, acquired via the services of the O.R.E.

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1955; Crick-Kuntziger 1956,  
 pp. 67–68, no. 61.

In the centre, Neptune, seen from the back and standing on a shell, creates the horse by plunging his raised trident into the bank covered with water plants. The beautiful white horse is rearing. Next to Neptune sits probably Amphitrite, his chosen nymph, in her chariot accompanied by a cupid. Tritons, Nereids and dolphins accompany the god of the sea and his wife. These sea creatures have the upper body of a human being, but from the waist down they are shaped like a fish. Above their heads hover groups of putti.

This subject from classical mythology is described by several authors, such as Philostratos and Pausanias. According to them, Neptune was the father of horsemanship.<sup>1</sup> The creation of the horse is the first scene of the *Riding School* series.<sup>2</sup>

#### Commentary

The *Riding School* series, after models by Jacques Jordaens, is mentioned from the 1650s onwards, but it may have been designed earlier.<sup>3</sup>

The interest in horsemanship dates back to ancient times and was revived in Naples in the sixteenth century. It was not only considered to be one of the most beautiful and pleasant occupations, but also an exercise necessary for the health of body and mind. A few publications illustrated this interest. The best known are those of Antoine de Pluvinel (1555–1620), published posthumously in 1623, and of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle (1592–1676), published in Antwerp in 1653.<sup>4</sup>

The horse and the skills of horsemanship therefore formed the ideal subject for a series of tapestries, a medium that was reserved for the social class to which the most ardent admirers of the noble animal belonged.

Documents describe the series as being “...of *Groote peerden...*” or “...*grote actie van peerden...*” (“of large horses” or “large scenes with horses”). One document is a contract from 1651 between a merchant, Carlos Vincque, and the weavers Reydam-Leyniers, which refers to an earlier purchase of two sets of “small scenes with horses”. In contrast to the new order, referring to Jordaens’ cartoons, the earlier orders do not mention a designer.<sup>5</sup> It therefore seems that different versions were marketed by the same workshop. Fine examples of both versions are probably the two complete sets of eight pieces, in Vienna and Hluboká respectively, which are still preserved, and which were produced by the same weavers. The eight pieces in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna can be considered depictions of grand, “large-horse” *manège* (riding school). Jordaens’ hand is clearly recognisable.<sup>6</sup> The series in Hluboká castle is dedicated to *manège* on a smaller scale.<sup>7</sup> This series was bought by Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in 1647. It is noted that the figures there differ from the version in Vienna.

With regard to their composition and background, the tapestries in Vienna can be divided into three groups. The *Creation of the Horse* and the *Presentation of Horses* are an introduction to the riding school proper. Another group of three, each with the *Levade*, is set against a piece of architecture and the last, with *Mezair*, *Ballotade* and *Capriole*, in the wild. It is these kinds of setting that predominate in small horsemanship.

No cartoons have been preserved, only four modelli for the large dressage. Each time, it appears that during the elaboration of the designs to the cartoons, elements on the sides were left out.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to compare this monumental and dynamic representation of the creation of the horse with the modello and the two different woven editions.

The modello of the representation is a painting on canvas, signed by Jordaens and dated around 1645, and now in the Pitti Palace in Florence (inv. 1234).<sup>9</sup> A life drawing for study purposes for the figure of Venus is also preserved





[FIG. 1] Neptune Creating the Horse, from *The Riding School*, Brussels, Evrard Leyniers, c. 1647. Hluboká Castle, inv. HL 1286.

in the National Gallery in Washington (inv. B7643).<sup>10</sup>

The painting most closely matches the version in Vienna, woven in mirror image. The design is wider though and with more sea creatures in the water next to Neptune and along the other side. The pose of the sea god and the horse is similar, but that of the naked nymph on her chariot is very different. The putti hovering in the sky are gone. Due to the difference in composition, the female character is more central to the design than Neptune.

A comparison of the Vienna version (Kunsthistorisches Museum, s. XL/1),<sup>11</sup> with the Hluboká and Brussels versions reveals that they are both the same width, but wider than the Vienna version and even wider than the design. On the left, a standing nymph has been added and on the right two nymphs were inserted. The putti from the design are also present. A similar edition is preserved in the Toms collection, but the border is a simple floral border that can be attributed to a later date.<sup>12</sup>

The main difference between the Hluboká (fig. 1) and Brussels versions is the border, in which more reeds are shown in the Brussels version, and a strip of sky at the top in Hluboká is replaced by a line of water at the bottom in the Brussels version.

The border, with an architecturally conceived frame, is typical of the period. On the left, a female figure of a herm (Epona, goddess of the horse?),<sup>13</sup> and on the right, a male figure of a herm, with the attributes of Mercury.

At the top, the putti carry the typical garlands of flowers and fruit and at the bottom, weapons and battle trophies are depicted.

Like the depiction itself, the border is also more in line with the series in Hluboká. The distribution contains similar elements along the four sides, but it is not identical. For example, the herms on the left and right are different in shape and have been worked out more as a border, whereas in the Brussels piece the herms really function as architecture. In the horizontal border at the top, the putti are missing. This type of border is totally different from the version preserved in Vienna, in which it is more traditionally composed of floral and fruit garlands, alternating with similar weapons and battle trophies. [IDM]

1. Nelson 1998, p. 123.
2. Idem, p. 123.
3. Idem, pp. 39–39.
4. J. Duverger 1959 gives an overview of the theme in tapestry art in the seventeenth century.
5. Idem, p. 42.
6. Idem, nos. 9–16; Antwerp 1993, pp. 290–301.
7. Cichrova 2014, pp. 139–165.
8. Antwerp 1993, p. 291.
9. Idem, p. 228, cat. A72, dimensions: 67 x 130.
10. Idem, cat. B50.
11. Brussels 1977, nos. 9–16.
12. Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, cat. 44.
13. Nelson 1998, p. 124.

[56]

## MILITARY SCENE

Southern Netherlands, Brussels(?), mid-seventeenth century  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 339 x 218 cm; 7 warps per cm  
Inv. 2034

Provenance: 1873, bought from the hospital of Lier

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956: pp. 66–67, no. 60.

A crowned figure under a canopy descends a staircase, covered with cloths. The figure wears a rich cloak trimmed with ermine and carries a sceptre in his right hand. Descending the steps and with his left hand raised up in the air, he is depicted in full motion. He is flanked by soldiers to the left and the right. In front of him on the stairs kneels a warrior wearing a helmet. The man is looking up at him.

### Commentary

The story of this episode has not been identified. The king's agitated attitude leads us to suspect that this is a specific scene depicting submission to a king, rather than a generic one. In this case, the crowned figure is not presented statically on a throne. What his relationship is to the kneeling figure cannot be determined. The drawing of the figures, their poses but especially the typical heads, place the design with an artist from the entourage of Jacques Jordaens. The style is reminiscent of his series depicting the *Life of Charlemagne* and the *Story of Alexander*.<sup>1</sup> It is assumed that not all the cartoons created by Jordaens are known, and it has also been established that he reused parts of the cartoons for a new subject.<sup>2</sup>

There is a striking resemblance to the series *Judith and Holofernes* in Hluboká, the designer of which is also unknown (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> It shows the same monumentality,



[FIG. 1] Nebuchadnezzar Entrusts his Army to Holofernes, from *The Story of Judith and Holofernes*, Brussels, Evrard Leyniers, c. 1647. Hluboká Castle, inv. HL 5493.





[56]



[FIG. 2] *The Marriage of Constantine's Half-Sister Constantia and Licinius*, from *The Story of Constantine*, Brussels, Matthijs Roelants, c. 1650. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, inv. 018678.

pathos and moving attitudes. The series was ordered in 1647 by Archduke Leopold-Wilhelm and the weavers are Everard Leyniers and Hendrik Reydam's the Elder.

The cartoon designer might be Antoon Sallaert (1594–1658),<sup>4</sup> a prolific supplier of cartoons in Brussels. There are similarities with his *Story of Theseus*<sup>5</sup> in the use of low perspective and in the facial types with fine profiles and sharp noses, often wearing helmets adorned with striking feathers.<sup>6</sup> But his contemporary, Lanceloot Lefebure (1585–after 1650), might also have been the supplier of the cartoons. Their work bears a great deal of similarity.<sup>7</sup> Several scenes in Lefebure's *Story of Constantine* (fig. 2), c. 1650, depict scenes of a ruler on a staircase and kneeling subjects, but the compositions are more classically constructed and the poses more rigid. A definite attribution is not yet possible, for the lack of further means of comparison.

The tapestry is quite narrow, but it has not been reduced in width, so it may have been supplied as a complementary piece to a work hitherto unknown. The fineness of the weave makes it very likely that this tapestry was woven in Brussels in an important workshop.

The borders are decorated with armorial trophies on three sides. In the vertical borders, which are set off at the bottom left and bottom right with a pedestal and a

console, a kneeling putto is carrying a fruit basket on his head. At the top, two putti carry the heavy garlands, typical for that time. [IDM]

1. Crick-Kuntziger 1937, pp. 136–140; Forti Grazzini 1994, pp. 311–325; Petterilli 1942, p. 43.
2. Crick-Kuntziger 1937, p. 145; D'Hulst 1982, pp. 306–308.
3. Cichrova 2014, pp. 167–193; Blazkova 1959, pp. 92–94.
4. Junquera 1974 B; Delmarcel 1999, pp. 240–241.
5. Junquera 1981; and Junquera & Diaz 1986, series 56–57.
6. In the catalogue, Crick-Kuntziger made a connection with the designer of the *Inclinations of Man*, designs which are now attributed to Antoon Sallaert, see Crick-Kuntziger (1936), no. 60, p. 67.
7. Brosens 2009, pp. 366–367.



## CHIMNEY PIECE WITH THE LIFE OF JOSEPH

Northern Netherlands, Delft or Gouda (?), 1650–1670  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 30 × 325 cm; 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 3379

Provenance: 1897, purchased from Mr Bauwens

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 65–66, no. 58;  
Amsterdam 1971–1972, no. 30.

Five oval medallions, each depicting a scene, are displayed against a background of scattered flowers and flower branches. Each medallion is formed by a wreath of leaves, fruits and flowers. The scenes tell the Biblical life of Joseph:

1. Joseph in prison explains the dreams of Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and baker, who were imprisoned by Pharaoh (Genesis 40: 5–19).
2. Joseph explains Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41: 5–36).
3. Joseph has a supply of grain laid up during the seven fruitful years (Genesis 41: 46–49).
4. During the seven lean years, Joseph distributes wheat in Egypt. In the rest of the world there is famine, but in

Egypt there is enough grain to bake bread (Genesis 41: 53–57).

5. Joseph's brothers report to their father Jacob about their first trip to Egypt and their meeting with Joseph. He had put them in prison for three days as a test (Genesis 42: 8–17).

### Commentary

It is not just the composition, but the form of the tapestry – with its low height and no borders – that indicates its function. It is intended as a decoration of a part of the interior. Often, an example of this type was placed in front of the chimney or around the canopy of a bed, as shown in a painting from around 1630–35 by an unknown painter from the Northern Netherlands (Geneva, Musée d'art et d'Histoire).<sup>1</sup>

It belonged, together with the tablecloths and the cushions, to the small pieces of work that every supplier of tapestries was able to offer, both in the Southern and in the Northern Netherlands. Relatively little of this type of weaving has been preserved because successive generations probably took less care of it than of the tapestries.

As with the table carpets, the Northern Dutch workshops in the seventeenth century had concentrated on

such pieces. This copy is also attributed to an unknown weaving workshop in the north.<sup>2</sup> It could have originated in either Delft or Gouda. We find the same decoration on the tablecloths with Biblical representations in medallions with similar dense wreaths around them and the scattered flowers.<sup>3</sup> The visual source of the scenes has not been identified. [IDM]

1. Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, p. 275; Amsterdam 1971–1972, cat. 46.
2. Van Ysselsteyn 1935–36, I, p. 312.
3. Amsterdam 1971–1972, cat. 14–15.







[58]

[58]

## TABLE CARPET WITH ORPHEUS

Northern Netherlands, Delft or Gouda (?), 1650–1670  
 Workshop and designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 161 × 244 cm; 7 to 8 warps per cm  
 Inv. 120

Provenance: 1844, purchased from the Van den Wiele collection;  
 it was the first tapestry to enter the museum's collection

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 72, no. 68;  
 Amsterdam 1971–1972, no. 7.

The central scene in a medallion, depicting Orpheus who lures the animals with his music, is surrounded by a background of large, curled leaves with flowers and fruit. Here and there, a bird can also be seen.

The scene is classical with Orpheus playing his harp, sitting among various kinds of animals.

In the borders along four sides are flowers and fruit festoons or bouquets, and in the corners, a smaller bouquet between volutes. In the middle of the four sides, in a medallion, biblical and Christian scenes are arranged: the prophet Elisha fed by the ravens; Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well; the Good Samaritan; and Christ meeting the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

### *Commentary*

By the mid-seventeenth century, table carpets were an exponent of luxury home culture, as is confirmed by numerous depictions of interiors in contemporary paintings. The main suppliers were centres of weaving in the Northern Netherlands,<sup>1</sup> but these types of decorations were also woven in the Southern Netherlands.

Because of the central figurative depiction, this table carpet can only be read from one side.

The decor is in keeping with the group of earlier tapestries from the Southern Netherlands in the sixteenth century, known as large-leafed greenery (cat. 33–34). The border contains flowers and fruit festoons, in the corners, a bouquet, and Christian depictions in the middle of each of the four sides. Representations from the Old or New Testament are the scenes most often found in the table

carpets still preserved today. Sometimes, mythological subjects are also inserted, but a combination such as this one is rather exceptional.<sup>2</sup>

It may have originated in either Delft or Gouda.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of marks, as is the case here, it is impossible to tell.

As on most of these table carpets, the design is rather stiff. Inspiration may have been drawn from engravings and botanical publications, as happened with other pieces.<sup>4</sup>

In other examples, the four hanging borders with their corner motifs are similarly filled with floral motifs, but the borders of those examples do not include the scenes found in the borders of this one. It is striking that each also displays the identical depiction of Orpheus in the middle.<sup>5</sup> [IDM]

1. Hartkamp-Jonxis & Smit 2004, pp. 273–274.

2. Amsterdam 1971–1972.

3. Van Ysselsteyn 1935–36, I, p. 312; Amsterdam 1971–72, pp. 6–9.

4. Idem, pp. 9–10.

5. Idem, cat. 10–11.



[59]  
THE WINE HARVEST

Bruges, workshop unknown, dated 1664  
The city mark of Bruges in the right side border:  
Gothic crowned B and weaver's bobbin for high warp  
After a model by Sir Antony Van Dijck (1599–1641)  
Wool and silk; 412 × 420 cm; 6 to 7 warps per cm  
Inv. 6277

Provenance: purchased at French & Co. in 1936

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1936; Versyp 1954, pp. 84–87;  
Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 71–72, no. 67; Asselberghs in Leuven 1973,  
pp. 168–171; Delmarcel & Duverger 1987, pp. 448–449.

A noble couple sits at the foot of a tree, receiving the fruits of the grape harvest going on around them. The lady is offered a bunch of grapes by a woman wearing a red, flapping robe. The gentleman reaches out his drinking glass to a servant, who squeezes grapes into it. A large basket of fruit lies in front of the lady, and another is placed at the back on the right. At the back left, the grapes are being harvested and are being pressed by the harvesters' feet in large tubs.

The borders are richly decorated with pedestals on which large vases of flowers are standing and from which branches snake upwards to capitals depicting the sun and



[58]

moon. Amidst this interwoven greenery, monkeys feast on all kinds of fruit, under the watchful eye of parrots. The bottom border is decorated with all kinds of hunting implements and hunting dogs around an empty cartouche. At the top, the cartouche with the date 1664 is surrounded by a hound and a peacock, amidst dead game.

*Commentary*

This work belongs to a scattered series of tapestries with a similar border, all of which refer to the life of the nobility. The year 1664 is also present on some other pieces, but it does not necessarily refer to the first edition. Crick-Kuntziger suggested that the series might have been a gift for the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, who came to inaugurate the new canal from Bruges to Ostend on 28 December 1664.<sup>1</sup>

The other known subjects are a *Troupe Making Music in Winter*,<sup>2</sup> a *Meeting of Nobles in a Park*,<sup>3</sup> *Donation of Jewels at a Well*, *Nobles Hunting on Horseback*, and a *Harvest Festival*. Versions of the latter two are preserved in the Davis Museum, Wellesley College (USA) (inv. 2015.107-108). They also bear the year 1664 in the cartouche, and therefore originally belonged to the same series as the one being discussed here (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup>

Some cartoons were drawn from existing models. The work discussed here goes back to an engraving by Pieter de Bailliu after a painting by Sir Antony van Dijck, *Rinaldo and Armida*, the first version of which was in the possession of King Charles I of England in 1629 (now in the Baltimore Museum of Art) and is known in several copies (fig. 2).



[FIG. 1] *The Harvest Festival*, from *The Life of the Nobility*, Bruges 1664. Davis Museum, Wellesley College (USA), inv. 2015.108.



[FIG. 2] *Rinaldo and Armida*, engraving by Pieter de Bailliu after a model by Antony van Dijck, c. 1629.

In the context of the other subjects in the series, this tapestry, with its emphasis on grape harvest and hunting, may have functioned as an allegory of Autumn. Erotic associations are implicitly present in the form of the numerous monkeys, including one for the noble lady, and in the form of the peacock, the symbol of Juno and of female vanity.

The designer of the cartoons is unknown. His graceful style may be related to that of Jan Thomas van Yperen (1617–1678), who worked for a time in Antwerp and from 1654 in Germany, before dying in Vienna.<sup>5</sup> The original model is therefore probably older than 1664, and the style of this series is consistent with the Bruges series of the *Seven Liberal Arts* and of the *Famous Women of the Bible*, which can all be situated between circa 1630 and 1660. [GD]

1. Crick-Kuntziger 1936, pp. 30–32.
2. Former Belgian collection (Delmarcel & Duverger 1987, pp. 450–451), sold at Sotheby's, London, 28 October 2004, lot 391.
3. Formerly at the Bernheimer Gallery, Munich (see Delmarcel & Duverger 1987, p. 446).
4. The *Noblemen on a Hunt on Horseback* was previously situated in the art trade in Berlin (Delmarcel & Duverger 1987, p. 447).
5. According to a friendly suggestion by Prof. Hans Vlieghe.



## OUR LADY WITH THE CHILD JESUS

Bruges(?), mid-seventeenth century  
 Workshop and designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 120 × 85 cm; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. 3361

Provenance: 1896, gift from Désiré Van de Castele, Bruges<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 74, no. 71.

The tapestry is conceived as a painting. The Madonna is depicted in life-size against an architectural background. On the right is a view through to a hilly landscape.

She is turned three-quarters to the right and on her left arm she holds the naked child Jesus, who is reaching out for her. She has her eyes lowered and her facial expression is very serene.

#### Commentary

The contrast between the colourful figures and the grey-blue architecture behind them creates a nice balance. The reproduction of the marble of the columns and the play of light and shade is also subtle.

The composition of the two figures goes back to Raphael's archetype of the *Madonna del Granduca* from around 1504 (Pitti Palace, Florence).<sup>2</sup>

A similarity can be detected in the position of the figures within the architecture and in the colour range with the tapestry *Annunciation to Mary* in the Museum Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van de Potterie in Bruges, dated 1639.<sup>3</sup> [IDM]

1. Versyp 1954, pp. 77–78. The inventory book lists “*Don de Vanden Castele, archiviste*”. It probably concerns Désiré Van de Castele (1839–1971), who was born in Bruges and worked as an archivist in Ghent and later in Namur and Liège. When it was registered, it was attributed to Bruges.
2. Dussler 1971, p. 18, plate 49.
3. Bruges 1987, no. 42.







[61.1]

[61]  
HUNTING SCENES

Eight tapestries  
Brussels, 1658–1669  
Workshops of Everaert III Leyniers (1597–1680)  
and Hendrik I Reydam (c. 1610–1669)  
Designer unknown, models after Antonio Tempesta,  
between 1618 and 1639  
Wool and silk; 8/9 warps per cm  
Inv. Tp 6 -Tp 13

Provenance: 1975, purchase from Galerie Courtois of Brussels

Literature: Woldbye 1959, pp. 258–268;  
Delmarcel in Brussels 1977, pp. 85–102; Delmarcel 1977.

The series includes four European and two exotic hunting scenes, as well as two narrower intermediary pieces depicting a noble rider and an amazon. Five of the hunting scenes show the most dramatic moment of the hunt, when the game is surrounded and the hunters are about to kill the animal. During the deer hunt, the animal is killed in the background, while the distribution of the entrails (*la curée*) of the animal to the pack is depicted at the front.

In Flemish tapestry art of the late sixteenth century, hunting took place in a wide landscape, sometimes with buildings in the background, and with small figures scattered across the landscape. In that regard, it is following an Italian tradition, established by the *Hunting at Poggio a Caiano* scenes, after models by Jan van der Straten/Stradanus (1523–1605) woven between 1566 and 1572, which were distributed by means of engravings.<sup>1</sup> One of his pupils, Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630) elaborated on this, and his numerous prints of animals and hunters served as models for some of the scenes in this series.<sup>2</sup>

These tapestries do not bear any city or weaver's mark. Their origin can however be confirmed thanks to the drawing of the vertical borders, which contain the herms of Jupiter and Venus. Such borders adorn a series with the *Story of Judith and Holofernes*, bearing the signatures of the Brussels workshops of Everaert III Leyniers (1597–1680) and Hendrik I Reydam (c. 1610–1669), nowadays preserved in the castle of Hluboká (Czech Republic). This

series was purchased in Brussels by Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in 1647.<sup>3</sup>

Their Brussels origin is therefore certain, but the creation of the models and their use must be placed earlier. Different versions of this series bear the marks and signatures of the Raes workshop of Brussels. A set of seven pieces bearing the monogram of Jan I Raes (active 1593–1651) and preserved in the castle of Kronborg (Denmark) incorporates the border drawing that was used in this workshop for the first editions of the *Life of Decius Mus*, after designs by P.P. Rubens, from 1618 onwards.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, two intermediate pieces (*entrefenêtres*) from the series are known, which feature the signature of Jan Raes the Younger (le Jeune) (1602–1639).<sup>5</sup> As this son of Jan I Raes died in 1639, we can determine that the period during which the cartoons of the series were used in the workshop was between 1618 and 1639. They continued to be placed on the loom there, first by Jan Raes in conjunction with a baroque border with satyrs,<sup>6</sup> around 1640–45, and subsequently by Frans Raes (1607–after 1658), the younger brother of Jan Raes the Younger.<sup>7</sup>

Since the activities of Frans Raes ceased in 1658, the cartoons were apparently taken over by Leyniers and Reydam, who reused them with the *Judith* border of 1647, but this only continued up to the death of Reydam in 1669.

[61.1]  
BEAR HUNT

Inv. Tp. 6  
332 × 333 cm

The upright bear grabs a hound which attacks him, while a second one threatens him from below. The servant on foot, and the nobleman on horseback are both on hand to spear the bear. The two characters are taken from a Bear Hunt, engraved by Antonio Tempesta and published in 1598 (Bartsch, no. 1125). The type of bearded lansquenet with a floppy hat already appears in Rubens' *Wolf and Fox Hunt* from 1616–1618.<sup>8</sup>





[61.2]



[61.3]





[61.4]



[61.5]



[FIG. 1] Antonio Tempesta, *Wolf Hunt*, engraving, c. 1618. National Gallery of Denmark, Copenhagen, inv. KKsgb 23140.

[61.2]  
**WOLF HUNTING**

Inv. Tp.7  
342 × 376 cm

The wolf is cornered by two hounds and by two hunters on horseback, who attack him with long spears. In the background on the right, a servant is restraining a large hound. Two engravings by Tempesta also served as models here – one with the two horsemen surrounding the wolf (fig. 1), and one with the servant at the back (Bartsch 1146). Again, the scene takes place between large trees, with a view of a castle in the distance on the right.

[61.3]  
**DEER HUNTING**

Inv. Tp.8  
343 × 447 cm

In deer hunting, the animal is chased until it succumbs to exhaustion, and is killed. In this case, that is happening on the second plane, on the edge of a lake. In the foreground lies a deer which has been cut open, and the dogs are waiting for their master's command before eating the entrails. On the right, a noble couple on horseback is

watching the spectacle. The gentleman is holding a falcon and apparently wants to pass it on to the lady – falconry was a sport for women.

In the similar deer hunt in the month of September that is depicted in the *Hunts of Charles V* (1528–1533, Musée du Louvre, Paris), the ladies are also present as the deer is being chased into a pond.<sup>9</sup>

In Peter Paul Rubens' *Hunting of Wolves and Foxes* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), a noble couple on horseback similarly comes along to watch the actual hunt.

[61.4]  
**AMAZON**

Inv. Tp.9  
340 × 177 cm

[61.5]  
**RIDER**

Inv. Tp.10  
337 × 172 cm

These two tapestries are fragmentary *entrefenêtres* that have been preserved. The Amazon was followed by a rider and accompanied by a greyhound. The greyhound was



mainly used in the course of the deer hunt. The *Deer Hunt* is also the only one at which a lady is present (cat. 61.3).

The rider holds his plumed hat in his hand and is pointing out a distant target to his servant who precedes him. They appear to be going to the boar hunt, given the servant's spear (cat. 61.8). They represent a variation on a wild boar hunt by Stradanus (Bartsch 1137). In a broader version, woven by Jan Raes around 1640, the servant holds a dog on a leash. The dog is of the same breed as the one on the Wild Boar Hunt.<sup>10</sup>

[61.6]

#### LION HUNT

Inv. Tp.11  
340 × 464 cm

A large lion, already wounded on its right flank, attacks a hunter from the side and drags him from his horse. The unfortunate one, with the bloody sword in his right hand, is being assisted by two other horsemen. One is about to spear the lion from behind with a lance; the other, in the rear, is holding up his scimitar. At the front left, a lion lies behind a tree trunk, bleeding to death. At the rear left, one can see ruins reminiscent of Roman baths or theatres.

The entire composition is a variation on the *Death of Decius Mus*, from the series with the same name, after a model by P.P. Rubens, first woven in 1616–1618. There, the falling Decius is struck in the throat by the spear of the warrior behind him, while another threatens him in the front left with a scimitar (cat. 54). Here, the situation is reversed, but the question remains whether the warrior with the sword can strike the lion. In Rubens' famous *Lion Hunt* from 1621, now in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, the hunter is also attacked from behind by the lion, a depiction that had already been used by Stradanus.<sup>11</sup> The hunters' oriental garments and scimitars were also customary props<sup>12</sup> in Rubens' works.

[61.7]

#### LEOPARD HUNT

Inv. Tp.12  
347 × 316 cm

Two horsemen with oriental turbans threaten the leopard with their spears. The front rider is largely taken from a *Lion Hunt* on a print by Antonio Tempesta from 1598 (Bartsch 1124) (fig. 2), while the rearmost rider comes from another *Lion Hunt* by the same engraver. The headgear and clothing of the hunters closely resemble those of the bystanders on an engraving by Stradanus, where captured panthers are being offered to the king of the Parthians.<sup>13</sup>

[61.8]

#### WILD BOAR HUNT

Inv. Tp.13  
343 × 439 cm

At the edge of an oak forest, a large wild boar is attacked by four hunters and their dogs. Two servants on foot and a nobleman on horseback stand ready to drive their lances into the animal's flanks. The wild boar is trying to get rid of a large hunting dog that is biting him in the neck; two other dogs have already been hurt by him. A second rider rushes to assist from the left with a raised sword: he will have to deliver the finishing stroke. At least three different engravings by Tempesta were used as models, including Bartsch 1147 A. In the contemporary version by Rubens (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille), this hunt is carried out in the same way: the boar is attacked by dogs, which he hurts, and the servants restrain him with lances fitted with a crossbar behind the spearhead.<sup>14</sup> In that way, he is not pierced and the nobleman can finish the animal with the sword. [GD]

1. Meoni 1998, pp. 210–223; Baroni Vannucci 1997, pp. 337–341.
2. Woldbye 1959.
3. Blazkova 1959, pp. 69–95; Cichrova 2014, pp. 167–193.
4. Woldbye 1959.
5. Keuller & Wauters, 1881, p. 23 no. 2, pl. C: auction at Christie's London, 16 April 2014, lot 137. For the chronology of the Raes workshop, see Brosens 2010.
6. Auctions at Sotheby Parke Bernet New York, 24 June 1977, lot 69 (lord and servant), Christie's New York, 10 January 1995, lot 152–153 (wolf and wild boar).
7. There were three pieces in the Martini & Rossi collection (Ferrero Viale 1971, pp. 67–73), and one with a signature in an auction at Christie's London, 1 October 1998, lot 211.
8. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 10.73, see Balis 1986, fig. 33.
9. Brussels, 2019, pp. 204–205, no. 48.
10. Auction at Sotheby Parke Bernet, 24 June 1977, lot 69.
11. Baroni Vannucci 1997, p. 354, no. 2.
12. Balis 1986, fig. 74 and 80 (engraving), and pp. 58, 129, note 6: Rubens to Carleton, 12 May 1618: "e si ella mi vorra credere piglarà quella caccia ch e sopra la lista laquale io faro di quella bontà come quella che V.E. hebbe di mia mano che si accompagnarebbe ottimamente insieme, essendo questa de [lupi] e cacciatori Europei, i quella de leoni [e cavallieri] alla moresca e turcesca molto bizzarra. [Conto] questa pezza a seicnto fiorini..." (for reading "[lupi]" rather than "[igri]", see p. 102, 11.2).
13. Baroni Vannucci 1997, p. 373, no. 9.
14. Balis 1986, p. 112, and fig. 40.



[61.6]





[61.8]



[61.7]





[62.1]

[62]

## STORY OF ZENOBIA AND AURELIAN

Four tapestries

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, around 1665

City mark and signature G. PEEMANS of the workshop

of Gerard Peemans (1637/39–1725)

Design by Justus van Egmont (1601–1674)

Wool and silk; 8 to 9 warps per cm

Inv. 6283-6286

Provenance: 1937, bought at the auction of the castle of Modave

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1950, p. 11; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 76–78, nos. 76–79; Delmarcel in Brussels 1977, pp. 119–130.

### History

The four tapestries originally belonged to a series of fifteen pieces which have been kept in the castle of Saint-Géry (Tarn, France) since the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In 1928, they were auctioned in Paris<sup>2</sup> and the four pieces ended up in the castle of Modave before being auctioned once again in 1936 and purchased by the Belgian government.<sup>3</sup>

### Commentary

The subject of the series is the sophisticated biography of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, who extended her kingdom to Egypt and who was captured by Emperor Aurelian and taken to Rome in 273 AD. The designers probably took their inspiration from the anthology by Jean Tristan de Saint-Amant, *Commentaires historiques contenant l'histoire générale des Empereurs, Impératrices, Césars et Tyrans de l'empire romain* ('Historical Commentaries on the General History of the Emperors, Empresses, Caesars and Tyrants of the Roman Empire'), published in Paris in 1644. In the seventeenth century, countless series featured female heroines from antiquity as a subject. They naturally follow the spirit of the times, because more attention was also being paid to the lives of these women in literature and theatre.<sup>4</sup> The series about Zenobia is one of the finest achievements in this genre. The eight large scenes of the Zenobia series, woven by Peemans, are still together in Madrid (Patrimonio Nacional),<sup>5</sup> and in the Segovia

Cathedral.<sup>6</sup> All the pieces have approximately the same dimensions and few deviations can be observed.

The series in Brussels contains the first two and the final two scenes of her story. After the *Wedding* (in this case, no. 1) and the *Wedding Supper* (no. 2) come the *Inspection of the Troops*, *Zenobia on the Hunt for Wild Animals*, the *Meeting of Zenobia and Aurelian*, and *Aurelian is Wounded in the Battle of Palmyra*. *Zenobia captured for Aurelian* (in this case no. 3) and the *Triumph of Aurelian* (no. 4) follow in conclusion.<sup>7</sup>

The designer, Justus Van Egmont (1601–1674), worked in Rubens' studio after his journey to Italy in 1618. Their relationship was mentioned at his entry into the guild lists in Antwerp in 1627/28. He accompanied his master to Paris for the accomplishment of the cycle *Life of Maria de Medici* for the Palace of Luxembourg. He stayed in Paris and worked in the studio of Simon Vouet (1590–1649). Van Egmont held the title *Peintre du Roy* ('Royal Painter') under Louis XIII and XIV and in 1648 he was one of the twelve founding members of the *Académie de Peinture et de Sculpture* (Academy of Painting and Sculpture). He was best known as a portrait painter of the aristocracy. In 1649, he returned to Brussels and in 1653, he settled permanently in Antwerp.<sup>8</sup> He became a well-known artist of Antwerp's Late Baroque school after Rubens and Jordaens. Typical stylistic features include the monumental, expressive figures in dramatic poses against a very sparsely populated background. The dynamically elaborated draperies add to the decorative effect.<sup>9</sup> Also characteristic of Van Egmont's contribution is the greater elegance of the composition, with elongated shapes and lively contours. Because the depth is limited, it appears as if the scenes are actually taking place on a stage.

We know from contracts that Van Egmont also supplied the patterns for the *Life of Caesar-Augustus*, and the *Story of Mark Antony and Cleopatra*. And finally, Gerard Peemans ordered the Zenobia series in 1664–65.<sup>10</sup> All these subjects were very much in vogue in the mid-seventeenth century, and commercial success was therefore granted for the weavers' patrons. By ordering several series from the same artist, collaborating dealers were able to use certain scenes in a different context to meet the large number of scenes requested in specific orders.<sup>11</sup>



Eighteen tapestries after Van Egmont and woven by Peemans are preserved in the Palazzo Mansi in Lucca.<sup>12</sup> The basis of the series consists of eight large scenes depicting the story of Zenobia and smaller secondary scenes found in other series, such as his *Story of Mark Antony and Cleopatra*, the *Story of Caesar and Cleopatra*, and the *Story of Dido and Aeneas*. The inscription in the cartouches was adapted and refers to Zenobia and Aurelian.<sup>13</sup>

Gerard Peemans was the son-in-law of the well-known entrepreneur Gerard van der Strecken (c. 1610–1677). In the third quarter of the seventeenth century, both worked in association with Jan van Leefdael (1603–1668) and Willem van Leefdael (1632–1688). Together, they dominated production in Brussels. Peemans ran one of the largest tapestry manufacturers of the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>14</sup> He worked from around 1660 until the beginning of the eighteenth century and produced several important series designed by both Flemish and French artists. Despite his successes, he went bankrupt in 1711.<sup>15</sup> In 1665, he reported to the Brussels city council that he was weaving, for the second time, the cartoons of Zenobia that had cost him a lot of money. In 1676, he concluded a contract with a Spanish trader in Antwerp for the delivery of a series of twelve Zenobia tapestries. In that contract, he emphasised the highly demanding nature of the drawings involved.<sup>16</sup> The preserved tapestries from the series do indeed indicate the difficulty of the cartoons, with the many light colours that required a lot of silk and the very crowded composition that required intensive weaving.

The borders are also very rich and imaginative. The beautifully designed sculptural fountains crowned by coral branches and dolphins below are typical of this. The six very large putti among the floral garlands appear to carry the bunches of lush flowers. The peacocks in the corners at the top are also large. In the centre of the upper horizontal border is a cartouche with a text that clarifies the scene. At the bottom, in the middle, is a monumental console as a counterweight.

The border was very successful and was found around other replicas, such as with the series in Madrid, and in slightly modified form in the Palazzo Mansi and the Cathedral of Segovia. In the side borders, the putti were replaced by a parrot. But they were also used around other subjects, such as the *Story of Dido and Aeneas*, woven at the same workshop.<sup>17</sup>

[62.1]

**THE WEDDING OF ZENOBIA AND ODENATUS**

Inv. 6283  
City mark of Brussels and signature of G. Peemans  
403 × 471 cm

Odenatus, a chieftain from the desert of Palmyra (Syria), is marrying Zenobia. The bride and groom holding hands are depicted in a central position. An older woman unites the couple by placing her hands on their shoulders. According to the text in the middle of the upper board, this woman is the mother of the husband or wife: NUBIT ODONATO REGINA ZENOBIA MATER AFFIRMANS FOEDUS IVNGIT VTRIQUE MANUM [Queen Zenobia marries Odenatus. The mother unites the hands of the pair to confirm the covenant]. The wedding takes place in front of a portico in the open air. Below and above, the couple are represented as putti carrying burning torches. On the left, a priest throws an offering in a brasero. Two little children and a dog are playing at his feet. Behind Zenobia comes a procession of bridesmaids, carrying all kinds of gifts.

Two drawings from the Zenobia series are preserved in Chicago (fig. 1).<sup>18</sup> They are attributed to Van Egmont. The composition of the washed charcoal drawing for *The Marriage of Zenobia and Odenatus*, in mirror image, is wider than the known weavings and there are several modifications. It is clear that the sketch was thoroughly reworked by Van Egmont himself or by the cartoon painter. The combination between the added putti in the tapestry is very similar to the many putti in the painting *Venus and the Graces*.<sup>19</sup>

[62.2]

**THE WEDDING BANQUET**

Inv. 6284  
City mark of Brussels and signature of G. Peemans  
401 × 623 cm

This scene is a continuation of the previous one. The cartouche reads EPULUM CONIUGALE ZENOBIAE ET ODONATI [The wedding banquet of Zenobia and Odenatus]. The festive table is set up in an open building in front of a large drapery. Odenatus is making a toast to his wife, who holds a flowering twig in her hand, looking shyly away. They are surrounded by various servants.

The beautifully crafted tableware, the abundance of flowers and colours, and the many elegant characters make the presentation a sumptuous baroque feast.

[62.3]

**ZENOBIA IS CAPTURED AND LED BEFORE AURELIAN**

Inv. 6285  
City mark of Brussels  
415 × 588 cm



[62.2]





[62.3]



[FIG. 2] Justus van Egmont (?), *Zenobia is Captured and Led Before Aurelian*, oil on canvas, c. 1665. Private collection.

Zenobia is captured and brought before the Roman Emperor Aurelian. Zenobia's husband Odenatus and his army made Palmyra a buffer zone between the Roman Empire and the Persians, and the Roman Emperors rewarded him for this with honourable titles. In 267 AD, Odenatus was killed during a palace revolution and his widow Zenobia, according to seventeenth-century sources, took power as the guardian of the two underage sons, Herennianus and Timolaus. Under her leadership, the Kingdom of Palmyra became a threat to Roman power in the East. Emperor Aurelian therefore declared war on her. The scenes from the series that are missing here tell of the heroic battle that she fought. In 273, Palmyra was conquered and Zenobia captured.

As the inscription *ZENOBIA AD AURELIANUM CAPTIVA DUCITUR* tells, she is taken captive and is brought before him.

On the tapestry, Zenobia stands proudly before the Emperor while pleading her case. Her two minor sons are begging alongside her, as are several servants. They are surrounded by Roman soldiers.

The kneeling lady-in-waiting next to Zenobia can be compared to the nymph who catches Venus in the water, in mirror image, in his painting *Venus and the Graces*.

A painted modello (74 x 126 cm) in mirror image, with exactly the same composition, has also appeared on the art market (fig. 2).<sup>20</sup>

[62.4]

#### THE TRIUMPH OF AURELIAN

Inv. 6286

City mark of Brussels and signature of G. Peemans

413 x 828 cm

The final piece in the series depicts the triumphant return of Aurelian to Rome.

According to the inscription *AURELIANUS DUOS REGES ET ZENOBIAM CUM FILIIS DUCIT IN TRIUMPHUM*, the Emperor not only bears Zenobia and her sons in his procession, but two other kings as well. All of these prisoners are displayed centrally, in front of a magnificent group of prancing horses pulling Zenobia's beautiful chariot. Behind them follow the soldiers with the loot, including a lion on the far right. Aurelian rides in front, in a chariot pulled by deer, in the left background. Above him fly the angels of Fame, holding trumpets, and of Victory, holding laurel wreaths.

The other rulers are supposed to be Tetricus and his son, the Kings of the Goths, who had occupied Gaul and were also defeated by Aurelian. Thus, in a single triumph, his victory was celebrated in the East as well as in the West. [IDM]

1. The tapestries are mentioned in an inventory from 1794. Eight form a series of Zenobia, see Ahlsell de Toulza 2005, pp. 216–217.
2. Paris, Galerie Georges Petit, 15 June 1928, nos. 44–58.
3. Paris, Galerie Jean Charpentier, 12 June 1936, nos. 88–91.
4. Brussels 1977, p. 121.
5. Junquera & Diaz 1986, series 62.
6. See RMAH, 1650.41–48.
7. In Madrid, they are in this order: series 62, numbers I, II, VIII, V, VII, VI, III and IV, see Junquera & Diaz 1986, pp. 164–172.
8. Brussels 1977, p. 119 and Balis 2006, p. 615.
9. Ibid.
10. Brosens 2008, p. 159.
11. One example is the *Story of Caesar and Cleopatra* series at The Art Institute of Chicago, which consists of fourteen pieces composed of his designs for the *Story of Caesar*, *Story of Cleopatra*, and *Story of Zenobia*. The series dates from circa 1680 and was woven by Peemans and Willem van Leefdael, see Brosens 2008, cat. 19.
12. Cambini 2001: pp. 333–388.
13. Ibid., pp. 340–342.
14. In 1665, he employed 14 weavers on 6 looms, while in 1683, he had 33 people working for him (see Wauters 1878, pp. 341–342).
15. Brosens 2008, p. 176.
16. Crick-Kuntziger 1950, pp. 25–26.
17. Junquera & Diaz 1986, series 47.
18. Art Institute of Chicago, inv. 1922.1918a-b, see Brosens 2008, pp. 159, 161. The other drawing for a scene of *Zenobia Surrounded by Soldiers on Horseback* (?) was probably not woven.
19. In the Hochenbuchau collection in Vienna, see Balis 2006, p. 614 and Valkeneers 2014, p. 4.
20. Balis 2006, p. 616. The modello painted on canvas was auctioned in Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 18 May 1993, no. 102.





[62.4]





[63]

[63]  
**THE CHRISTIANS BRING GIFTS  
 TO THE APOSTLES**

Southern Netherlands, Antwerp, Wauters family (?), 1670–1700  
 Design probably by Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596–1675) (?)  
 Wool and silk; 224 × 248; 6 warps per cm  
 Inv. 9000 A

Provenance: 1955, purchased from Mr Gaston Demeter, Brussels  
 (tapestry and drawing, inv. 9000 A and B)

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 73–74, no. 70.

Several Christians, men and women, bring bags of goods or the proceeds of their sales to the apostles who have set up on the steps in front of an open building. On the full versions, we can count eleven of the twelve apostles. They are distributing the money to those in need. (Acts 4: 32–637).

Commentary

The *Acts of the Apostles* was one of the most woven themes in tapestry throughout the centuries, following the fame

of the series in the Sistine Chapel, woven in Brussels from designs by Raphael for Pope Leo X at the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In the seventeenth century, not only the Brussels workshops, but also the smaller centres started to market their own versions. In many cases, these refer back to the original designs of Raphael but sometimes new themes are added or treated differently, as in this subject. This is a fragment of the scene *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles with the Death of Ananias*. The emphasis here is on the giving of the gifts (Acts 4: 32–37), while Raphael's painting, is about the death of Ananias. The latter fell down dead when he returned only half the proceeds of the sale (Acts 5: 1–6). At the back left in the seventeenth-century version, we see the deceased Ananias being carried away, but this part has disappeared from the fragment.

From the 1670s onwards, this series was woven by the Wauters family in Antwerp, where in documents from 1671<sup>2</sup> and 1682, the eight subjects in the *Story of the Works of the Apostles... (de historie van de wercken der Apostelen...)* are described in detail, without mentioning the author. The series were ordered from Philip Wauters.<sup>3</sup> On the death of



**[FIG. 1]** *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles*, from *The Acts of the Apostles*, Antwerp, workshop of Philip Wauters, 1670–1700. Great Chalfield Manor, Wiltshire.





**[FIG. 2]** *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles*, from *The Acts of the Apostles*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Abel Reggelbrugge, 1664. Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest, inv. 73.15.1.



**[FIG. 3]** Erasmus II Quellinus (?), *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles*, drawing, c. 1660. Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, inv. 9000 B.



**[FIG. 4]** Abraham van Diepenbeek, *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles*, drawing, c. 1660. British Museum, London, inv. 1846-7-9-20.

his brother, Michiel Wauters, in 1679, eight patterns with the subject were listed.<sup>4</sup> A tapestry from the series that bears Michiel's mark is preserved in Westminster Abbey, London.<sup>5</sup> In Great Chalfield Manor, Wiltshire, a series of four tapestries is kept, including *Christians Bringing Gifts* (fig. 1). In its right hand galloon, the 'PW' monogram of the tapestry entrepreneur Philip Wauters (1660–1679) is woven.<sup>6</sup>

This is an example of the most widespread version featuring the woman who appears on the right in the drawings. Another edition after the same cartoon, which, according to Marillier, was also woven by Philip Wauters, surfaced in France in 1979.<sup>7</sup>

But this series was also woven in Oudenaarde (fig. 2), and we know of examples of this and another subject that were signed by Abel Reggelbrugge and dated 1664.<sup>8</sup> Abel was born in Oudenaarde in 1624 and was active until 1691. He enjoyed close ties with Antwerp. Several merchants there owned series produced by him, and his son Johannes settled there after 1679. Because the edition with his mark is a mirror image of the drawing and the fragment in Brussels, we can assume that he did not own the original cartoons, but made new ones, copied from the tapestries of Wauters. A second copy of this edition with the same vertical borders, without marks, is in the collection of the Musei Civici in Alessandria.<sup>9</sup>

The identification of the designer has given rise to an interesting discussion. The Royal Museums of Art and History holds a drawing of the same subject under the same inventory number as the tapestry (fig. 3).<sup>10</sup> According to Crick-Kuntziger, it is signed, on a step situated on the right, *Antwerpiae Erasmus Quellinus fecit*, in reference to Erasmus II Quellinus (1607–1678).<sup>11</sup> The signature is almost impossible to read today. Crick-Kuntziger considered it to be the first design and therefore attributed the series to Quellinus back in 1956.<sup>12</sup>

However, a drawing preserved in London and attributed to Abraham van Diepenbeek (1596–1675) depicts the same subject of *Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles* (fig. 4).<sup>13</sup> It is a mirror image of Quellinus' drawing and therefore also a mirror image of the fragment, so it may have been drawn in order to produce the cartoon. It is probably not the case of two drawings being produced by the same hand because the elaboration of the figures is different in each case. The faces, beards and draperies in Van Diepenbeek's drawing are much more plastic in appearance. In general, Quellinus' work is more classicistic in style. Various specialists have suggested that the drawing in Brussels is a copy after a tapestry.<sup>14</sup> Could the copy have been made in order to realise the new cartoons for the Reggelbrugge workshop in Oudenaarde?

The most striking difference between the drawing by Van Diepenbeek and this one by Quellinus and the preserved tapestries<sup>15</sup> (figs. 1 and 5) is that the building



**[FIG. 5]** *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles*, from *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1670–1700. Private collection.

behind the kneeling youth is missing and that on the steps next to the bag of money there is also a chain. In the drawing by Quellinus, the hind legs of the dog are positioned differently.

The two artists worked simultaneously in Antwerp and both were active as tapestry designers. Moreover, many of their drawings bear no signature and many works are attributed to them on stylistic grounds. The drawing of *The Christians Bring Gifts to the Apostles* fully matches attributions to Van Diepenbeek.<sup>16</sup>

This artist came to Antwerp from 's-Hertogenbosch in 1621. His father was a glass painter and Abraham himself focused mainly on designing and less on painting. In total, thirteen tapestry series can be attributed to Van Diepenbeek.<sup>17</sup>

Reference is often made to documents in the Felix Archives in Antwerp from which it might be concluded that the author of the series was indeed Abraham van Diepenbeek. In a letter from Philip Wauters to the Forchoudts in Vienna in 1676, Van Diepenbeek is mentioned as the author of several series. The enumeration is rather unclear and, in my opinion, it is not indisputable that the *Story of the Apostles* belongs to it.<sup>18</sup> Denucé mentions elsewhere that the *Historie van de Werken der Apostelen* was signed by Van Diepenbeek in 1674, but does not refer to the original document.<sup>19</sup> It was not until much later, in 1717, that the link between the series and its designer was explicitly stated in a letter from Cornelis De Wael, a descendant of the Wauters family, to Baert in Amsterdam. He writes *ick hebbe oock een patron van d'apostelen, waterweerfsteeking van den vermaerde schilder Diepenbeek, groot levensgroot* (I also possess a pattern of the apostles, a watercolour by the renowned painter, Diepenbeek, which is life-size).<sup>20</sup> [IDM]

1. Delmarcel 2020.
2. According to Klara Alen, the date of 1674 as published by Denucé is wrong and should be 1671, see Alen 2017, p. 463 and Denucé 1931, p. 189.
3. Denucé 1931, pp. 189, 211; Crick-Kuntziger 1935 B, pp. 41–42.
4. Crick-Kuntziger 1935 B, p. 36. In total, however, eleven scenes may have been woven, see Van Tichelen 1986, p. 178, and Alen 2017, pp. 463–365.
5. Wingfield Digby 1959, p. 233 and fig. 1.
6. Thanks to Helen Wyld for the photos and information, see Wyld 2022, pp. 55–57.
7. Marillier 1930, p. 4 and pl. 1a; Auction at Bourg-en-Bresse, 9 December 1979, see *La Gazette de l'Hôtel Drouot*, no. 42 of 30 November 1979, p. 79.
8. Oudenaarde 1999, pp. 199–201.
9. Correspondence with Dr Sara Pappada from 2014; see also Pappada 2015. It is together with a second scene *Philip Baptising the Ethiopian Eunuch* in the Palazzo Cuttica. The latter scene differs from the edition known to carry Wauters' mark, see Marillier 1930, pl. 2b. Both specimens have a border at the top and bottom and the upper one is different from the specimens in Bucharest and Budapest with the name of Reggelbrugge.
10. Inv. 9000 B; Dimensions: 31.5 x 52.5 cm; paper, watercolour and gouache. The drawing was purchased together with the tapestry in 1955 and according to a note on the back, the drawing is said to have been traded at the De Vliieger sale in 1911.
11. De Bruyn 1986, p. 249. According to Dr Jean-Pierre de Bruyn, a specialist on Quellinus, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the signature or the attribution. Apocryphal signatures, whether or not by Quellinus, were regularly found on his drawings, see De Bruyn 1986.
12. Previously, Crick-Kuntziger had regarded a pupil of Rubens to be the designer, without further specification, see Crick-Kuntziger 1935 B, p. 42.
13. British Museum, inv. 1846-7-9-20. Steadman 1982, p. 48.
14. Communications in correspondence with Prof. Dr Arnout Balis and Prof. Dr Hans Vlieghe.
15. The building is also missing from other woven editions of the scene. A complete example without marks and with a different border to those of Reggelbrugge or Wauters was in the art dealership of French & Co., 97-P.7. It was sold at Christie's New York on 14 January 2004, no. 294.
16. Steadman 1982.
17. Van Tichelen 1986, pp. 174–175.
18. Felix Archive, Antwerp, inv. 1B#1129, see also Denucé 1931, p. 199. In 1978, E. Duverger announced a publication on the series *Acts of the Apostles* by the brothers Michiel and Filip Wauters, after a design by Abraham van Diepenbeek, but this was probably never finished, see E. Duverger 1978, p. 81, note 6. He also mentions the pattern of Quellinus (inv. 9000B), but without further interpretation or comment.
19. In his introduction to the House of Wauters, Denucé (1936, p. XLVII) refers to the exchange of letters between Wauters and Forchoudt, but gives no reference. This is confusing, because in the letters published by him, the series is mentioned but without stating a designer, i.e., in 1671 (*The Life of Peter*), 1675 and 76 (*Apostles*), see Denucé 1936, pp. 373, 376–377, 382.
20. Duverger 2008, no. 2196. 1717 was a long time after their creation and there may be gaps in the account of events that had been passed on. In all other instances when this subject is mentioned by Wauters and by De Wael – and there are many from 1674 onwards – Van Diepenbeek's name is not mentioned.





[64]

[64]

## FRAME MADE FROM THE BORDER OF A TAPESTRY

Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
final quarter of the seventeenth century  
Weaving attributed to Albert Auwercx (1629–1709)  
or Hendrik II Reydam (1650–1719)  
Designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 365 × 450 cm; 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 8233

Provenance: 1946, bequest of Baroness Lemonnier

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 72, no. 69.

This is a wide and very rich tapestry border that was transformed into the frame for a door or a window, called a *cantonnière* in French. The original lower horizontal part is missing.

At the top, a central cartouche is surrounded by fruit, flowers and musical instruments, and, at each of the two corners, an eagle holding up flowers and fruit garlands by means of a ribbon. The vertical borders contain flowers, between which, on the right, are the Tables of the Law and censers (containers for the burning of incense), while on the left, we see the Bronze Serpent and a fountain, and the headdress of a Jewish high priest is accompanied by a

Hebrew inscription. Most of these attributes refer to the Biblical story of Moses.

### Commentary

This very decorative border is typical of the final quarter of the seventeenth century. The basis for the decoration are the beautiful flowers supplemented with various biblical attributes. Similar borders were used around a *Story of Moses* woven by Albert Auwercx and Hendrik II Reydam that is still preserved in Montdidier and in Toledo Cathedral (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The depictions refer back to a model from the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In other editions, the lower part of the left vertical border is different, because on the base of the column, part of the floral composition is replaced by a calf.<sup>3</sup>

In an inventory drawn up in 1714 after Auwercx's death, several cartoons remained undivided between his nine children. These included five cartoons, in tempera on paper, for a series depicting the *Story of Moses*, the other five cartoons from the series being at the workshop of Henry II Reydam. At the time of the 1718 stock inventory, the ten cartoons from the series had been sold.<sup>4</sup> In the inventory after the death of his son, Philippe Auwercx,<sup>5</sup> in 1740, eleven cartoons of the same story are included.<sup>6</sup> [IDM]



[FIG. 1] *The Passage Through the Red Sea*, from *The Life of Moses*, Brussels, workshop of Albert Auwercx, final quarter of the seventeenth century. Toledo Cathedral, Toledo.

1. Set of six pieces preserved in Montdidier, Eglise du Saint-Sépulcre, with marks of both Reydam and Auwercx, see Marty 2004.
2. The sixteenth-century series (1545–48) can be attributed to Giovanni Battista Lodi da Cremona (1520–1612), a follower of Giulio Romano. A series of twelve pieces is kept in the castle of Châteaudun; see New York 2002, p. 392 and Brown & Delmarcel 1996, pp. 194–205.
3. With two copies in the Royal Palace in Brussels (see Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels, B 196408 and 196409), the series at Montdidier (see note 1), London, Christie's, 12 November 1987, no. 216 (carrying the mark of Reydam).
4. Brosens 2012, pp. 185–186 and Appendix 1.
5. Five of the children took over their father's workshop in 1714. Philippe was probably the one who ran it, see idem.
6. Brosens 2004, pp. 260–261. The fact that there are now eleven being mentioned and not ten can possibly be explained by the fact that a missing intermediate piece had been created, or that a cartoon had been divided into two.



## PERGOLAS WITH VASES

Two tapestries  
 Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde or Antwerp (?),  
 final quarter of the seventeenth century  
 Workshop and designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 327 × 445 cm and 320 × 322 cm;  
 4 to 5 warps per cm  
 Inv. v2924-2925

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1927, pp. 67–68;  
 Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 75, nos. 73–74.

These two tapestries are very similar and are therefore described together. The only difference is that the narrower of the two represents a pergola or open gallery with only one vase, as opposed to the two vases that are present on the wide version within a double pergola. Between the Corinthian columns, which are sculpted with acanthus leaves and grotesques at the bottom, there are fruit festoons at the top. The high pedestal on the wide tapestry (cat. 65.1) is decorated with putti around a decorated cartouche, and on the narrow version (cat. 65.2), grotesques appear around the cartouche. The top is crowned by a flat architrave. The architecture stands in a landscape with a closed forest in the background. The vases, as in all the other examples, are heavily decorated in the baroque style and contain beautiful, but somewhat stereotypical mixed bouquets.

#### Commentary

These highly decorative motifs were woven throughout the seventeenth century in the various centres of the Southern Netherlands. Five series depicting this subject matter are preserved in varying degrees of quality in the collection of the Patrimonio Nacional in Madrid.<sup>1</sup> The number of pieces involved total fifty-eight, which proves the great popularity of the subject. Against a background of greenery, a garden view or a landscape, the front of each piece features the open architecture of a garden pergola with a vase filled with flowers on a pedestal between

the columns. Covering a room with a decor of this type created the atmosphere of a winter garden.

The finest examples came from Brussels workshops. Best known is the series *Vertumnus and Pomona*, woven by Willem de Pannemaker (active from 1535 to †1581), produced in around 1545 after a cartoon by Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen (1500–1559) or Pieter Coecke (1502–1550) (cat. 41).<sup>2</sup> Within the architecture of the pergola, the two protagonists are presented in a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Soon afterwards, a variant would be released in which the human figures are left out and all attention goes to the park view. In the *Gardens of Cardinal Granvelle*, different species of birds are placed in front of the beautiful pergola. The series was also woven by Willem de Pannemaker around 1564.<sup>3</sup>

The representation was very popular and was woven until the end of the seventeenth century, albeit in an adapted form.<sup>4</sup> The name in documents for such a series in Brussels was *Galderyen met pilleeren ende meypotten* (galleries, columns and vases). These are indeed the three elements that define the design. Compared to the Renaissance example, the architecture has been greatly simplified. In the background, the garden views can be replaced by continuous landscapes, possibly including hunting scenes.<sup>5</sup>

The borders also evolve and many examples have the twisted columns that were introduced by Rubens in his designs for the *Triumph of the Eucharist*, from 1626–27. They are twisted 'Solomonic' columns with a playful decoration of putti and enhance the monumentality of the whole. The horizontal borders are filled with heavy flowers and fruit bunches. In the middle of each border there is also a cartouche depicting the same landscape in each case.

Such series are known to bear the mark of the Wauters family, active in Antwerp around the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> The quality of these seventeenth-century series is significantly lower than the Brussels examples in terms of the drawing, the proportion of silk, the range of colours, and the warp density.

No specimens with Oudenaarde marks were found. This is not exceptional as marks were not usually woven-in for most of the seventeenth century, although documents show that by the end of the century, a large number of



[65.1]



[65.2]





[FIG. 1] *A double pergola of six pillars in a landscape*, Antwerp, Jacob Wauters, c. 1650. Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh, inv. RCIN 28029.

them must have been woven. In the sixteenth century, Oudenaarde had already established a tradition of weaving tapestries with a purely decorative content, in which pergolas played an important role.<sup>7</sup> Between 1679 and 1698, “flowerpots” are regularly mentioned in the trade documents of the Van Verren family. One important customer was the Jan Van Verren-Nicolaas Naulaerts company in Antwerp (active from 1678 to 1701) and Jan Van Verren alone.<sup>8</sup> From Oudenaarde, consignments were also sent to the Brussels dealer Pedro de Grousselier.<sup>9</sup> The correspondence shows that other weavers in Oudenaarde also wove such cartoons. Thus Pieter accuses his brother Jan van Verren of giving copies of his cartoons to their competitor De Bock,<sup>10</sup> and in 1691 it appears that he lent cartoons for the flowerpots to Jacobus van Coppennolle in Ghent.<sup>11</sup>

Both the preserved pieces and the documents demonstrate the interest that existed in this purely decorative genre from the middle of the sixteenth century to around 1700.

A comparison with series preserved in Holyrood House (fig. 1) and in Madrid<sup>12</sup> makes it clear that the pergolas are

often crowned with an open latticework overgrown with greenery. The flat crown in stone is less common. Usually, the lower horizontal border is also missing. The high pedestal is also only present in a minority of cases. The elaboration with the putti is also found in other examples, but none of them is identical.<sup>13</sup> [IDM]

1. Junquera & Diaz 1986, series 64–68; Delmarcel 1999 B, p. 173.
2. New York 2014, pp. 270–289; Junquera & Herrero 1986, series 17.
3. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, series LXVI; Delmarcel 2000 B, p. 281.
4. Examples in Delmarcel 1999, pp. 130–133.
5. Vianden 1995, p. 46, no. 12.
6. In Holyrood House, see Swain 1988, pp. 17–19. The set of five pieces bears the mark of Jacob Wauters (11660).
7. Oudenaarde 1999, pp. 133–140, nos. 6–7, and pp. 8–9.
8. De Meüter 2016, p. 54, pp. 70, 75.
9. Idem, pp. 80, 143.
10. Idem, p. 141.
11. Idem, p. 143.
12. Swain 1988, pp. 17–19; Junquera & Diaz 1986, series 67, pano VI–VIII are most similar. These series were recently attributed to Antwerp instead of Brussels.
13. Idem, series 68–VII.

## ACIS AND GALATEA

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1690–1700

Workshop unknown

Figures designed by Peter IJkens (1648–1695)

and the landscapes designed by Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711)

Wool and silk; 330 × 383 cm; 8 to 9 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 29

Provenance: 2007, purchased from a private collection in Italy

Literature: De Meüter 2016, pp. 240–253.

### History

The tapestry was purchased in Berlin<sup>1</sup> at the beginning of the twentieth century and again in Rome in the 1970s, where it was shortened horizontally at the top and a lining inserted. After the museum had purchased the tapestry, the shortening was reversed.

In a beautiful arcadian landscape, the sea nymph, Galatea, stands centrally in the foreground, surrounded by a group of nymphs. The young shepherd Acis appears on the right and is courting her. High up on the left, the cyclops, Polyphemus, is sitting amidst his flock, observing the scene.

### Commentary

This tapestry of *Acis, the Shepherd, and Galatea* belongs to a series of *Metamorphoses* after Ovid.<sup>2</sup> From 1700 onwards, the series of eight subjects is mentioned several times in the memorandum of the Antwerp merchant Naulaerts. Apparently, different qualities could be ordered, woven in Brussels and Antwerp.<sup>3</sup> The designers listed “figures designed by Mr Ykens and the landscapes designed by Mr Spierinckx” in reference to Peter IJkens (1648–1695) and Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711) respectively.<sup>4</sup> The attribution to Peter IJkens is confirmed by comparison with his paintings.<sup>5</sup> Like his father, Jan, he also produced figures in the paintings by Pieter Spierinckx.<sup>6</sup> The documents also specify that the figures in the tapestries are very large.<sup>7</sup> This is consistent with most of the replicas. Examples were found of all the subjects. The only series with a

weaver’s mark is the one in Berkeley Castle, signed by Jan Cobus, a Brussels manufacturer who was active around 1700 (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup>

The themes chosen for the series fall somewhat outside of the usual mythological topics. In this case, the story is told of the sea nymph, Galatea, who is loved by the young shepherd, Acis. But the cyclops Polyphemus, who is also in love with her, later kills Acis with a rock. Galatea thereupon asks Neptune to turn Acis into a river.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the example in Berkeley Castle, two other editions of this scene were offered at auctions.<sup>10</sup> The borders are extremely similar, but not identical, and do not carry any weaver’s marks. Although the composition of these pieces is identical, small differences can be observed



[FIG. 1] *Acis and Galatea*, from *Metamorphoses After Ovid*, Brussels, workshop of Jan Cobus, c. 1700. Berkeley Castle.





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[FIG. 2] *Eurydice Bitten by the Serpent*, from *Metamorphoses After Ovid*, Brussels. Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, inv. Tap 64.

in the greenery of the background on the right and in the figures.<sup>11</sup> Since this was a popular series and was apparently woven by several weavers, there were most likely several sets of cartoons in circulation that included modifications. These may have circulated simultaneously, or they may have succeeded one another chronologically.<sup>12</sup> In the case of editions that were considerably cheaper, however, the differences are of course more pronounced.<sup>13</sup>

The composition of the rich border is very typical of the Brussels workshops at the end of the seventeenth century. The volutes, fruits and flowers are interrupted by attributes such as quivers of arrows, torches, censers, decorative cloths and shells, as well as birds, such as doves and parrots.

An unsigned replica of *Eurydice Bitten by the Serpent* in the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle (fig. 2) is decorated with the same border and may have belonged to the same edition.<sup>14</sup> Several borders around the replicas that have been found belong to the same type.

The similarities with the borders around the series *The Continents*, woven by Judocus de Vos and Albert Auwercx, are especially striking.<sup>15</sup> [IDM]

1. A black-and-white photograph has been preserved, showing an interior that includes the tapestry.
2. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2.11.
3. De Meüter 2016, pp. 240–253.
4. De Meüter 2003, pp. 137–140; De Meüter 2016, pp. 240–253.
5. Idem, p. 253.
6. Idem, p. 209.
7. Idem, p. 240.
8. Five subjects are preserved, divided over six tapestries, see idem, pp. 242–245. The scene with Acis and Galatea does not represent the entire cartoon.
9. In 1718, G.F. Händel would publish an oratorio incorporating this story.
10. Paris, Galerie G. Petit, 30 May 1919, no. 7. It was offered in a series of six pieces, of which only two are reproduced; London, Sotheby's, 28 May 1993, no. 18.
11. For example, the difference in Acis's posture, the addition of a floral crown worn by Galatea and the omission of a second figure between the two protagonists are striking. Similar and even more significant differences were observed in other subjects in the series. For example, in the case of *Eurydice Bitten by the Serpent*, the number of figures can vary between six and ten. This obviously has an impact on the cost of the order, see De Meüter 2016, p. 250.
12. Whether the backgrounds of the variants are also by Spierinckx cannot be determined. It is possible that some of the decors are attributable to Gaspard De Witte, see De Meüter 2016.
13. The backgrounds are completely different and the figures are smaller in an edition attributed to Antwerp and kept in Rosenborg Castle in Copenhagen, see De Meüter, 2016, pp. 252–253.
14. Barnard Castle, Bowes Museum, inv. Tap 64.
15. De Meüter 2016, pp. 309–312.





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## THE DEATH OF PHINEUS

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, 1690–1700  
 Signature IDOCUS.DE.VOS from the workshop  
 of Judocus de Vos (1661–1734)  
 Figures designed by Lodewijk van Schoor (1619–90)  
 and landscape designed by Lucas Achtschellinck (1626–1699)  
 Wool, silk and metallic threads; 360 × 500 cm; 8 warps per cm  
 Inv. 8605

Provenance: 1951, purchased from Galerie Moderne, Brussels<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 79, n° 81.

The scene is part of the *Story of Perseus and Andromeda*, a mythological series from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book IV–V) that was very popular.<sup>2</sup> Perseus was the son of Zeus and Danaë, the daughter of the King of Argos. Andromeda was the daughter of Cepheus, the King of Ethiopia. Because of the pride of the mother who boasted about the beauty of her daughter, the kingdom was punished by

the sea god Poseidon. To turn the tide, Andromeda would have to be sacrificed. When Perseus killed the sea monster that threatened the Andromeda chained to the rock, he received her as a wife. During their wedding feast, they were disturbed by Phineus who came to claim Andromeda as his bride by force. She had been promised to him as his wife by his brother Cepheus. Perseus wins the battle, when, with snakes in hand, he petrifies Phineus and his supporters.

Phineus kneels before the enraged Perseus, with imploring, raised hands and averted head. He is scared off by the snakes coming from the head of Medusa, captured by Perseus. In his right hand, Perseus holds a sword. Phineus and his warriors entering from the left are petrified by the snakes. The fighting also continues on the second plane, and a city is on fire. Above the two, the goddess Minerva comes to Perseus' aid in his struggle. On the right, Andromeda is escaping inside her father's palace, where the disrupted wedding banquet took place.

### Commentary

The *Story of Perseus* was widespread at the end of the seventeenth century. In 1682 the opera *Persée* was created in Paris by Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–87). The series then received popular acclaim both in the Southern Netherlands and in the Republic.

In 1700, in Naulaerts' memorandum, the names of the designers are mentioned for a *Story of Perseus and Andromeda*, namely Lodewijk van Schoor in the case of the figures, and Lucas Achtschellinck for the scenery.<sup>3</sup> The preserved tapestries point to the workshop of Judocus de Vos (1661–1734)<sup>4</sup> while the documents include a single reference to the weaver, Jacob van der Beurcht/Borcht.<sup>5</sup> The series with the *Story of Perseus and Andromeda* delivered by Naulaerts came sometimes from Brussels and sometimes from Antwerp. The editions from Antwerp, however, presented smaller figures and came from a different cartoon designer for the landscapes, namely Pieter Spierinckx.<sup>6</sup> They were probably woven by Jacobus Van der Goten (1659–1724).<sup>7</sup> Both editions were successful and were bought at the same time, in around 1700, by the Brussels merchant weaver Judocus de Vos.<sup>8</sup>



[FIG. 1] *Minerva Comes to Perseus' Aid*, from *The Story of Perseus and Andromeda*, Brussels, workshop of Marcus De Vos, 1680–1700. Het Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch (Renschdael Art Foundation).



These cartoons had already been woven by his father Marcus de Vos (c. 1635–1704) (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup>

Lodewijk van Schoor (1619–90) was the most productive designer at the end of the seventeenth century, working for all the centres in the Southern Netherlands.<sup>10</sup> About fifteen different series have been attributed to him.<sup>11</sup> In many of the series, the attribution is certain, as the result of references in documents, or because his name was discreetly woven in.<sup>12</sup> Until then, the name of the cartoon designer was rarely woven into the tapestry. In 1678, he was registered as a master of the Brussels painters' guild. It is possible that he was already active as a pattern painter at that moment.<sup>13</sup> In 1729, Jacob Campo Weyerman described him as a meritorious cartoon-painter for the Brussels and Antwerp tapestry workshops.<sup>14</sup> His depictions are distinctively decorative-lyrical, based on French examples. Van Schoor often created a classical, clear structure with, in the foreground, only a few, mostly female characters, adopting graceful poses. In some cases, as the series shows, the figures are better integrated into the landscape and its different planes.

The appearance of the faces is very characteristic, rather heavy with double chins and with wavy or curly hairstyles. The draperies of the clothing are built up by means of rather large, clear surfaces. All these characteristics are very pronounced and have apparently been imitated to such an extent that we can speak of a Van Schoor style.<sup>15</sup>



**[FIG. 2]** *Death of Phineus*, from *The Story of Perseus and Andromeda*, Brussels, workshop of Judocus De Vos, 1680–1700. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. Tap LXXVI/6.

Lucas Achtschellinck (1626–1699) received his privileges as a landscape painter in Brussels in 1689.<sup>16</sup> In 1702, Judocus de Vos contributed patterns by Achtschellinck to the alliance he entered into with the Antwerp merchant Naulaerts.<sup>17</sup> Those cartoons possibly served as decors for figurative series.

The cartoons that can be attributed to Achtschellinck on the basis of documents are usually quite closed without much depth. The landscapes really serve as background, almost as an item of scenery, to the scene in the foreground. In his landscape paintings with only a few small characters for decoration, a great deal of attention is paid to depth and distant views between the sets of trees. His work is fully in line with the famous Brussels school of landscape painting of the late seventeenth century.

A replica depicting this subject is known, which forms part of the most complete series in Vienna, which, however, takes up only the central part (fig. 2).

The amply filled border is typical of the end of the seventeenth century. The richly elaborated flowers, arranged on volutes, are accompanied by parrots and many attributes, such as an open shell in the middle of the horizontal borders, and in the corners at the bottom, a flower basket, a quiver of arrows, a decorative cloth, and various kinds of burners and bowls with ornaments. Other editions from the series by the De Vos family have the same borders. [IDM]



1. Previously, the tapestry is said to have formed part of an English collection.
2. A set of six pieces, without marks, is preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. LXXVI. The borders are identical. The series possibly originates from the same workshop; an edition woven in Oudenaarde is also mentioned in the documents, see De Meüter 2016, pp. 326–332.
3. Denucé 1936, p. 178.
4. For the genealogy of the De Vos family, see Brosens 2002, pp. 58–62.
5. Denucé 1936, p. 180.
6. De Meüter 2016, pp. 326–332.
7. Denucé 1936, pp. 257, 260, 278.
8. Denucé 1936, pp. 180–182. De Vos bought a series of four pieces attributed to Jacobus van der Beurcht/Borch, while the surviving tapestries show that he wove versions of them himself.
9. A *Minerva Comes to Perseus' Aid* with his name in the border belongs to the collection of the Renschdael Art Foundation. The tapestry has the same border, see also Brosens 2002, p. 62.
10. According to correspondence with Van Verren in Oudenaarde, Van Schoor supplied him with cartoons in 1694–96. For Oudenaarde and Antwerp, see De Meüter 2016, e.g., pp. 411–414.
11. New York 2007, p. 445.
12. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. Tap. LXXXIX/1, see Halburn 1991, p. 81; De Meüter 2003, p. 143.
13. Brosens 2004, pp. 92–93.
14. Weyerman 1729, vol. 2, pp. 255–256.
15. De Meüter 2016, pp. 412–413.
16. Idem, p. 97.
17. Brosens 2012, p. 191 and Appendix 2.





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THE WINTER

Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
fourth quarter of the seventeenth century  
Signature I.F.V. from the workshop of  
Jean-François van den Hecke (c. 1640–c. 1705)  
Figures designed by Lodewijk van Schoor (c. 1650–1702)  
Wool and silk; 380 × 335 cm; 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 8583

Provenance: 1948, donated by Mrs Elisabeth Andriessse  
in memory of her husband Mr Hugo Andriessse

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1954 B, pp. 98–102;  
Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p.78–79, no. 80.

In the first plane, several allegorical figures are gathered  
around a lady sitting on a chair with her feet on a pretty  
cushion. She warms herself on a brazier while protecting

her face behind a screen that she holds in her hand. She  
is wearing a richly decorated dress with a fur collar. Her  
headgear is also made of fur and decorated with a beautiful  
brooch.

Behind her is a winged figure with a Janus head, sym-  
bolising the year past and the year to come. His older face  
with a beard is looking backwards, while the young face is  
looking forwards. The river god on the front left holding  
a barrel of flowing water symbolises the astrological sign  
of Aquarius. The winged figure on the right stands on a  
net and carries a cloth with a fish in it and symbolises the  
astrological sign of Pisces.

This scene is set in front of a large room, closed off by  
heavy curtains, in which a spectacle is taking place. On a  
balcony, an orchestra is playing for a dancing couple and  
animated onlookers.

In the rich border, various birds (parakeets, parrots  
and doves) appear in the midst of flowers, arranged on



[FIG. 1] *Winter*, from *Four Seasons of the Year*, Brussels, fourth quarter of the seventeenth century. Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb, inv. MUO-014862.





[FIG. 2] *Autumn*, from *Four Seasons of the Year*, Brussels, fourth quarter of the seventeenth century. Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb, inv. MUO-014861.

volutes. Other attributes have been added, such as a dog, ornamental cloths, incense vessels, caduceus, flute, fruit bowls, and curtain tiebacks.

At the centre top, there is a cartouche bearing the Latin inscription *HIEMS* (Winter), surrounded by torches, ribbons and curtain tiebacks hanging down into the picture plane, and at the bottom, as a counterweight, are various fruits, a large shell and a staff.

#### Commentary

The Latin inscription *Hiems* in the central cartouche leaves no doubt as to what this tapestry is depicting – *The Winter*. It forms part of a series, in which the seasons are combined with the signs of the zodiac. The inscriptions and the identical borders make it possible to identify other scenes from the series.<sup>1</sup> A *Winter* and an *Autumn* (fig. 1) are preserved in the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb.<sup>2</sup> The edition depicting *Winter* is broader (fig. 2). To the left of the group of figures and at the water's edge is a third character with wings who is lifting up a bowl with her right hand. Her left arm rests on a ram, the third astrological sign that completes the winter.<sup>3</sup>

The weaver's mark on our tapestry was recovered from the original reinforced edge and integrated into the new one after restoration. The incomplete initials IFV and

a piece of the H leave no doubt as to the name of the workshop: Jean-François van den Hecke. He belonged to a family of entrepreneurs active in Brussels for several generations. From 1661 onwards, he is cited in the documents of the guild.<sup>4</sup> In 1681, he asked for the privileges he had received since 1662 to be extended, because he was not only in charge of a workshop with eight looms but also had control over thirteen looms in colleagues' workshops.<sup>5</sup> His work is of high quality. This tapestry is a fine weave with strong colours woven in many shades, and metallic threads have been used in relief on some of the decorations. The richly worked border is typical of the production of Van den Hecke. Like his father François I van den Hecke (1595/96–1675), he re-used old cartoons from the various series by Rubens,<sup>6</sup> but of course, he also had new series designed.

He often relied on Lodewijk van Schoor, the most sought-after figure-designer in the second half of the seventeenth century in Brussels, but also in Antwerp and Oudenaarde (see cat. 67). It is often very difficult to correctly identify the rather abstract representations with similar figures. The inscriptions woven into the cartouches enable us to make a correct interpretation. A document from 1700 explicitly mentions that Mr Jean Lottin bought a series depicting the *Four Seasons of the Year* painted by Van Schoor from Van den Hecke.<sup>7</sup>

Such a large group of cartoons enabled the merchant to determine the composition of a series to the wishes of the customer.<sup>8</sup> A memorandum by his son Peter van den Hecke (c. 1675–1752) mentions a series of the Four Seasons, each in combination with signs of the horoscope, as in the tapestry *Winter*. The four pieces were supplemented by two tapestries combining the four elements.<sup>9</sup>

Such a representation of the months with horoscope signs had a predecessor in Brussels with the well-known series designed by Jan van den Hoecke (1611–1651) around 1647.<sup>10</sup>

Who provided the backgrounds for the series is not known. The cooperation between both suppliers of the cartoons must have been quite intense because in most scenes there are many characters placed in the background, especially in *Autumn* and *Winter*. The style of the decors, with a mixture of park views, buildings and panoramas, may point to both Augustin Coppens<sup>11</sup> and Pieter Spierinckx. We know from documents that the latter collaborated with Van Schoor for the realisation of similar allegorical maps, *The Four Continents and the World-Controlling Forces*<sup>12</sup> and *The Months*, depicting the activities of the months.<sup>13</sup> The first series in particular was very successful and many copies are still preserved.<sup>14</sup> The elaboration is completely the same as *The Seasons*. [IDM]

1. Until 1918, a series hung in the Zerbst castle in Anhalt. Two old post-cards show the series divided over two wide walls: *Winter*, *Autumn* and *Summer*. It is not known whether *Spring* was also present. A copy of *Spring* is preserved in Munich, see Collection of the Bayerische Verwaltung, inv. BNS W 12.
2. Zagreb, Museum of Arts and Crafts, inv. MUO-014861, *The Autumn* and MUO-14862, *The Winter*.
3. Other copies of the Four Seasons appeared in the trade with the narrow framed border, as in Anhalt, or with the sumptuous border of *Winter*. Only a few bear weaver's marks. There is a list of various editions in Standen 1985, no. 34. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York owns a copy of *Autumn* (inv. 15.121.8, narrow example with a frame border). Other reissues include: for *Autumn*, see Getty Research Center French & Co., no. 0238223; for *Summer*, see Getty Research Center French & Co., nos. 0238223 and 0238225 (with frame border), London, Sotheby's, 20 June 1975, no. 6, and London, Christie's, 10 December 1981, no. 10 (with frame border); for *Spring*, see The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, inv. 1927.183, Bennett 1992, no. 57 (narrow copy), Getty Research Center French & Co., no. 0238221, London, Christie's, 30 November 1967, no. 140.
4. Brosens 2004, pp. 338–343.
5. Idem, p. 60.
6. E. Duverger 1981 A.
7. Wauters 1878, p. 270.
8. Standen 1985, p. 223. At Christie's in London, a peculiar variant of the series was sold on 18 May 1995, nos. 214–219. They bear no marks and the whole work is stiffer in its elaboration. The border is different because it is narrower and has an interlocking arrangement consisting mainly of arabesques. *Winter* and *Autumn* are in mirror image, while in *Spring* and *Summer*, the most important group of figures was copied across, however, the personifications have largely disappeared and been replaced by seasonal land activities. The series of six is completed with two examples of *The Elements*.

9. Wauters 1878, pp. 355–356. In the Museum of Decorative Arts in Zagreb, examples of the seasons are combined with *The Elements*, as in the memorandum by Peter van den Hecke. In a memorandum from 1692 in connection with a purchase of several series by the Duke of Savoy, the configuration is different. There, new cartoons are listed for the *Four Continents*, but also for four tapestries that combine a season with an element. A description is given which makes reference in each case to different geniuses. There is no mention of the weaver or designer. Whether *Winter* belongs to this edition cannot therefore be determined with certainty, see Viale Ferrero 1968, p. 812.
10. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, inv. XLVII and inv. LIII, see Bauer 1975, pp. 55–68.
11. In Oudenaarde, they worked together for series traded by Van Verren, see De Meüter 2016, pp. 379–408.
12. Idem, pp. 305–315.
13. A lead time of two months was proposed each time. This edition, which is mentioned in the documents, was also probably woven by Van den Hecke, see De Meüter 2016, pp. 315–318.
14. Such as a series woven by Judocus de Vos in the Egmont Palace in Brussels.





[69]

[69]

## THE WOUNDED POROS IS BROUGHT BEFORE ALEXANDER

Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
final quarter of the seventeenth century  
Possibly from the workshop of  
Jean-François van den Hecke (c. 1640–c. 1705)  
Design after Charles Le Brun (1619–90)  
Wool and silk; 412 × 697 cm; 8 to 9 warps per cm  
Inv. 8665

Provenance: 1948, acquired via the services of the O.R.E.

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 80–81, no. 82;  
Crick-Kuntziger 1949.

After conquering the Persian Empire, Alexander wanted to take over India. In a battle (in 326 B.C.), the Indian king Poros is captured and carried to Alexander. Because Alexander is impressed by his courage, he asks what destiny he desires. This conversation, recorded in the work of Lucius Flavius Arrianus or Arrianos (89?–after 145/146), *Anabasis Alexandrou/Tour of Alexander*, is reproduced here.

The original composition of the model, designed by Le Brun, has been shortened at the left. The most important part of the scene of Poros being brought before Alexander and his retinue is no longer central. Some iconographic details, such as the obesity of Poros and the presence of the statue of Hercules (far right) carried by the Roman soldiers in the war, were inspired by the 1639 French edition of Quintus Curcius's *Life of Alexander*. Furthermore, the inscription in the centre of the border, praising the generosity of Alexander, is also inspired by Quintus Curcius: PORI REGIS VICTI CAPTIQUE MAGNANIMATEM NON MISERICORDIA MODO SED HONORE PROSEQUITUR ALEXANDER ILLUMQUE IN AMICORUM NUMERUM RECIPIT MOX DONAT AMPLIORE REGNO ("Alexandre n'est pas seulement touché de compassion en voyant la grandeur d'Ame | Au Roy Porus qu'il a vaincu et fait son prisonnier, mais il luy donne des marques | honorables de son estime en le recevant au nombre de ses amis, et en luy donnans | ensuite un plus grand Royaume que celuy qu'il avoit perdu").

The left part of the composition (missing here) depicts the end of the battle. Also, the part of the composition in which the battle is settled is still full of movement due to

the jumble of soldiers and the prancing horses. The prancing horse on the right is possibly inspired by the central horseman in the *Battle of Zama*, from the series depicting the *Story of Scipio* by Guilio Romano.<sup>2</sup>

Only a brief indication is given about the background.

### Commentary

This depiction of *A Wounded Poros is Brought Before Alexander* is part of a Brussels revival of a series of tapestries that told the *Life of Alexander* in eleven pieces and was originally designed in the Gobelins, in honour of Louis XIV of France.<sup>3</sup> The ambitions of the ancient hero could be compared to those of the young Louis XIV, in terms of conquests, but also as an example of an ideal reign. From the time he was a child, the king was regarded as the new Alexander.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1662 and 1672, Charles Le Brun – appointed first painter to King Louis XIV (1638–1715) in 1664 – developed compositions for an edition of the theme by the *Manufactures des Meubles de la Couronne* in Paris. He went on to lead that organisation from 1663 until his death.<sup>5</sup>

The first tapestry of the Alexander series was first entered in the Garde-meuble in 1667 and the four subsequent ones in 1670. In the following years, numerous more specimens were noted, woven with gold thread and a little silver, by various workshops within the Gobelins (figs. 1–2).<sup>6</sup>

The engravers who worked in the Gobelins ensured a rapid dissemination of Le Brun's designs. The paintings of Alexander were engraved by Girard Audran and Gérard Edelinck between 1672 and 1678. In the case of the series depicting Alexander, this mode of dissemination was extremely important, as it meant that it would soon be followed by Brussels and Oudenaarde.

For his creation, Le Brun looked to the great Italian examples (including Raphael and Pietro da Cortona), as well as Poussin and the Flemish masters, such as Rubens and Jordaens.<sup>7</sup> Several elements of the great French style are united: the epic elaboration of the battles in a manner that is full of action, and with a multitude of strong characters expressing a range of emotions. Often the scene, as here, is worked out as a frieze and it is possible to refer





[FIG. 1] *The Wounded Poros is Brought Before Alexander*, from *The Story of Alexander*, Paris, Manufacture des Gobelins, workshop of Mozin, 1670–1676. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT-93-004.



[FIG. 2] Right-hand part of *The Wounded Poros is Brought Before Alexander*, from *The Story of Alexander*, Paris, Manufacture des Gobelins, before 1683. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 82-007.

to a *horror vacui*. This new style appealed to a new clientele, including in the Southern Netherlands. In Brussels, six workshops marketed versions of the engravings soon after they were distributed. Several workshops probably had cartoons painted themselves. The colour palette differs from the Parisian examples because the elaboration of the cartoons could only be based on the black-and-white engravings. Most of the Brussels series came from the workshop of Jean-François van den Hecke and it is likely that he was responsible for the first Brussels editions. He also followed the original model most closely. In the versions by Marcus de Vos and Gerard Peemans, a greater distance can be established from the original.<sup>8</sup>

The painting for *A Wounded Poros is Brought Before Alexander* is thought to have been finished in 1669.<sup>9</sup> The difference from the first editions by the Gobelins is that the subdivision of the original model is different. From the very beginning, the representation was delivered in the form of three separate tapestries. In this Brussels edition, the right wing is united with most of the central section (figs. 1 and 2).

Compared to the model, almost no modifications can be seen. The composition is identical and also includes a view upon the tent encampment at the back, but due to the lower height of the tapestry, the landscape above Poros is less nuanced. On the right, the tapestries woven in Paris and Brussels have a little more space than in the model, making it clearer that the statue of Hercules had been placed on a movable cart.

The borders most frequently used by Van den Hecke are identical to the tapestry in Brussels. Along three sides is a beautiful rich floral border, with a succession of full bunches of flowers, alternating with bronze-coloured volutes. The same volutes occur once more around the cartouche in the centre of the upper border. In the cartouche at the top, the text explains what is being depicted. The bottom border is a narrow frame. An attribution to his workshop is therefore fully justified. There are still several known editions with the same border and the name of the weaver Jean-François van den Hecke woven in. There is no difference between the replicas that have been preserved.<sup>10</sup>

The editions bearing the marks of other Brussels workshops (Judocus De Vos, Jean-Frans van der Borgh, and Peter van den Hecke) may even have been woven up to the 1730s and they allowed themselves more freedom.<sup>11</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, the Van Verren workshop in Oudenaarde also marketed the subject. Here, the groups of figures are copied, but are often placed in a different, greener setting. Documents prove that Peter IJkens (1648–1695) was asked to paint the cartoons after Le Brun's model.<sup>12</sup> [IDM]

1. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 80; Paris 2008, p. 14.
2. Idem, p. 91.
3. One for *Alexander and the Family of Darius* and the *Triumph of Alexander*, and three volumes each for the *Battle of Granikos*, the *Battle of Arbella*, and for *A Wounded Poros is Brought Before Alexander*.
4. Paris 2008, pp. 11–17.
5. Idem, pp. 41–52.
6. Idem, pp. 45–52, 108.
7. Idem, pp. 21–23.
8. Vanhoren 1999, pp. 62–65.
9. Idem, p. 43.
10. Auction of the (collection) *Sammlung der Markgrafen und Grossherzöge von Baden*, Sotheby's, Baden-Baden, 8/21 October 1995, no. 1037, and again at Sotheby's, New York, Ingraio collection, 20 October 2006, no. 107. A series of twelve pieces in the Count Berwick and Alba collection, see Berwick & Alba, nos. 19–31. Later in the Erlanger collection, see Brussels 1880. There are twelve pieces in the castle at Haroué, see Chambord 1996, pp. 230–237, and copies in Würzburg and Skokloster.
11. Idem, pp. 63, 65–66.
12. De Meüter 2016, pp. 253–259. For Peter IJkens, see also cat. 66.



## ARMORIAL OF THE MARTINI FAMILY

Southern Netherlands, Antwerp (?),  
fourth quarter of the seventeenth century  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 223 × 180 cm; 7 to 8 warps per cm  
Inv. 1072

Provenance: 1863, purchased from Mr Staes-Cockx

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p.81, no. 83.

The composition is very elegant with the armorial of the Martini family as the main element. Hanging on cords with tassels against a landscape creates a *trompe l'oeil* effect.

The shield is composed of a plain silver upper segment, with a red and silver heart shield below that bears a red anchor cross. Above it is a helmet clad in red and silver, with a double eagle as helmet insignia.

### Commentary

A landscape is often chosen as background for tapestries depicting the armorial of the purchaser.<sup>1</sup> In most cases, heraldic tapestries were ordered in a series and of course the cartoons were painted specifically for the client.

The coat of arms belongs to the Martini family, probably to the art dealer Asciano Martini. He was based in Antwerp and sent tapestries to southern Europe and Vienna.<sup>2</sup> He acted as a negotiator for the Brussels *Zenobia* series bought by the Mansi family and still kept in their palace in Lucca (cat. 62).<sup>3</sup> Documents in 1675 mention a shipment from Ostend to Seville via Cadiz, and in 1680, orders dispatched overland to Genoa and Vienna. It is striking that the description of the three deliveries is the same: Antwerp work and landscapes.<sup>4</sup> The fact that only tapestries from Antwerp were included may of course be coincidental, but is possibly an indication of the origin of his own heraldic tapestry.

Tapestries from the end of the seventeenth century that can be attributed to workshops in Antwerp are scarce, so an attribution remains conditional.

The landscape in the background is very well balanced and has a nice perspective. Its soft colours contrast elegantly with the bright red accents of the coat of arms. [IDM]

1. Famous examples include the tapestries woven in Brussels in around 1555–60 with the Polish armorial of King Sigismund August, and the armorial of Lithuania in order to decorate Wawel Castle in Cracow.
2. Denucé 1931, pp. 15–16; Denucé 1936, p. XXXIX.
3. Cambini 2001, pp. 356, 364.
4. Donnet 1897, pp. 363–365.





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## A BANQUET



[71]

Southern Netherlands, Brussels or Antwerp,  
final quarter of the seventeenth century  
Workshop unknown  
Design by Lodewijk van Schoor (1619–90)  
Wool and silk; 277 × 452 cm; 7 warps per cm  
Inv. 9004

Provenance: 1956, bequest of Mrs Claude De Brabander

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 82–83, no. 86.

The entire composition is taken up by a banquet that takes place in a beautiful architectural setting, a kind of portico with a view towards a park. Musicians and singers are adding lustre to the meal. Servants are walking on and off.

The characters sitting around the table, from right to left, include: a queen who is oriental in appearance, adorned with a turban and a small crown; in the centre, a group of two bearded men and a young woman; and finally a young woman who turns towards the female musicians on her right.

In the foreground, some servants are busy preparing drinks.

Three details stand out, for which no explanation is immediately available. The figure on the right, who appears to be a man,<sup>1</sup> is holding a winged shoe; the woman on the left is carefully holding a coral branch between two fingers; and in front of the bearded older man is a billy goat's foot as an ornamental object.

### Commentary

To date, no clues allow us to determine the series to which this scene belongs. The representations of beautifully set tables are presented on works depicting biblical as well as mythological subjects.

It could be an allegorical representation, a month or a season, which were fashionable in this period, but a scene from the *Story of Telemachus* or the *Story of Medea* has also been suggested.<sup>2</sup> A series that also fits in stylistically and was certainly ordered from Van Schoor is the

*Story of Amadis and Oriane*. In 1698, Cornelis De Wael in Antwerp received the oil paint patterns ordered from Van Schoor and Pieter Spierinckx.<sup>3</sup>

A border is now missing but was probably originally woven on.

The workshop that wove it cannot be determined due to the absence of any marks. Brussels comes to mind, but so does Antwerp.

Another example of the same representation, with a rather narrow flower-and-fruit border featuring occasional birds, is to be found in the *Chambre de Commerce* in Rouen.<sup>4</sup> For the moment, the border also gives no hint that allows us to place the scene in a broader context. [IDM]

1. According to Crick-Kuntziger, this is a woman, see Crick-Kuntziger 1956: p. 83, no. 86.
2. Boccara 1971, p. 135, and Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 82–83.
3. Heym 1998, De Meüter 2016, pp. 332–336, and Alen 2017, II, pp. 568–570.
4. Dimensions: 310 x 440. Illustration in D Boccara 1971, p. 135.



## CALVARY

Southern Netherlands, seventeenth century

Workshop and designer unknown

Wool, silk and traces of metal threads; 88 × 69 cm; 7 warps per cm  
Inv. v2920

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1926, p. 68;

Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 74–75, no. 72.

In the foreground, the dying Christ hangs on the cross. He is surrounded by Our Lady, with her arms crossed over her chest, and by St John, who is looking up towards Christ. At the foot of the cross, Mary Magdalene uses a cloth to dry the blood that drips from Christ's wounds. In front of the cross, an ointment jar belonging to Mary Magdalene and a skull are references to Golgotha and according to legend, this is the skull of Adam.



[FIG. 1] *Calvary*, engraving by Antoon Wierix after a model by Maarten de Vos, last quarter of the sixteenth century. Royal Library Albert I, Brussels, inv. s.i. 38245.

Metal thread is applied in the chalice and other parts, such as the halo of Our Lady, the garments of St John and Mary Magdalene, and the perizoma or loincloth of Christ.

The city in a mountainous landscape in the background represents Jerusalem.

The border is an imitation of a simple wooden frame border with a repeat of an acanthus leaf.

### Commentary

Given its small size, this tapestry was probably ordered for private devotion in a domestic chapel. Such small pieces were woven in large quantities in all centres of the weaving industry. Precisely because of their nature, very few of them have been preserved.

The composition was inspired by Flemish devotional prints from the last quarter of the sixteenth century, such as engravings by Antoon Wierix (active in the period 1579–1604) after a model by Maarten de Vos (1531/32–1603) (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup>

The stereotypical way in which the mountainous landscape, the trees and other greenery are depicted allows us to date the piece to the end of the sixteenth century. However, the combination with the frame border points to a century later, when these were in fashion. [IDM]

1. Mauquoy-Hendrickx 1978, I, pp. 46, pl. 39, nos. 326, 328 and 331. With thanks to my colleague Guy Delmarcel for the information.







-V-

## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY



AS FAR AS the eighteenth century is concerned, the collection contains a sample of the themes that were in vogue. The Leyniers family catalogue includes themes from antiquity, such as *Famous Men After Plutarch* (cat. 79), and mythological subjects, such as the *Triumph of Mars* (cat. 81), but also *Don Quixote of La Mancha* (cat. 80), after the novel by Cervantes, which was published between 1600 and 1614 as a parody of the fashionable chivalric novels of his time. The successful collaboration in those two editions between the prolific Brussels painter of figures, Jan van Orley (1665–1735) and Augustin Coppens (1668–1740), who was responsible for the beautifully rendered landscapes, was also repeated for an Old Testament subject, the *Life of Moses* (cat. 83) and a theme from antiquity, *Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes* (cat. 82).

The decorative *Landscapes with Animals* formed a separate genre in their own right. Weavers from Oudenaarde, in particular, created countless series of these (cat. 74–75), sometimes decorating them with smaller figures (76).

Series depicting all kinds of peasant scenes, the so-called *Teniers Series* – which refer to the paintings typical of father and son, David Teniers the Elder and the Younger – were very popular. Such representations were so popular that every workshop offered them, both in full tapestries and also in smaller works (cat. 85–86). The collection includes examples from Brussels (cat. 84) and



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[75]



[76]



[84]



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from Oudenaarde (cat. 88), but also examples from Lille (cat. 87, D4–5), as well as works from Beauvais (D6).

In the course of the eighteenth century, the centres in the Southern Netherlands began to face competition from tapestry workshops in France. There was Lille, which lay just across the border, but other cities became more important. Examples from all of those production centres can be found in the collection. Two *portières* combining the seasons and the elements were produced in Paris (cat. 89), as well as smaller works after paintings (cat. 92–93) at the end of the century. Both the *Mars and Venus* after François Boucher (1703–1770), woven in Beauvais (cat. 90), and the exotic *Birdcage* (cat. 91) from Aubusson are representative of these centres. Rather marginal, but no less interesting, was the production in Italy. The two examples from Rome were conceived as small paintings (cat. 94–95).

For the last series of this period, we return to Brussels for the late-eighteenth-century *Legend of the Holy Hosts*, made for the Cathedral of Saint Gudula and Saint Michael (D7). The six cartoons were painted in 1769 and in 1780 by Maximiliaan de Haese (1713–1781), a nephew of the famous cartoon painter, Jan van Orley. After his death, Jan de Landtsheer (1750–1828) provided the two missing scenes in 1784. The father and son weavers, Jan-Frans (1697–1774) and Jacob van der Borgh (†1794) owned the last weaving workshop in Brussels. [IDM]



## APOLLO AND A NYMPH IN A PARK



[73]

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1700

City mark of Brussels and the signature H. REYDAMS

from the workshop of Hendrik Reydam (1650–1719)

Landscapes designed by Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711) and figures

designed by Johannes de Reyff (active from 1677 onwards)

Wool and silk; 312 × 467 cm; 8 warps per cm

Inv. 3155

Provenance: 1893, Gift from Mrs Elisa Lejeune-Dubois

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 81–82, no. 84

The composition is very well balanced with a pair of lovers in the centre that are being besieged by a group of three putti on the right. On the left, accompanied by the nymph, two women are picking flowers for the vase that is next to them.

The overall meaning of the scene is not obvious. The only clue to the identity of the central pair of lovers is the lyre lying on the ground to the left of the male figure, partially hidden under his cloak. This is a typical attribute of Apollo, the god of music. The group of putti attacking the couple may also include other attributes that indicate that the figure shown is Apollo. One of the putti is leaning on a shepherd's staff and Apollo was the patron of shepherds. The other is shooting with a bow and arrow. This may be a reference to Apollo as a hunter, but it is also an attribute of Eros or Cupid, the god of love.

The female character is more difficult to determine because the god had many love affairs. It has been suggested that the person represented here is Clymene, or Cyrene,<sup>1</sup> but specific indications are lacking.

This scene takes place on the first plane of a harmonised combination of different landscapes. The setting is composed of a beautiful park view fronted by a fountain with a monumental bronze featuring a triton and a nymph sitting next to a lion, water features, and parterres in which two gardeners are at work on a second plane. In the distance is a view of a hilly landscape. On the left, a forest view with a small pathway counterbalances the fountain. One remarkable detail is the view of an open building between the trees behind the fountain.

Commentary

Hendrik II Reydam (1650–1719) succeeded his father and namesake as the owner of an important workshop in Brussels.<sup>2</sup> His father was admitted to the weavers' guild as a master in 1628/29. Two years after his father's death, in 1671, Hendrik II was granted privileges. In 1675, he married a daughter of the painter Daniel II Leyniers (1618–1688).<sup>3</sup> Hendrik I Reydam (c. 1610–1669) regularly worked together with other weavers, as was the case with Everard III Leyniers in 1654 on the delivery of *The Riding School* (cat. 55).<sup>4</sup> The connection between the two workshops had therefore already existed for a long time. It explains why Urbanus Leyniers (1674–1747) associated himself with his brother Daniel (1669–1728), as well as with his cousin by marriage, Hendrik Reydam, when starting his weaving workshop in 1712. Until then, Urbanus had been active as the best-known dyer in Brussels. In 1705, Reydam worked with five looms, making it one of the medium-sized workshops.<sup>5</sup> Within the association that existed between them, he was given the task of organising the workshop and arranging sales.<sup>6</sup>

In 1690, Reydam made a series of six *Landscapes with Small Figures*, with gold and silver thread, at the request of Jaspas Leyniers, the father of Urbanus and of Daniel, who was active as a dyer. In the contract, Spierinckx is listed as the designer and the delivery time for the six tapestries was eight months. The terms of the deal are very strict and confirm that Reydam had debts to Leyniers' family.<sup>7</sup>

The tapestry undoubtedly belongs to this genre. Other documents are more precise about what was being depicted. According to the trade correspondence of the Naulaerts company in Antwerp, Reydam supplied series with *Groen uyt den Ovidius, historie van Jupiter* and *Groen met figurkens uyt den Ovidius, historie van Aeneas* in 1700.<sup>8</sup> The scenes listed do not correspond to the tapestry depicting Apollo. In 1700, the series is described as new, which means that different cartoons were probably used to the ones woven in 1690.

A very fine mythological series from his workshop is kept at Hatfield House (Hertfordshire, England). The ensemble consists of twelve pieces, some of which are cut-up fragments, spread over different rooms of the





**FIG. 1** *Juno and Sea-Gods*, from *Landscapes with Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Brussels, workshop of Hendrik Reydam, c. 1700. Private collection.

house. As is typical for the end of the seventeenth century, the border is a combination of arabesques and flowers with all kinds of attributes (shells, quivers with arrows, torches and braziers). The beautiful frame with flowers growing from decorative elements in the corners and the middle of each edge is equally typical of this period.

In the series at Hatfield House, several tales of the gods from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* can be identified. Almost all of the sets are park scenes with large water features and therefore of the same type as in the design that depicts Apollo.<sup>9</sup>

One of the scenes shows the same couple on the left but placed in a different setting. What is more, the series in Hatfield House has a background very similar to that of Apollo but includes a depiction of Juno with river gods.<sup>10</sup> The same scene was found in the art trade (fig. 1).<sup>11</sup> This group of figures was also found in other combinations and decors. The combinations and variations within this

series are almost innumerable.<sup>12</sup> The same decor without figures, but with some birds was apparently also woven by Reydam.<sup>13</sup>

The method of combining separate cartoons for groups of figures and settings has only rarely been demonstrated in Brussels workshops, while it was commonplace in the workshops in Oudenaarde of the same period. We know that Pieter Spierinckx often worked for the merchant Van Verren in Oudenaarde and so he was possibly one of the people who introduced this working method to Brussels. It gave traders the advantage of being able to offer a greater variety to customers, while using only a limited number of cartoons. Obviously, this approach is only valuable for tapestries with small figures.

The manner of constructing the set in the depiction of *Apollo with a Nymph*, with an extensive park view combined with a Southern vista, and on the left, a forest view, shows many similarities to the style of Pieter Spierinckx<sup>14</sup>

(cat. 66, 77). A similar filling-in was used with park views in his first designs for the Antwerp merchant Pieter Wouters from around 1660. The Brussels series with mythological subjects produced by Jan Cobus, but especially those by Gerard Peemans, are elaborated in a similar manner.

It is interesting to compare the figures of the *Story of Jupiter* that we know with the mark of Reydam.<sup>15</sup> In the inventory of Urbanus Leyniers, the seven patterns for this subject include the annotation that they were painted by Johannes de Reyff and Augustin Coppens.<sup>16</sup> Little is known about De Reyff.<sup>17</sup> Could the figures of this mythological scene also be attributed to De Reyff? The elaboration of the figures is very similar, with curly hair above high foreheads and rather heavy arms and legs. The mischievous putti, all naked, surrounded only by a loose cloth, are also found in the *Story of Jupiter*.<sup>18</sup> Given the limited number of figures, it is clear that the tapestry with Apollo is a cheaper realisation.

Only one exact reproduction of the representation – in mirror image – has been found in an auction. According to the catalogue, it was a nineteenth-century copy woven in Mechelen.<sup>19</sup> [IDM]

1. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 81 and Reydam 1908, p. 101, respectively.
2. Reydam 1908; Brosens 2004, pp. 334–337.
3. Brosens 2004, p. 66, 68; for information about the Leyniers family, see Vanwelkenhuyzen & De Tienne 1988, and Vanwelkenhuyzen & De Tienne 1989.
4. Brosens 2004, p. 334.
5. *Idem*, p. 210.
6. Vanwelkenhuyzen & De Tienne 1989, p. 29.
7. *Idem*, p. 17; Brosens 2004, pp. 70, 202. Two more of Jaspar Leyniers' contracts with Albert Auwerckx, from 1688 and 1691, refer to tapestries with the same title. No designer is mentioned in those cases. Whether or not Reydam and Auwerckx used the same cartoons cannot be determined. Sets of this genre bearing the Auwerckx mark have been preserved, see Göbel 1927. Copies that were auctioned have park views that closely match the *Apollo with Nymph*, see Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 12/13 December 1928, no. 228, and also later in Paris, Galliera, 14 March 1975, no. 139, plus a *Diana with Nymphs* in the Blondeel-De Wit collection in 1992.
8. Denucé 1936, pp. 160–161, with an enumeration of the scenes.
9. Some of the scenes have been worked out differently, both with regard to the figures and in the settings, which means that the tapestries do not belong to the same group of cartoons. Given the size of the order – twelve tapestries – this makes sense.
10. A few adjustments were made, the most striking being Juno's chariot, which replaced the monumental fountain.
11. Two pieces from the series were at Galerie Blondeel-Deroyan at TEFAF (The European Fine Art Fair) in Maastricht in 2000, and were auctioned off; see Christie's, London, 2 April 2003, nos. 52–53. In this piece depicting Juno, her chariot was omitted so the fountain is fully present. The second example depicts Diana and some nymphs in a similar park setting. At Hatfield House, this representation also belongs to the series, but in that version, the two nymphs from the representation of Apollo in the museum are included.
12. Other examples: Sotheby's, London, 5 March 1976, no. 31, and again at Christie's, London, 15 November 1984, no. 216. Photo in the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, ACL 62160B (neg. Becker, Brussels). The tapestry from the Baron Cassel collection was sold at Galerie Giroux, Brussels, 21 November 1953.

13. Christie's, London, 7 July 1977, no. 110. In 1999 in the collection of Galerie Blondeel.
14. De Meüter 2016, pp. 221–357.
15. Brosens 2004, pp. 137–140 and De Meüter 2016, pp. 375–376.
16. Brosens 2004, p. 277.
17. In 1677, he is registered as a pupil of Lanceloot Volders, but at what point in time he was registered as a master is unknown, see Brosens, p. 96 and Delmarcel 1999, p. 306.
18. For images, see Brosens 2004, cat. 3, and De Meüter 2016, pp. 375–376.
19. Sotheby's, Monaco, 26/27 May 1980, no. 1101. More likely, it is a copy from the 1920s–30s when Gaspard de Wit in Mechelen made many copies of tapestries from the collection of the Royal Museums of Art and History; see Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019. Fig. 26 shows several copies of tapestries from the museum's collection on the weaver's stand at the 1930 World Exhibition (Exposition internationale coloniale, maritime et d'art flamand) in Antwerp.





[74.1]

[74]

## LANDSCAPES WITH ANIMALS

Six pieces

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, c. 1700

Workshop of Pieter (1640–1709), or Jan van Verren (1666–1735) (?)

Landscapes designed by Gaspar de Witte (1624–1681) (?) and

some of the animals designed by Adriaan de Gryeff (c. 1655–c. 1722)

Wool and silk; 6 to 7 warps per cm

Inv. 2001–2006

Provenance: 1873, transfer from the Ministry of the Interior.

The series came from the old Brussels private mansion of the Barons of Rommerswael, who settled there in the course of the eighteenth century

Literature: Nobiliaire 1760, pp. 387–388, 472; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 91–92, nos. 105–110; De Meüter 2016, pp. 177–200, 439–441

### History

The series of six pieces was transferred to the museum by the Ministry of the Interior in 1873, together with inv. no. 2007 (cat. 75) and a Teniers series (inv. 1997–2000; cat. 84). The seven tapestries with landscapes were hung in a room in the Hôtel de Rommerswael on the Rue des Petits Carmes in Brussels, in which the Court of Audit was located from 1831 to 1897.<sup>1</sup> Originally, the building was the private mansion of Dukes de Sart and later, probably through marriage in the 1720s, it passed into the hands of Baron van Rommerswael of the Vander Gracht family.<sup>2</sup> We do not know whether the seven tapestries were bought to decorate the Hôtel in the eighteenth century or whether they were incorporated later. On that occasion they may have been altered to fit the dimensions of the room. The modifications (cat. 74.2) seem to indicate that the seven landscapes with animals originally formed an ensemble of six cartoons.

The series of six tapestries is a different edition to inv. 2007, as this tapestry is 30 to 40 cm taller than the others and though the frame border is similar, it differs as a result of the extra decoration in the centre. This can possibly be explained if they were not brought together until later, or if one tapestry was already finished when the order was submitted and the others were woven afterwards.

### Commentary

The series is a typical example of a successful edition from Oudenaarde from around 1700. In the trading papers of the Van Verren family, the mention of “greenery with animals” is frequent and the preferred animals or birds are indicated without too much specification. In some cases, the animal painters who supplied the cartoons are also named. For both a parrot and a white bird, the attribution *de grief* is often included with a De Witte pattern for the landscape. According to correspondence with the animal painter Adriaan de Gryeff, animal patterns were supplied in 1695.<sup>3</sup>

The dealer owned cartoons of greenery for various series and often the designer is mentioned on an order, in this case the name of the Antwerp painter Gaspar De Witte who, according to the correspondence with Van Verren, delivered patterns at different times between 1668 and 1676.<sup>4</sup> Long after De Witte’s death, his patterns were still being used by Jan van Verren until at least 1708.<sup>5</sup> The fact that the cartoons were frequently re-used was obviously not without consequences with regard to their state of preservation, so corrections were sometimes necessary.<sup>6</sup>

On stylistic grounds, the patterns of this series are attributed to De Witte, just like inv. 2007. The similarity in the arrangement of the tapestries is striking – three groups of trees, two at the front, on the left and right, and a third located centrally on the second plane. Even the composition of the individual groups of trees is almost identical. Also similar is the filling-in of the foreground with all kinds of bushes, thistles and flowering plants with a striking red touch, the design of the trunks and leaves of the trees and the presence of a water feature. Buildings, often with bridges, form a prominent presence and are Italian in inspiration.

The animals in these landscapes are mostly birds of various types. In some cases, they are difficult to identify because certain features, such as their beaks, neck length or the colour of their plumage, are incorrect. It is clear that the traders had a preference for colourful birds. Since separate payment had to be made for the birds in the composition, they were often placed somewhat haphazardly



on the ground or in trees, rather as an ornamental element.

Of course, the same landscapes could be filled with small figures instead of animals. The most striking example is a series of four tapestries depicting Teniers scenes (Gazzada Schianno, Cagnola collection)<sup>7</sup> (figs. 1, 2, 6, and cat. 75, fig. 3). It has not yet been established who was the author of these peasant scenes. In addition, the same backgrounds have been found with mythological figures.<sup>8</sup> These other series include both the cartoons of this series and the piece inv. 2007 (cat. 75). This confirms that they were owned by the same workshop and together formed a set. Sometimes, small changes were made to the elements included in these different interpretations, thereby giving the tapestry a totally different look. This is a nice illustration of the versatility with which the cartoons had been conceived by the workshops in Oudenaarde.

Apart from Oudenaarde, the De Witte brothers also found buyers for their cartoons in Antwerp and Ghent, and in 1708, cartoons produced by them were on sale in Brussels. Yet this series is an edition by the dealers Van Verren, which is proven by the entries in the trade papers, the quality of the execution, and the borders that are typical of those found around many of their tapestries.

The type of border is an imitation of a wooden frame that was very popular in centres in which tapestry weaving was practised around 1700. This border is composed of a succession of identical volutes and acanthus leaves. The same frame was found around many tapestries attributed to the workshop of Van Verren.

[74.1]

**LANDSCAPE WITH FOX AND DOG FIGHTING**

Inv. 2001  
277 × 270 cm

A well-balanced landscape with a distant view of a building in the hills, to the right of an arched bridge. The bridge crosses a stream with two swans in the intermediate plane. In the foreground, a fox and a dog are fighting. On a branch on the right, a white bird is watching. It looks like a hoopoe, but because of the colours and the short beak it is more reminiscent of the exotic bird known as the kagu, or of a cockatoo. It is possible that this is the white bird that recurs regularly in Van Verren's documents and that it may have been part of the birds supplied by the animal painter Adriaan de Gryeff in 1696.<sup>9</sup> It may also, however, be one of the other birds in the series.

Three tapestries from the series *Landscapes with Animals* were sold at a Brussels auction, but only a replica of this tapestry was published.<sup>10</sup> A tapestry auctioned in 1991 is narrower but has the same decor.<sup>11</sup> Both animals were



[FIG. 1] *Shepherds in a Landscape*, from *Country Scenes*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. Collection Cagnola, Gazzada Schianno.

replaced by a single, indeterminate animal. The border is a so-called chain border, which we will see again below around replicas (figs. 3–5).

Among the four Teniers scenes is a shepherd scene with the same view in the distance. Adjustments have been made to the trees, the water feature and the greenery in the foreground (fig. 1).

[74.2]

**LANDSCAPE WITH PARTRIDGES CHASED BY A DOG<sup>12</sup>**

Inv. 2002  
281 × 143 cm

This narrow tapestry consists of two sections joined together and has two false vertical borders. The broader right-hand section appears to complete the depiction on the left of the *Landscape with Two Birds* (inv. 2006, cat. 74.6). It is possible that the left-hand section originally belonged to the same tapestry, but on the right-hand side. It is therefore a later modification and not an original design.



[74.2]





[74-3]





[74.4]



[FIG. 2] *Robbery by Soldiers*, from *Country Scenes*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. Collection Cagnola, Gazzada Schianno.

[74.3]  
LANDSCAPE WITH A POND AND VARIOUS BIRDS

Inv. 2003  
279 × 482 cm

A broad and attractive landscape with a variety of trees, shrubs and flowers and embellished with various colourful and exotic birds. In the pond is a long-necked bird resembling a heron, while a grouse watches it from the edge. Three other birds have been placed in the trees, including a type of toucan and a parrot. It is clear that it was the purchaser's wish to choose colourful birds, as was often the case. Hence the predilection for parrots, as evidenced by correspondence with painters.<sup>13</sup> The red accents enliven the composition.

In the series depicting the Teniers scenes, this decor was adapted to weave the scene entitled *Robbery by Soldiers* (fig. 2). The pond has disappeared giving the tapestry a completely different look. Similar adjustments appear in inv. 2007 (cat. 75).

[74.4]  
LANDSCAPE WITH PHEASANTS<sup>14</sup>

Inv. 2004  
275 × 224 cm

A pair of pheasants was placed in front of a landscape with running water in the centre and a waterfall. In the distance, we see the same hills with architectural features.

A replica of the scene with the same frame border is preserved in the collection of the Church of Our Lady of Pamele in Oudenaarde.<sup>15</sup>

[74.5]  
LANDSCAPE WITH A DOG WATCHING DUCKS IN A POND

Inv. 2005  
282 × 577 cm

On the left a small section (42 cm) has been added to the landscape. The transitions were adjusted by means





[74.5]



[74.6]





[FIG. 3] *Landscape with a Dog Watching Ducks in a Pond*, from *Landscapes with Animals*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. The New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans.

of touch-up painting. The attached piece does seem to completely match the rest of the series and the border has a seam, but is also original. Where this fragment comes from and when this modification took place is impossible to determine.

The composition of this broad landscape is conceived in such a way that it is possible to split it into two narrower tapestries, as explicitly requested by Pieter van Verren to Gaspar de Witte when he ordered new patterns in 1675.<sup>16</sup> The pattern painter worked with two different vistas, one with a classical, palatial building and the second with a farmyard. As with most of his compositions, a dirt road winds through the greenery on the right. The landscape is enlivened by a pond with several ducks, watched by a dog on the site.

The New Orleans Museum of Art<sup>17</sup> preserves a slightly narrower reproduction of this widest tapestry of the series (fig. 3). The specific border has a basic structure of a chain with flat links decorated with flowers and fruits. It is probably a border of that type that is explicitly mentioned as “*met den keten boordt*” (with the chain border) in Naulaerts’ trade documents in connection with tapestries supplied by the other Oudenaarde weaver Ferdinand Brandt.<sup>18</sup> The same border was found around tapestries with different decors and groups of figures (see below).

[74.6]

**LANDSCAPE WITH TWO BIRDS**

Inv. 2006  
273 × 227 cm

On both the left and right is a seam in the border which indicates that the tapestry was originally wider. This is confirmed by the wider versions of this landscape that have been preserved (figs. 4–5). We can observe that the right-hand section of *Landscape with Partridges Pursued by a Dog* (inv. 2002, cat. 74.2) originally formed the left-hand section of this tapestry. It is possible that the left-hand section fits against the right-hand side of this *Landscape with two Birds*. We must therefore consider the possibility that the tapestries were adapted to the dimensions of the salon in the Hôtel de Rommerswael when they were installed.

The thistle placed centrally in front in the Italianate landscape attracts attention. The view of the walls and buildings of a city, along with the bridge with arches, is very nicely executed. The birds at the front right, as with the other pieces in the series, provide a colourful note. The interplay between the two birds is almost a repeat of the birds on the left in inv. 2003 (cat. 74.3).

The replicas that have been found are with figures and are wider than the modified *Landscape with Two Birds*. One with mythological figures, *Boreas Robs Orithyria*, was in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. Tap XXXIV/2)<sup>19</sup> (fig. 4), while another one with *Diana with Nymphs* appeared on the art market<sup>20</sup> (fig. 5). The structure of the composition is in keeping with that of the broad *Landscape with a Dog Looking at Ducks in a Pond*. Both replicas have the same chain border as the one surrounding the replica preserved in New Orleans (fig. 3).

A representation with festive peasants from a series of Teniers scenes is also broader, but as with other reproductions of peasant scenes, more changes have been made to the greenery (fig. 6) and an inn has been added to the scene being depicted. [IDM]

1. Henne & A. Wauters 1845, vol. III, p. 390.
2. *Nobiliaire des Pays-Bas...*, vol. 2, 1760, pp. 385–388, 472.
3. De Meüter 2016, pp. 432–447.
4. Oudenaarde City Archive – Letters of pattern painters, no. 1182/58.
5. Oudenaarde City Archive – Guild of Saint Barbara (Nering van Heilige Barbara), reg. 843/v/1681: Letter 18 February 1708.
6. In a settlement between Pieter and Jan van Verren in 1688, it is noted: “*Debet monsieur peeter van verren 16 april betaelt anden schilder vander Cruijs, voor het retoucheren van een 8 de witte patroon*” (Debt to Mr Peeter van Verren paid on 16 April to the painter Vander Cruijs, for the retouching of one eighth of the white pattern). See Oudenaarde City Archive – Guild of Saint Barbara, reg. 843/v/39.
7. Forti Grazzini 1999, pp. 49–53. The subjects are: *Village Fair*; *Shepherd and Shepherdess with their Sheep*; *Peasants Playing at an Inn*; and a *Robbery by Soldiers* – all subjects for which Alexander van Bredael also provided designs in 1698. It appears that there used to be a fifth scene in the collection.
8. Brussels, Galerie Le Roy, 17 June 1927, nos. 1–3. The remarkable thing is that the three subsequent numbers in the auction catalogue are exactly the same landscapes but with animals, see Galerie Le Roy, 17 June 1927, nos. 4–6. Of these three, a picture is included of only one, the *Landscape with Fox and Dog Fighting*.
9. De Meüter 2016, pp. 439–441.
10. See Galerie Le Roy, 17 June 1927, no. 4. See note above.
11. Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 2 December 1991, no. 206.
12. The tapestry did not return to the museum after being loaned to a public service in 1978.
13. De Meüter 2016, p. 439.
14. The tapestry did not return to the museum after being loaned to a public service in 1985.
15. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, p. 216.
16. Oudenaarde City Archive – Letters of pattern painters, no. 1182/69: 22 December 1675.
17. Inv. Esch. 575. Inv. 2005 has a width of 577 cm versus 510 cm in the case of the piece in New Orleans. The shortening was carried out on a small part on the right, while on the left, the entire attached piece of inv. 2005 is missing.
18. Denucé 1936, p. 309.
19. The tapestry has been lost.
20. Paris, Tajan, 4 February 2020.



[FIG. 4] *Boreas Robs Orithyria*, from *Landscapes with Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. Private collection.



[FIG. 5] *Diana with Nymphs*, from *Landscapes with Ovid's Metamorphoses*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. Private collection.



[FIG. 6] *The Country Fair*, from *Country Scenes*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. Collection Cagnola, Gazzada Schianno.





[75]

[75]

## LANDSCAPE WITH COCKEREL AND HENS

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, c. 1700  
 Workshop of Pieter (1640–1709) or Jan van Verren (1666–1735) (?)  
 Landscape designed by Gaspar de Witte (1624–1681)  
 and the animals designed by Adriaan de Gryeff (c. 1655–c. 1722)  
 Wool and silk; 313 × 344 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm  
 Inv. 2007

Provenance: 1873, transfer from the Ministry of the Interior,  
 originally from the Hôtel de Rommerswael, Brussels,  
 seat of the Court of Audit

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 91, no. 104;  
 De Meüter 2016, pp. 177–200, 441.

### History

The tapestry, together with the similar series *Landscapes with Animals* (cat. 74), was transferred to our museum by the Ministry of the Interior in 1873 from a salon of the Hôtel

de Rommerswael in the Rue des Petits Carmes in Brussels. Despite the differences – inv. 2007 is 30 to 40 cm higher than the other six and the frame border differs slightly – it seems likely that they originally belonged to the same group of cartoons and were possibly supplied together.

A nicely balanced landscape with an Italian-style mountain view in the background. On the intermediate plane, a group of trees and a special building with a tower and a building in ruins. The latter is exceptional as far as tapestry compositions are concerned. The transition to the front plane is achieved by means of a pond. In front, among the trees and flower bushes, is a rooster with some hens and chicks.

### Commentary

We consider this tapestry to be the work of Gaspar de Witte on the basis of several specific characteristics that can also be found in his paintings. The most remarkable element is the ruin that was given a place on the second



[FIG. 1] Gaspar de Wit, *Landscape with the Fortune Teller*, oil on canvas, 1667. Royal Museum of Fine Art, Antwerp, inv. 115.





[FIG. 2] Gaspar de Wit, *Landscape with Jesus Curing the Servant of the Centurion City*, oil on canvas, 1671. Snijders & Rockoxhuis, Antwerp.

plane, to the right of the centre. In his biography, this is presented as a trademark of De Witte.<sup>1</sup>

The large curve of the pond, the arrangement and shape of the trees and the crossing of their trunks all refer to his paintings, such as the *Landscape with the Fortune Teller* (City Hall, Antwerp)<sup>2</sup> (fig. 1) and the *Landscape with Jesus Curing the Servant of the Centurion* (Rockoxhuis, Antwerp) (fig. 2). The first is dated 1667, one year before Gaspar de Witte supplied patterns to the workshop of Pieter van Verren in Oudenaarde.<sup>3</sup>

Just as in the series entitled *Landscapes with Animals* (cat. 74), some tapestries are known to have the same decor as this tapestry, for example a Teniers scene in the Cagnola collection in Italy (fig. 3).<sup>4</sup> It has not yet been established who was the author of these peasant scenes. We know that Pieter van Verren was already supplying his brother Jan with peasant scenes of that type in 1697.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that they were woven on this pattern by De Witte. The scene with *Peasants Playing and Music-Making at a Table* uses the same ground with some modifications. The same decor was used without modification along with rather large mythological figures, possibly representing the shepherd Acis and Galathea.<sup>6</sup>

The specific frame border, composed of a succession of the same volutes and acanthus leaves, with masks in the centre of each border, makes it possible for this to be attributed to Oudenaarde and Van Verren. The same frame was found around many tapestries that can be attributed to the workshop of Van Verren. [IDM]

1. De Bie 1661, pp. 393–395.
2. Antwerp, Royal Museums of Fine Arts, inv. 115.
3. De Meüter 2016, pp. 185–188.
4. Forti Grazzini 1999, pp. 49–53.
5. Oudenaarde City Archive, Guild of Saint Barbara, reg. 843/v/1272: Letter 98: 27 August 1697; reg. 843/v/1273: Letter 3: 10 October 1697.
6. Brussels, Galerie Le Roy, 17 June 1927, nos. 2–3. From the brief description in the catalogue of the two other, narrower tapestries, it can be deduced that the decors possibly belonged to the other tapestries in the series, see inv. 2001–2006.



[FIG. 3] *Farmers Playing Near an Inn*, from *Country Scenes*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. Collection Cagnola, Gazzada Schianno.







[76.1]

[76]

## LANDSCAPES WITH NYMPHS

Five tapestries

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, c. 1700

Workshop of Pieter van Verren (1640–1709) (?)

Figures designed by Lodewijk van Schoor (c. 1650–1702)

and landscapes designed by Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711)

Wool and silk; 6 to 7 warps per cm

Inv. 3097-3101

Provenance of the series: 1892, bought by the museum by means of a special loan (18,000 Bfr)

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 83–84, nos. 87–91;

De Meüter 2016, pp. 290–298.

### History

According to the detailed announcement of the auction by civil-law notary Moxhon in Liège on 24 May 1892, the series formed the complete decoration of one of the rooms of the presbytery of Saint Martin's basilica. They were already there in 1812 when the church administration bought the house from the family of the Dukes of Méan.<sup>1</sup>

### Commentary

Determining the subject of the series is not easy. The almost exclusively female characters without clear attributes are difficult to identify. On the grounds of the style of the protagonists and backgrounds, the series can be linked to the tapestry designers Pieter Spierinckx and Lodewijk van Schoor. There are obvious stylistic similarities with the series produced by both artists,<sup>2</sup> and a connection with an order from 1708 by the Antwerp merchant Forchoudt, commissioned by his brother Marcus, based in Vienna. A series depicting an "Ovidian history", the landscapes of which were drawn by Pieter Spierinckx, was ordered from Pieter van Verren in Oudenaarde. The list of the subjects in this large series consisting of eleven pieces in total is incomplete. A rather vague description is given of only six pieces: "Flora, een herder met een peyl in de hand die presenteert aen een eyderinne, een godt en ende

godinne, 2 heyderinnen onder eenen boom, een godinne wordt gecront, Arges" (Flora, a shepherd with an arrow in his hand presenting to a shepherdess, a god and a goddess, two shepherdesses under a tree, a goddess is crowned, Arges).<sup>3</sup> That the descriptions are so vague seems to indicate that the writer also did not know the meaning of the series and of the individual pieces. Since the series usually consisted of six pieces, the other scenes were most likely taken from other series and adapted in order to fulfil this large order.<sup>4</sup>

Not all six known subjects of this series correspond to one of the five tapestries in the museum. The subjects not represented here were, however, found in other collections. The group of figures showing a shepherd with an arrow in his hand in the company of shepherdesses has been found elsewhere on several occasions. This group of figures was placed in various settings, both in different park views (fig. 1) and in a more open, outdoor view with a river and a bridge.<sup>5</sup> Some figures have also been found in a different context.<sup>6</sup>

We believe we have found the depiction of a god and goddess, which is also missing, in two woven versions (fig. 2).<sup>7</sup>



[FIG. 1] *Park View with a Shepherd with an Arrow in the Company of Shepherdesses*, Oudenaarde, workshop of Pieter van Verren, c. 1700. National Museum of Occidental Art of Tokyo, inv. OA.2001-6.





[FIG. 2] *Park View with God and Goddess (?)*, Brussels, c. 1700. Private collection.

The name of the supplier of the patterns for the figures in the series was not mentioned in Forchoudt's document, but on stylistic grounds, Lodewijk van Schoor is a likely candidate.

In the version preserved in the museum, incorporating the rather large figures in the landscapes of the tapestries was not without difficulty, as we can see, for example, when studying the tapestry depicting *Flora*. It is clear that mistakes were made.

What is striking is that some of the replicas seem to be have been woven in Brussels. For example, two series

can be identified, each of which has four representations from the series and the same broad, beautifully finished frame border.<sup>8</sup> Centrally located in the vertical borders are crossed torches and quivers of arrows. None of these editions display any marks, but the type of border and the more subtle weave indicate that they were produced in Brussels. Both the figures and the decor of both tapestries fit in with the other pieces of the series that have been found. In the case of other series, too, editions of differing levels of quality were found, see the two illustrations of *Park View with Muses* (figs. 3–4). The fact that a Brussels and an Oudenaarde version existed is not surprising in itself, as Jan and Pieter van Verren maintained close ties with the Brussels tapestry world and both designers worked for the Brussels and the Oudenaarde workshops.

The floral border with volutes, bowls and vases is typical for the period around 1700 and was woven in many variants in both Brussels and Oudenaarde. A similar border was found around replicas of depictions from the mythological series preserved in Vienna (inv. Tap LXV, fig. 3) and signed by both artists.<sup>9</sup> This series was woven by Gerard Peemans in Brussels and the difference in quality compared to the series we are discussing here is obvious, both in the depiction and the border, if we consider the greater nuance and detail thanks to the finer weave and larger colour palette.<sup>10</sup> As mentioned above, floral and frame borders were woven around different replicas of the series. Some of these mouldings can be linked to Brussels workshops, while other types are more likely to be linked to Oudenaarde. The document of 1708 only mentions that the tapestries have "*rondom met cransen*" (are surrounded by wreaths), in other words that they have borders, except for three pieces in which the vertical borders are missing.



[FIG. 3] *Park View with Muses*, Brussels, workshop of Gerard Peemans, c. 1700. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. Tap LXV/6.



[FIG. 4] *Park View with Muses*, Oudenaarde (?), c. 1700. Packwood House, Lapworth.



[76.2]





[76.3]



[FIG. 5] *Italianising Landscape with Two Shepherdesses*, Brussels, c. 1700. Private collection.

[76.1]  
**FOREST AND PARK SCENE WITH TWO NYMPHS**

Inv. 3097  
 325 × 195 cm

As often happens with this group of tapestries, the setting is a combination of different types of landscape – a southern mountain landscape in the distance, a park view in the middle and a partial forest view in the foreground. Two figures have been placed at the front. The precise meaning of the walking female figure on the right and the figure hiding behind a tree to the left of the centre has not been determined. Are these two nymphs playing a game?

The 1708 document does not mention the subject.

[76.2]  
**ITALIANATE LANDSCAPE WITH TWO SHEPHERDESSES UNDER A TREE**

Inv. 3098  
 314 × 262 cm

The setting consists of an Italianate landscape with a view of a river in the centre. The two female figures in the foreground stand under an ornamental tree at the end of a winding path. The path finds its way between the trees into the depths of the image.

*Commentary*

One of the figures is resting on a stick or staff, which could refer to a shepherdess, so the depiction may correspond to “2 shepherdesses under a tree” in the 1708 document.

The scene also forms part of the editions with a broad frame border (fig. 5).<sup>11</sup> In these better versions, the two women, the “shepherdesses”, are also standing under a tree, but in contrast to the edition in the Royal Museums of Art and History, they are being spied upon by a young man and other figures are walking along the path.<sup>12</sup> The additional characters also indicate that this is a more expensive version.

[76.3]  
**ITALIANATE LANDSCAPE WITH TWO LADIES**

Inv. 3099  
 320 × 317 cm

The river with waterfall and viaduct in the centre of the background suggests an Italianate landscape. From the river, a path leads into the foreground. On the path along the river, three more figures are depicted.

In the middle of the foreground, two women are seated next to the water. Next to them is a basket containing all kinds of accessories such as scarves, necklaces and a comb. One woman is clearly helping the other arrange her hair.

*Commentary*

The 1708 document does not mention the subject. Whether the depiction has any other meaning or purpose than to represent a beautiful scene is not clear.

There is no real difference between the Oudenaarde edition at the Royal Museums of Art and History and the Brussels one (fig. 6).<sup>13</sup>



[FIG. 6] *Italianising Landscape with Two Nymphs (?)*, Brussels, c. 1700. Private collection.





[76.4]





[FIG. 7] *Italianising Landscape with a Nymph Being Crowned*, Brussels, workshop of Jasper van der Borgh (?), c. 1700. Private collection.

[76.4]

**ITALIANATE LANDSCAPE WITH A LADY BEING CROWNED**

Inv. 3100  
326 × 508 cm

All the elements of the decor included in the narrower tapestries are shown to full advantage here: an Italianate landscape with mountain views in the distance, plenty of room for water features both to the left and to the right of the central group of figures, and the parts of trees that frame the scene. The figures appear to be ladies crowning a central figure and engaged in arranging bouquets of flowers. Other figures are also placed to the left and right of this group in order to fill-in the landscape.

*Commentary*

The description in the 1708 document “a goddess is crowned” is the best match here. A replica of *A Goddess Being Crowned* was auctioned in Brussels and had a frame border that we can attribute to Oudenaarde.<sup>14</sup>

It was also found with a nice frame border combined with flowers and a nicely detailed weave (fig. 7).<sup>15</sup> Because

it is narrower, it was shortened on the right side, as a result of which the figure located there disappeared from the tapestry. At first glance, there seems to be a big difference between this and the tapestry in the Royal Museums of Art and History, but the images are essentially identical, right down to the details. It seems therefore that the same cartoon was used for each, but that the weaver delivered a tapestry of higher quality.<sup>16</sup> This tapestry must also be considered as having been produced in Brussels.

[76.5]

**FOREST AND PARK LANDSCAPE WITH FLORA**

Inv. 3101  
322 × 565 cm

The scenery is a combination of a southern view, including, on the right, a park view with beautiful ponds in which fountains and pleasure boats have been placed. However, the majority of the scene is taken up by a fairly closed view from the edge of a forest.

The central group of figures also consists exclusively of women who are engaged in collecting flowers. Hence, the description in the 1708 *Flora* document may refer to this.

*Commentary*

Of the depictions that form part of this series as a whole, the majority of reproductions discovered are of this work. These not only include an Oudenaarde version with a frame border,<sup>17</sup> but versions produced in Brussels as well.<sup>18</sup>

The elaboration of the other Oudenaarde scene as well as the two Brussels ones is much better than the edition in the museum. Several inaccuracies have crept into this weave. This clearly shows that less attention was paid to the edition. Some figures were actually pasted onto the landscape and not incorporated into it. Moreover, there is the peculiarity that the figure on the far right seems to be emerging from the water, while she is originally standing on the bank behind a bush. The weaving of the landscape is also, in general, more nuanced and with a greater variety of greenery. For example, there are striking little flowers growing on the bush behind the female figure on the far left, which have largely disappeared on the edition in the museum. In the Brussels editions, the thistle at the front has more normal proportions.

We can therefore observe that at least three elaborations, each to a different level of quality, could be obtained from the same cartoon. [IDM]

1. Document preserved in the documentation of the Fonds Braquenié in Paris, in the archive of Mobilier National. This information differs from the information published by Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 83–84, nos. 87–91 on the series' provenance.
2. De Meüter 2001 C; De Meüter 2003; De Meüter 2016, pp. 283–298.
3. See Denucé 1936, pp. 394–395. None of these subjects or descriptions have been found in the documents of the Van Verren family in the Oudenaarde town archives.
4. This working method can frequently be seen in preserved series and is referred to in the correspondence between Jan and Pieter van Verren. See De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999: nos. 69–72, pp. 81–82, 85–89, and De Meüter 2016, pp. 137–144, 278–283, 386–408.
5. A version in the National Museum of Western Art of Tokyo, inv. OA.2001-6, and one auctioned at Christie's, London, 2 December 1971, no. 146, have different park decors. An image of a version auctioned at Sotheby's in 1931 is in the Marillier Archive, Victoria & Albert Museum, London: *Mythologies various*: 39. In this case, the setting is an Italianate landscape in line with the other ones in the series. According to Marillier's note, it was woven by J.V.D. Beurcht. The floral border definitely originates in Brussels.
6. Two seated female figures have been taken from one scene, together with the shepherd with the arrow and the dog, but are now separated by a newly inserted flower arrangement. The figures were placed in yet another landscape. The shepherd is not identical, but his posture is very similar. See French & Co. Archive, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles: no. 0240255.
7. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive: no. 0238676; One of four pieces in the Michiels-De Beer collection auctioned in Ghent, 10/11 November 1902. See RMAH: 1725.137.
8. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive: no. 0238675-77 and 6049; Four pieces in the Michiels-De Beer collection auctioned in Ghent, 10/11 November 1902. See RMAH: 1725.136-137. Another tapestry with the same border was auctioned in 1912. See Paris, Hôtel Drouot, 14 June 1912. Juno in her chariot and with a peacock at her feet dominates the depiction.

9. For details of the mythological series in Vienna, see inv. Tap LXV, De Meüter 2016, pp. 284–290. A tapestry depicting *Minerva with the Muses* (?) (inv. Tap LXV/5 in Vienna) is located in a private collection in Belgium, while a tapestry depicting the three muses in a park scene is preserved in Packwood House.
10. For a comparison between the two series, see De Meüter 2016, pp. 293–294. The greater nuance that can be seen in all facets of the drawing is logical, as the density of the Vienna series is 8 to 10 warps per centimetre, compared to 5 to 6 warps per centimetre in the Oudenaarde versions.
11. Part of the series at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive: no. 0238675. This tapestry was later sold, see New York, Sotheby's, 23 May 2003, no. 89. Another edition was part of the series in the former Michiels-De Beer collection.
12. In the Getty Institute's database, the depiction is interpreted as *Vertumnus and Pomona*. The role or significance of the hidden youth is also not made clear.
13. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive: no. 0238677, and one of four pieces in the Michiels-De Beer collection auctioned in Ghent, 10/11 November 1902, see RMAH: 1725.137.
14. Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 23/25 March 1976, no. 816. See also the next tapestry in the series.
15. The tapestry was auctioned in Cologne, Lempertz, 16 November 2007, no. 19.
16. According to the auction catalogue, the piece bears the initials AC in the border on the right. Perhaps the initials AC stand for Jasper van der Borcht (1675–1742), active in Brussels, who also signed his tapestries with A Castro. A tapestry, a Teniers scene, preserved in The Art Institute of Chicago, inv. 1952.1246 bears the same initials, see Brosens 2008 A, cat. 25.
17. Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 23/25 March 1976, no. 815 and again on 26/28 March 1985, no. 1057. At the first auction, a second replica was offered for sale: *A Goddess is Crowned*.
18. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive: no. 6049 (when the photographic archive was digitalised, this photo was not recorded and could not be retrieved) and one of four pieces in the Michiels-De Beer collection auctioned in Ghent, 10/11 November 1902, see RMAH: 1725.136.





[76.5]





[77]

[77]

## CRISPUS FLEES HIS STEPMOTHER FAUSTA

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, c. 1700  
 Workshop and designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 337 × 188 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm  
 Inv. 6419

Provenance: 1938, bequest of Maurice Despret

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 82, no. 85.

We see two fleeing figures in a park view with fountains. They probably represent Crispus, the son of Constantine the Great, and his stepmother Fausta.

There is a wide floral-and-fruit border with bows and shells amidst birds.

### Commentary

The scene is part of a series of *Parallel Lives* after Plutarch (c. 46–c. 120) (Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men). Plutarch recounted the lives of famous Greek and Roman heroes (cat. 79).

The company Nicolas Naulaerts-Jan van Verren<sup>1</sup> in Antwerp sold series with this subject, supplied by Mrs Delzoye from Oudenaarde, in the years 1699–1700.<sup>2</sup> She often worked together with the van Verren family.<sup>3</sup> Three of the subjects mentioned could be identified with certainty thanks to tapestries preserved in Vienna.<sup>4</sup> Several replicas were found with the figures in other decors and with different borders. They are often combined with representations from the *Metamorphoses*.<sup>5</sup>

This tapestry is one of the editions with the subject described in the documents as “Crispus, the son of Constantine the Great, flees his stepmother Fausta who is in love with him”.<sup>6</sup> According to ancient stories, however, Crispus was executed after his stepmother accused him of trying to seduce her.

The wide floral border has been found on other tapestries attributed to the firm Van Verren in Oudenaarde. [IDM]

1. Worked from 1678 to 1701, see De Meüter 2016, p. 43.
2. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 244–245. The memorial Naulaerts begins in 1699. The original cartoons were previously also woven by Peter Wauters in Antwerp in the 1680s, see Denucé 1936, p. 86.
3. De Meüter 2016, pp. 71, 72, 142, 152, 320.
4. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, S. CV2/ 6-7.
5. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 245–247.
6. Denucé 1936, p. 89.
7. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, p. 227.



[78]

## LANDSCAPE WITH NYMPHS

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, eighteenth century  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 263 × 190 cm; 6 warps per cm  
Inv. 6418

Provenance: 1938, bequest of Maurice Despret

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 84, no. 92.

Two female figures are situated in the foreground in the open air. One carries a beautiful basket of grapes to a second woman sitting on a stool under a tree. In the background, we see a view of a harbour town built against a mountain, and on the left, some ships in the harbour.

### Commentary

This small tapestry belongs to the same genre as the series *Landscapes with Nymphs* (cat. 76), which was woven in Oudenaarde. It also corresponds to the fine series entitled *Conversations of the Ladies* that was woven there, but executed, in this case, in accordance with a drawing of considerably inferior quality.<sup>1</sup> [IDM]

1. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, no. 74.



[78]



## THE SPEECH OF PERICLES

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, 1729–45  
 V.LEYNIERS.D.L. signature of the workshop of  
 Urbanus (1674–1747) and Daniel IV Leyniers (1705–70)  
 Figures designed by Victor Janssens (1658–1736)  
 and landscape designed by Augustin Coppens (1668–1740)  
 Wool and silk; 415 × 390 cm; 8 warps per cm  
 Inv. 8859

Provenance: 1953, purchased from Sam Mennig, Brussels<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1953, pp. 16–18;  
 Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 87–88, no. 97.

Following the capture of the island of Samos, Pericles brings the fallen back to Athens to bury them. The offering for the dead is apparently depicted centrally on the intermediate plane, where a plume of smoke is rising.

On the right, Pericles stands on the platform from which he delivers his eulogy. The bench behind him and the drapery above it give a more solemn character to the setting. Behind him, the elders and other members of his retinue listen and crown him with flowers. He is cheered on by women who also offer him flowers and crowns. A child at the foot of the steps is making a wreath of flowers. Is this his son?

The scene is depicted in a concentrated manner in the foreground. Behind it, there opens out a beautiful, wide Arcadian landscape that is very southern and ends at the walls of an ancient city and a mountain range. Here and there, groups of small figures are still running.

#### Commentary

The scene *The Speech of Pericles* is part of a series of *Parallel Lives* after Plutarch (c. 46–c. 120) (*Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious Men*). Plutarch recounted the lives of nine famous Greek and Roman heroes. Published in 1559–65, the French translation by Jacques Amyot (1513–93), *Les vies des hommes illustres*, enjoyed considerable success over a long period of time.

This series is well documented. The brothers Urbanus and Daniel III Leyniers ordered patterns in oil on canvas

from the Brussels painter Victor Janssens in 1711, which had to be elaborated in accordance with the approved sketches. Janssens also had to pay the supplier of the landscapes, Augustin Coppens.<sup>2</sup> In 1711–13, this resulted in a series of eleven tapestries in Brussels. Each time, the noble character of the heroes is highlighted in an alternation of compositions (entrances, sacrifices, battles, etc.).

The De Grois manuscript mentions a first delivery in 1713, and a delivery in 1734 to Count de Rotembourg, the French Ambassador to Spain, lists the eleven subjects: *Battle of Alcibiade*; *Meal of Lycurgus*; *Dance of Theseus*; *Aristide Sacrifices to the Spirits of the Departed*; *Pericles*; *Timoleon*; *Cimon*; *Entry of Dio into Syracuse*; *Sacrifice of Dio to the Rising Sun*; *Sacrifice of Theseus in the Temple of Apollo*; and *Eumenes*.<sup>3</sup> The inventory drawn up after Urban's death in 1747 includes nine patterns by Janssens, in oil on canvas, with the *Story of Plutarch*.<sup>4</sup>

Only nine scenes have been linked with existing tapestries. When comparing the subjects mentioned with the preserved tapestries from the series, it is sometimes not clear which story is depicted. That is also the case with this depiction. Crick-Kuntziger put the *Return of Dio from Syracuse* forward as a possibility, although that subject is not included in the list. It is very likely that a phase in the life of Pericles is being told here.

The collaboration between Urbanus Leyniers and his son Daniel IV for the production of tapestries only began in 1729.<sup>5</sup> At that time, the workshop already had a track record. In 1711, Urbanus Leyniers started up a workshop for the production of tapestries together with his brother Daniel (III) and cousin, Hendrik Reydam. Prior to this, the Leyniers family had only been involved in dyeing.<sup>6</sup> The series about the *Illustrious Men* was therefore among the first cartoons they commissioned.

Victor Janssens returned to Brussels in 1689 after a stay in Italy that began in 1678. In 1690, he was granted privileges there.<sup>7</sup> His style is in keeping with the classical tendencies propagated by Gerard de Lairese (1640–1711) in his tracts. He developed a monumental classicism. In his tapestry designs, the compositions are balanced and the figures are beautifully incorporated into the landscape.

Many elements of Janssens' paintings are in accordance with those in his cartoons. For this tapestry, the parallels



[79]





**[FIG. 1]** Victor Janssens, *The Prediction of the Fate of Lavina*, oil on canvas, c. 1700. Royal Museums of Fine Arts, Brussels, inv. 116.

with various female figures in the painting, *The Prediction of the Fate of Lavina*, *Wife of Aeneas* in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Brussels are striking (inv. 116) (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> They are grouped in a similar way and assume the same moving postures.

For de Lairesse, the arcadian landscapes with elements of classical architecture were required to contribute to the monumentality.<sup>9</sup>

The landscape painter Augustin Coppens clearly followed the same track. He was very active in painting the decors for the Brussels and Oudenaarde series around 1700. Some orders for cartoons for Oudenaarde date from 1694–95, while the first mentions of Brussels workshops date from around 1700. One of his first series was probably the *Story of Rinaldo and Armida*, also in collaboration with Victor Janssens. Exactly as he did here, he paid a lot of attention to the effect of depth in the elaboration of his wide vistas by working on successive planes, dynamically connected by diagonal lines. The mountain range on the horizon and evocations of the Italian countryside with classical buildings form a constant, as do the draperies above the characters.<sup>10</sup>

Although several series and separate pieces have remained preserved, no other editions with the scene discussed here are known. The most extensive series has been preserved in Bruchsal Castle and in the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe.<sup>11</sup> It consists of six complete tapestries and a fragment. The preserved narrow fragment is identical to the left-hand section with the pair from the depiction of Pericles.

A total of five *Illustrious Men* pieces have been preserved at different locations, with the same beautiful border as the Brussels tapestry and sometimes the same marks. It is possible that all of them form part of the same series.<sup>12</sup> This frame border is one of the most beautiful imitations of a wooden picture frame, with pronounced corner motifs, as were frequently used on tapestries from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. The successful effect of light and shadow that completes the impression of a thick, sculpted frame is striking. Replicas made use of different, less monumental, frame borders. [IDM]

1. At the time, the tapestry had formed part of his collection for more than twenty years.
2. Brosens 2004, p. 220.
3. *Idem*, pp. 251, 258.
4. *Idem*, p. 277.
5. *Idem*, p. 55.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Idem*, p. 100.
8. Together with its counterpart, inv. 115 *Dido Finds Carthage*.
9. Brosens 2004, pp. 101–102.
10. De Meüter 2016, pp. 375–379.
11. Tapisserien 2002, pp. 63–69.
12. Brosens 2004, p. 144, listed four; Denis 1997 published two preserved at the Hospice Saint-Charles in Rosny-sur-Seine (*The Sacrifice of Aristide* and *The Entry of Dio into Syracuse*); one (*The Wrestling Contest of Eumenes*) was auctioned in Brussels, Galerie Moderne, 18/19 November 1979, no. 1513 and again in London, Christie's, 15 November 1984, no. 1984.

[80]

## DON QUIXOTE HANGING FROM THE WINDOW

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, 1729–45

Signature: U.LEYNIERS from the workshop of

Urbanus Leyniers (1674–1747)

The figures were designed by Jan van Orley (1665–1735)

and the landscapes by Augustin Coppens (1668–1740)

Wool and silk; 285 × 690 cm; 8 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 15

Provenance: 1979, purchased from

Viscount de Gellinck Vaerneuyck

Literature: Brosens & Delmarcel 1998.

### History

The tapestry originates from the collection of the Moretus de Theux family.<sup>1</sup> The four pieces came to this family after the marriage of Eugène Moretus (1818–1867) to Florence Geelhand de Merksem. The Geelhand family had already had the series restored in 1792. Were the borders removed at that time? The suspicion arises because the marks were inserted in the picture plane at a later date.

The remaining three pieces are now divided among various private collections.<sup>2</sup> The tapestries in their possession also have no borders.

On the left, Don Quixote hangs from the hayloft of the inn. He stood on his horse Rocinante to reach the window of the hayloft to meet his beloved Dulcinea. The maid Maritornes impersonated Dulcinea, and she ties Don Quixote by the wrist to the window. She leaves him on his horse for a whole night, but when Rocinante becomes distracted by other riders arriving at the inn, all Don Quixote can do is call for help. Many people witness his accident and either comment or rush to help. On the far right, a group of people are looking at the scene while in the background, Don Quixote rushes to the scene on his horse to rescue himself. This anachronism has crept into the composition because elements from different scenes have clearly been brought together to enlarge the original composition considerably.

The groups of figures have been elaborated with great care. The whole scene is told across several planes in a

beautiful landscape with a wide river in the centre and views to a southern landscape.

### Commentary

The two-volume novel by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616) telling the adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha was written between 1600 and 1614 as a parody of the fashionable chivalric novels of his day. The (anti)-hero of the novel gets so carried away by his excessive reading of chivalric novels that he can no longer distinguish between reality and fantasy, and suddenly feels called to ride his horse Rocinante into the world and fight injustice. The many adventures he experiences, each one more foolish or disastrous than the last, became one of the most popular themes in tapestry art in the eighteenth century.

The exploits of Cervantes' character were a popular subject for weavers in all production centres in the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Each one brought their own version to the market, but the design by Charles-Antoine Coypel (1694–1752) for the Manufacture Royale des Gobelins proved especially popular. The designs were delivered between 1714 and 1734 and the engravings that were distributed from 1723 onwards served as inspiration for the groups of figures when the series was created in Oudenaarde after 1734<sup>4</sup> and in Brussels, in the workshops of Peter van den Hecke (c. 1675–1752) and Van der Borcht.<sup>5</sup>

Leyniers' version, however, predates the dissemination of Coypel's engravings, as is mentioned in earlier documents.

This was one of the topics most frequently requested from the Leyniers family. They wove the series repeatedly between 1715 and 1747. Seven editions are mentioned in the De Grois manuscript.<sup>6</sup> A total of eight more scenes are known. Of the ten cartoons executed in oil on canvas that are mentioned in the inventory made after Urbanus' death in 1747, possibly two or more cartoons were intended for a broad widespread depiction. The mention of "*met eenige opleghsels*" (with some additions) also indicates that variations are possible during weaving.<sup>7</sup> The specimen in the museum bears the signature of U. Leyniers, while the mark of both Urbanus and his son Daniel (1705–70) appears on the *Accolade of Don Quixote*





[80]

[FIG. 1] *Sancho Panza is Thrown into the Air*, from *The Adventure of Don Quixote*, Brussels, workshop of Urbanus Leyniers, 1729–1745. Private collection.



in this edition. Since the two of them were professionally associated from 1729, the combination can be dated between 1729 and 1745, the year of Urbanus' death, in the case of the series.

The designers of the series are mentioned in the documents of the Leyniers company. Jan van Orley (1665–1735) was by far the most important designer for the Brussels workshops of the early eighteenth century (cat. 79, 81, 82 and 83). This subject from around 1714 is probably one of his earliest creations. His groups of figures were placed very elegantly in the foreground. The fact that Van Orley knew the work of older artists has already been established. Sources of inspiration such as Rubens and French painters, such as Charles Lebrun and others, have already been mentioned, and parallels can be drawn in that regard with figures from the Loggias of the Vatican by Raphael. These creations were also distributed via engravings.<sup>8</sup> The landscapes of Augustin Coppens are also well documented (see cat. 79, 81 and 83). It is interesting to note that the artist always adapts the way in which he dresses up the background, in line with the story. Sometimes, he chooses exotic elements and then, as here, all sorts of buildings that are compatible with rural life come into view. His decors place the events in an appropriate context. However, the beautifully crafted vistas are a constant.

As with the other most successful series of the Leyniers firm, the *Teniers Scenes* and the *Triumph of the Gods* (cat. 81), the success of the subject was due to the great flexibility that these subjects brought with them. The choice of scenes was completely free and it was not necessary to follow any particular order in order to be able to understand the room. Furthermore, the comic aspect of the scenes was an attractive element. Each genre scene was decorative enough to stand on its own.<sup>9</sup>

At almost seven metres in width, this specimen is by far the largest that has been found. It is clear that the

right-hand section was not part of the original drawing<sup>10</sup> and that elements from other scenes were put together. The group of three figures resting in the foreground next to Sancho Panza's donkey, and Don Quixote rushing up on his horse, are taken from the scene entitled *Sancho Panza is Thrown into the Air* (fig. 1).<sup>11</sup> The servant who pours water for the horse is taken from *The Accolade of Don Quixote*.<sup>12</sup>

Some editions have been preserved with beautiful frame borders, in which the weaver's mark was woven into the composition and not into the reinforced edge. [IDM]

1. A file in the Rubenianum, Antwerp (VT18/i) contains photographs of four tapestries without borders, mounted in panelling in a drawing room in the family's mansion in Antwerp, built in the nineteenth century.
2. Brosens & Delmarcel 1998, p. 61.
3. Versions of the novel were brought onto the market at several workshops in Brussels, but also in Beauvais, Aubusson, Lille and Madrid, see Brosens & Delmarcel 1998, pp. 55–56.
4. De Meüter 1998, pp. 229–238 and De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 256–263.
5. Van den Hecke's edition is in line with Coypel's and Leyniers' edition. In my opinion, it is impossible to say with certainty who painted the cartoons for the Van den Hecke edition, as there are no documents available on the subject and only stylistic comparisons can provide clues. The attribution to Philippe de Hondt (c. 1685–1741), see Brosens 2004, pp. 122–123 and Dallas-Toledo 2005–06, p. 174, or Maximiliaan de Hase, see Delmarcel & Huyghens 1997, p. 153, is not convincing. Delmarcel 1999, p. 321 also mentions Nicolas De Haen (master in 1725) as a possible author. This was cited by Charissa Bremer-David in Bremer-David 2003, pp. 490–492.
6. Brosens 2004, pp. 147–151; Brosens & Delmarcel 1998, pp. 73–74.
7. Brosens 2004, p. 277.
8. Brosens & Delmarcel 1998, pp. 76–77.
9. I agree with Delmarcel and Brosens that these arguments were more important for popularity than the historical and socio-political context sometimes referred to, see Brosens & Delmarcel 1998, pp. 78–81.
10. Hôtel Drouot, Paris (Beaussant Lefevre), 9 December 2015, no. 287 (310 x 460), bearing the mark U. Leyniers and a frame border.
11. A copy with the mark of Urbanus Leyniers, see Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive: 97P.7; original DB ID: 2793; web DB ID: 307687.
12. Illustrations of the original scenes from which both groups come can be found in Brosens & Delmarcel 1998, figs. 5 and 1.



## TRIUMPH OF MARS



[81]

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1725

Reydams-Leyniers workshop

Figures designed by Jan van Orley (1665–1735)

and the landscapes by Augustin Coppens (1668–1740)

Wool and silk; 289 x 590 cm; 8 warps per cm

Inv. 8412

Provenance: 1948, purchased from Baron de Vinck

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1953, pp. 20–23; Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 86–87, no. 96; De Meüter 1978, pp. 123–138.

In the foreground, Mars stands as the triumphant victor on a chariot pulled by lions. In front of him, soldiers walk with the loot, while behind him, yet more soldiers are carrying the spoils and conducting prisoners along with them.

As God of War, Mars is wearing a griffin on his helmet. The winged Victoria holds a laurel wreath over his head, Fama flies before him with the trumpet, and with the wheel under her arm, Fortuna leads the lions.

The Italianate landscape, with a portico and ruins, was very popular around 1700.

### Commentary

In the eighteenth century, several Brussels workshops (the Van der Borcht family, the De Vos and Auwerck partnership and the Leyniers and Reydams partnership) included series on the theme of the triumphs of the gods and goddesses in their range.<sup>1</sup> It was a rewarding subject to place elegant characters in panoramic landscapes. Only the *Triumph of Mars* depicts a real triumphal procession.

The series to which this scene belongs was marketed by the firm Leyniers and Reydams. In the De Grois manuscript, the subject is mentioned thirteen times and was therefore the most favoured after the *Teniers Scenes*. The firm (cat. 79, 80) was active over a long period and since no marks are present, it is not possible to determine an exact date.

The earliest documented edition of five pieces was produced for the Kasselrij of the Oudburg in Ghent and was delivered in 1717. The series is currently at the city's Museum of Fine Arts (inv. 1994-F 1-5).<sup>2</sup> The five subjects (Triumphs of Mars, Minerva (fig. 1), Venus, Apollo, and Diana) are the most common, but the series may include up to thirteen subjects.<sup>3</sup>



**[FIG. 1]** *Triumph of Minerva*, from *The Triumphs of the Gods and Goddesses*, Brussels, workshop of Reydams-Leyniers, c. 1725. Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, inv. 1994-F-5.





[FIG. 2] Jan van Orley, *Triumph of Mars*, drawing, c. 1725. Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent, inv. 2001-D.

Two preparatory drawings from the series, for the *Triumph of Mars* (fig. 2) and the *Triumph of Minerva* are also kept in the same museum.<sup>4</sup>

They can be considered as a diptych with the allegories of War and Peace. While various triumphs were woven in other workshops as well, it seems that the Leyniers-Reydam's consortium had a monopoly on both subjects.

Comparison with the drawing of the *Triumph of Mars* makes it clear that the various editions of the tapestries are usually not as wide as the drawing.<sup>5</sup> In the tapestry, the soldiers with the jars, as part of the loot, are the key figures both right and left, while in the drawing, further characters have been added. Some editions are wider and show the beginning and the end of the procession in full (fig. 3).<sup>6</sup> At the back, there are some deviations. The

background of this edition is also identical to the drawing. In our version and in the majority of versions, the loveliness of the landscape has prevailed over the depiction of devastation caused by war. The ruins were moved further towards the edges, making them less important. There is no explanation as to why apparently two cartoons were used in the same workshop.

The elaboration of the ruins clearly shows the contribution of Augustin Coppens, who, after the bombardment of Brussels in 1695, published a series of engravings with views of the devastated city.

The drawings are unsigned. Thanks to documents from the Leyniers family, we know for sure that Jan van Orley and Augustin Coppens were the designers.<sup>7</sup> They collaborated many times for the different series being produced for the firm Leyniers-Reydam's.

As mentioned earlier, Van Orley took his inspiration for the figures from other series of tapestries.<sup>8</sup> There are similarities with Rubens' series the *Triumph of the Eucharist*, but especially with the edition by Charles Lebrun (1619–1690), the *Story of Alexander*. Figures from his *Alexander and King Porus* (cat. 69) and *Battle of Arbella* were copied almost literally. [IDM]



[FIG. 3] Room with the *Triumphs of Mars and Minerva*, from *The Triumphs of the Gods and Goddesses*, Brussels, workshop of Reydam's-Leyniers, c. 1725. Van de Perre House (Zeeuws Archive), Middelburg.



1. De Meüter 1978, pp. 135–137.

2. De Meüter 1977.

3. Brosens 2004, pp. 152–155.

4. Inv. 2001-C and 2001-D; Brussels 1983, pp. 78–79.

5. A total of twenty editions of Mars were tracked down.

6. There is an example in the Van de Perre House (Zeeuws Archive) at Middelburg (width 769 cm), and an edition completely identical to the drawing was sold at Sotheby's Monaco, 30 November 1986, no. 1062.

7. De Meüter 1978, pp. 131–134; Brosens 2004, pp. 153, 253–254.

8. De Meüter 1978, pp. 126–132.





[82]

[82]

## ACHILLES AMONG THE DAUGHTERS OF LYCOMEDES

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1726–1732  
 Signature I.B.VERMILLION from the workshop  
 of Jean-Baptist Vermillion (c. 1680–c. 1748)  
 Figures designed by Jan van Orley (1665–1735)  
 and the landscapes by Augustin Coppens (1668–1740)  
 Wool and silk; 376 × 522 cm; 7 to 9 warps per cm  
 Inv. 9005

Provenance: 1956, bequest by Mr De Brabander

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger (1956), pp. 85–86, nr. 95;  
 Delmarcel & Huygens (1997), pp. 149–152.

As the Greek leaders sought him out to join them in battle against Troy, Achilles was taken by his mother Thetis to hide on the island of Skyros in order to avoid this fate. Disguised as a woman, he was part of the entourage of the daughters of King Lycomedes. When the Greeks discovered this, they sent Odysseus and Diomedes to the island. Dressed as traders, they offered the women all kinds of trinkets. Odysseus' ploy to hide weapons underneath also worked. Achilles could not restrain himself and reached for the weaponry.

He stands at the back of the party, wearing a turban, holding a shield and reaching for a helmet. At the front, a man seen on his back is offering the trinkets. In the middle of the women is Deidema, Achilles' lover, who is watching the events with a look of horror. To the left of the park, Odysseus arrives and sees that his ruse is working.

### Commentary

The very elegant scene with Achilles dressed as a woman in the company of the daughter of Lycomedes is part of the very successful eighteenth-century Brussels series addressing the *Story of Achilles*. It was very elaborate, with fourteen scenes woven in different workshops. The numerous editions are surrounded by woven frames of various types.

The various members of the Van der Borgh family in particular would frequently produce this series. Series of five and more copies are preserved to the present day.<sup>1</sup>

One specimen, with a somewhat different composition depicting *Achilles Being Immersed in the Styx*, is the only one bearing the mark of Judocus de Vos.<sup>2</sup>

Four examples of the series bearing Vermillion's mark are documented, but the locations in which the other three are being stored are unknown. Since two different frames were used, at least two editions are involved in this case (figs. 1–2).<sup>3</sup>

Jean-Baptist Vermillion was granted privileges as a tapestry maker in Brussels in 1723 after having worked for ten years in association with his uncle, Hieronymus le Clerc (1722), whom he apparently succeeded. In 1732, Vermillion got into serious financial problems and some of his property was publicly sold to pay off his debts. He later attempted to set up a workshop in Huy, but seemingly without success. He is supposed to have returned to Brussels after 1741, but was no longer active as a weaver.<sup>4</sup>



[FIG. 1] *Thetis Dipping Achilles in the Styx*, from *The Story of Achilles*, Brussels, workshop of Jean-Baptist Vermillion, around 1726–1732. Private collection.





**[FIG. 2]** *Kidnapping of Helena*, from *The Story of Achilles*, Brussels, workshop of Jean-Baptist Vermillion, around 1726–1732. Private collection.



**[FIG. 3]** Sébastien Leclerc the Younger, *Achilles Among the Daughters of Lycomedes*, oil on canvas, c. 1710. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brest, inv. no. 972.4.1.



**[FIG. 4]** *Achilles Among the Daughters of Lycomedes*, from *The Story of Achilles*, Brussels, workshop of Jan-Frans van der Borcht, c. 1730–1740. Hotel Bristol, Warsaw.

Only a limited number of tapestries with his woven signature have been found. There are scenes from a *Story of Psyché* to a design by Victor Janssens<sup>5</sup> and from the *Life of Christ*, after a design by Jan van Orley.<sup>6</sup> Both series originally belonged to the catalogue of Hiëronymus le Clerc and Jasper van der Borcht (1675/76–1742).<sup>7</sup> Apparently Vermillion himself only ordered designs from Louis Grangé (1680–1747) and Philippe de Hondt (c. 1685–1741) for a version of the successful *Story of Don Quixote*.<sup>8</sup>

The border imitating a picture frame is a very sculptured, convex, bronze-coloured moulding. Its traditional features include the shell motifs in the corners, and specific to this frame, in addition to the motif in the centre of each border, are the additional small decorations equally spaced out along the flat part. The infill consisting of a head in the sculpted part in the middle of the horizontal borders is special. In this respect, it displays considerable similarities to the frames around the *Life of Christ*, also woven in the Vermillion workshop.

The series is indebted to the one created by Rubens one hundred years earlier (cat. 53). Four of the subjects are the same, including this *Achilles Amidst the Daughters of Lycomedes*. The setting of the scene on a terrace with an architectural feature on the right and a view on the left is certainly similar. There is much less dynamism and movement in the version by Jan Van Orley, and elegance prevails in the eighteenth-century version. This new direction

was inspired by French examples. Some parallels point to French engravings from 1710–1720.<sup>10</sup> For example, there are strong similarities between the composition of this tapestry and a painting by Sébastien Leclerc the Younger (1676–1763), now located in Brest (fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> Engravings of it were marketed by Edme Jeurat (1688–1738) in 1713 and later by Jacob Folkema (1692–1767).

Many elements are clearly related, such as the building and especially the group of figures surrounding Achilles, adorned with a turban and supporting himself on a shield, plus the poses of several of the women and the figure presenting the helmet and lance.<sup>12</sup> The various French iconographic sources for the series can be situated in the period 1711–1726.<sup>13</sup>

On stylistic grounds, Jan van Orley was put forward as the designer of the figures by Marthe Crick-Kuntziger as long ago as 1927, and this has since been endorsed by other authors.<sup>14</sup> The creation must be situated after 1726, a period in which Van Orley was very active for several Brussels workshops. For the Van der Borcht family, he produced no fewer than three series, including *The Life of Moses*<sup>15</sup> (cat. 83). Similarities can also be observed between the postures of the female figures in *Achilles Immersed in the Styx* and *Moses Rescued From the Water*.<sup>16</sup>

His designs are elegant and powerful at the same time. The predominantly light colour-palette gives this representation a somewhat cheerful impression. The female

figures are slender with narrow faces and raised hair. They often have the same fine noses and pronounced eyebrows. The drapes of their clothes follow their movements.

Van Orley worked with Augustin Coppens for the decors. As always, he perfectly fulfilled what he was asked to do, adapting it to the spirit of the times, in which elegance prevailed. He found a balance between a closed right-hand section with the figures inside an architectural feature and a beautifully detailed parkland view over several levels, containing all of the classic ingredients, such as a fountain and beautiful parterre.

Comparing the representation of Vermillion's *Achilles Among the Daughters of Lycomedes* with the same scene woven by the Van der Borcht workshop, we note no differences in the composition, the figures or the decor. The same scenes in the Palácio Nacional de Ajuda in Lisbon and in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris are slightly wider, with more room in front of the curtain on the far right. The widest preserved example, however, can be found in the Hotel Bristol in Warsaw (fig. 4).<sup>17</sup> That tapestry bears the mark of Jan-Frans van der Borcht (c. 1697–1774). The architecture flows nicely, and behind the wide curtain, a woman comes to watch. [IDM]

1. The most important publications in public collections are in the Palace of the Prince-Bishops in Liège (5 pieces, see Crick-Kuntziger 1927 B), the collection of the city of Paris (5 pieces, see Niclausse 1948, pp. 77–79), in the Museum Jacquemart André in Paris (9 pieces, see Reyniès 1995 A), in the Swedish Embassy in Paris (5 pieces, see Boettiger 1928), series GG, Raleigh, North Carolina Museum of Art (7 pieces, sold at Sotheby's New York, 26 May 1992, lots 239–244), Lisbon, Palácio de Ajuda (6 pieces, see Mendonça 1983, pp. 128–133).
2. Göbel 1923, II, pl. 353.
3. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive, no. 97.P.7-0240981 and no. 97.P.7-0240982 with the same moulding; ex-collection V&C Sternberg, see London 1965, no. 37 with a different moulding. The same moulding was found around an unmarked *Kidnapping of Helena*, see Paris, Galerie G. Petit, 22/23 May 1924, no. 182. It is therefore possible that five copies from the Vermillion workshop have been traced.
4. Brosens 2005 B, pp. 403–405.
5. Idem, pp. 405–406.
6. The attribution to Maximiliaan de Haese is not taken into account because the series probably originated before 1722 and de Haese was born in 1713, see Brosens 2005, p. 119. For the attribution to de Haese, see Delmarcel & Huygens 1997.
7. Brosens 2004, pp. 118–120; Brosens 2005 B, p. 405.
8. Delmarcel & Huygens 1997, p. 151; Brosens 2004, p. 120.
9. The fact that the head is not wearing a helmet is, however, an anomaly.
10. Reyniès 1995 A, pp. 164–171.
11. Brest, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. 972.4.1.
12. Reyniès 1995 A, pp. 165–166.
13. Idem, pp. 170–171.
14. Crick-Kuntziger 1927 B, p. 178; Reyniès 1995 A, pp. 171–172.
15. Brosens 2004, pp. 124–125.
16. Reyniès 1995 A, p. 172.
17. RMAH, 1725-44.



## THE LIFE OF MOSES



[83.1]

Two tapestries

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1730

Signature I.V.D. BORCHT from the workshop  
of Jaspar van der Borch (†1742)

Figures designed by Jan van Orley (1665–1735)  
and the landscapes by Augustin Coppens (1668–1740)

Wool and silk; 7 to 8 warps per cm

Inv. 6302-6303

Provenance: 1938, purchased from the  
antique dealers Thiérard Frères in Paris

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1944; Crick-Kuntziger 1956,  
pp. 88–89, nos. 98–99; Huygens 1994.

In the eighteenth century, religious scenes were much less commonly used as a subject for series of tapestries. The *Story of Moses* from the Old Testament, designed by Van Orley and Coppens, was undeniably an exception. The numerous series that were woven, consisting of the eight subjects that are known, prove that the way in which these themes were elaborated certainly appealed to potential buyers.<sup>1</sup> The Van der Borch family would ultimately put numerous combinations on the market. The signatures found on some of the items are those of Jaspar van der Borch or his sons Peter (†1763) and Jan Frans (†1772), or of his great-grandson Jacob II (†1794), the last weaver in the family and the last workshop to remain active in the city of Brussels. The Van der Borchts were apparently also the only ones to market this subject in the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to an entry from 1763, we know that Van Orley was the designer of this series as well as of the *Life of Christ* in St Donatian's Cathedral in Bruges, also woven by Jaspar van der Borch. Stylistically, the two series fit together.<sup>3</sup> There is also a direct relationship with the *Story of Achilles* that was also designed by Jan van Orley and Augustin Coppens (cat. 82). Some figures were copied almost literally. Several figures from *Moses Rescued from the Water* were used in *Thetis Dipping Achilles into the Styx*.<sup>4</sup> The latter series has been found to have been created between 1726 and 1732.<sup>5</sup> The creation of the Moses series should be

in line with this. In 1732, the subject is mentioned when the Prussian Charles-Louis Baron de Pöllnitz (1692–1775) visits Brussels and describes the weaving going on in the various workshops at the time. It is possible that this is the series made for Archduchess Maria-Elisabeth, Governor of the Austrian Netherlands, which is now preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.<sup>6</sup> Dated 1737, a series for the Maastricht town hall is the earliest order mentioned in a contract with Van der Borch. The five pieces were completed a year later and are still in situ.<sup>7</sup>

The border is designed as a wide gilt frame, with carvings of large acanthus and laurel leaves alternately and regularly turned around a bar. In the corners, everything comes together in large shell motifs. The garland continues over all of the edges. It is possible that some preserved scenes with the same broad border once belonged to the same series.<sup>8</sup>

[83.1]

## MOSES RESCUED FROM THE WATER

Brussels city mark and I.V.D. BORCHT,  
signature of Jaspar van der Borch

362 × 435 cm

Inv. 6302

Beneath a drapery in the trees, the group of elegant women in the foreground has gathered on the bank around the basket in which Moses lies. A female servant is still partly standing in the water from which she has removed the basket, while another lifts the lid so that the infant who has been found becomes visible to the Egyptian princess, the daughter of the Pharaoh. On the right kneels a young girl, the sister of Moses, pointing to a woman standing in the background, their mother. The palm trees and the ancient city in the decor, with a pyramid on the right, refer to the place where the scene is set. Because the Israelites were becoming too numerous in Egypt, Pharaoh ordered all the boys to be thrown into the Nile. To keep Moses from this fate, his mother put him in a basket in the reeds under the supervision of his sister (Exodus 2: 4–6). The princess took pity and followed his sister's suggestion to find a nurse among the Hebrew





[FIG. 1] *The Bunch of Grapes from Canaan Brought to Moses*, from *The Life of Moses*, Brussels, workshop of Peter van der Borcht, c. 1730. Domschatzkammer, Aachen, inv. no. T00803.

women. His mother was chosen for the task and took care of the child until he was big enough before bringing him to Pharaoh's daughter, who then took care of him as if he were her son.

Only a few examples with the same representation have been found.<sup>9</sup> Apart from adjustments to the dimensions, no changes to the cartoon were noted. The Brussels version is the largest known.

[83.2]

**THE BUNCH OF GRAPES FROM CANAAN BROUGHT TO MOSES**

Brussels city mark and I.V.D.BORCHT,  
signature of Jaspar van der Borcht  
367 × 547 cm  
Inv. 6303

The seated elder on the right is Moses, surrounded by his retinue, who receives the envoys from various tribes whom he sent out to the promised land of Canaan forty days before to gather fruit. They are holding all kinds of fruits as evidence that their mission was a success. (Numbers 13: 24–28)

The setting consists of a vast tented camp surrounded by palm trees.

This originally narrow tapestry has been extended left and right with wide, new strips. Other examples are known which solely contain a representation of the central part of the scene in the museum (fig. 1).<sup>10</sup>

The two attached, woven-on pieces to the right and left of the scene are probably later, free interpretations that were applied in order to fit the scene into another interior. The borders were put back after the adjustment. [IDM]

1. Two additional intermediate pieces, known to have formed part of the original interior of the Wespienhaus in Aachen, are now on display in the Germanisches Landesmuseum in Nuremberg. These were probably produced as additions to enable the ensemble to fit inside baroque panelling.
2. A document from 1748 may show that Daniel Leyniers also received an order, and a number of disparate pieces were offered at auction without marks, see Huygens 1994, pp. 262–263.
3. Idem, pp. 264–266.
4. Idem, p. 266, and Reyniès 1995, p. 172.
5. Reyniès 1995, pp. 172–173.
6. Delmarcel & Huygens 1997, pp. 254–255.
7. Vogelaaar 1985, p. 131.
8. These include: a *Moses Rescued from the Water* in the Raffaele Verolino collection in Modena; an *Adoration of the Golden Calf* in the American Embassy in Paris (1968), formerly sold at the Galerie G. Petit in Paris, 8/9 December 1919, no. 176 and returned to Paris, Coll. Victor Desfossés on 6/7 May 1929, no. 24; *An Offering for the Construction of the Tabernacle* at Sotheby's, London, 27 June 1969, no. 26, and again at Sotheby's, London on 25 May 2001, no. 1; *A Passage Through the Red Sea* at Piasa, Paris, on 20 December 2000, no. 168; and a set of four auctioned at Christie's, London on 05 December 1968, no. 156.
9. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, series XLII.1; Collection Raffaele Verolino, Modena; Temple Newsam House, Leeds; New York, Parke-Bernet, 7/8 December 1956, no. 375.
10. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, series XLII.6; London, Christie's, 5 December 1968, no. 156; Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum. On the example in the cathedral of Aachen, the bearded man on the right was also completed later, but the cloak has been developed differently.



[83.1]



## SCENES OF COUNTRY LIFE AFTER TENIERS



[84.1]

Four tapestries  
Southern Netherlands, Brussels, c. 1720  
Workshop and designers unknown  
Wool and silk; 8 to 9 warps per cm  
Inv. 1997-2000

Provenance: 1873, transferred by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, originally in the Hôtel de Rommerswael, Brussels, the headquarters of the Belgian Court of Audit

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 89–90, nos. 100–103; De Meüter 2016, pp. 177–200, 171–173.

#### History

This series of tapestries, containing four pieces, was transferred to our museum by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, together with a series of six pieces (inv. 2001-2006) (cat. 74) and inventory number 2007 (cat. 75), all of which consist of landscapes with animals.<sup>1</sup>

#### Commentary

Series of tapestries with peasant scenes belong to the new genres that emerged at the end of the seventeenth century and corresponded to what was described as the *goût moderne*. Paintings and prints in this genre were also much in demand in France.<sup>2</sup> This is fully in keeping with the emerging predilection for representations with small figures in landscapes. The great variety of activities on the land provides a wealth of possible subjects for a series of tapestries. This opportunity was gratefully taken up by all the manufacturers in all the weaving centres still active at the time: Brussels, Oudenaarde, Antwerp and Lille.

Many cartoons, painted by different artists, were also in circulation. Some painters are known by name, but the fact that the same scenes were being used again and again makes it difficult to link them to a specific design. The series bears no weaver's marks, and therefore identifying its designers as well as the weaver's workshop is very difficult.

All the peasant scenes from this period were inspired by the typical genre paintings promoted by David II

Teniers (1610–1690) and his son David III (1638–1685). That is why their name was given to such representations: the “Teniersen”. The weavers preferred scenes outdoors in beautifully detailed, wide-open landscapes, while the paintings also depict scenes in the interiors of inns.<sup>3</sup> The decision to make use of landscape scenes responded to the trend in tapestry production in that period. Whereas in Teniers' paintings, the peasants are often in the company of aristocrats in order to highlight the harmonious cohabitation of the different classes, this is not the case as far as the tapestries are concerned.<sup>4</sup> Various family documents from 1683 show that David III Teniers was commissioned by his father to work on patterns for tapestries.<sup>5</sup> Sometimes copies were produced according to patterns by other painters, such as Jan van den Hoecke.<sup>6</sup> Some of the tapestries are signed with Teniers' name, including a series that was in Madrid. The eight tapestries bore the weaver's marks of Hendrik Reydam's (1650–1719) and Jacob I van der Borcht (c. 1655–1693). The current place of storage for these tapestries dated 1680 is unknown.<sup>7</sup> Jacob van der Borcht together with Hieronymus le Clerc (1643–1722) brought out an initial series in this period.<sup>8</sup> Some of the peasant fairs by Teniers are close to the representations on the tapestries.<sup>9</sup>

In the documents of the Antwerp firm of Nicolaas Naulaerts, the name of the Brussels landscape painter Lucas Achtschellinck (1626–1699) is linked in 1707 to that of the Brussels figure painter Jan van Orley (1665–1735) for a series of tapestries entitled *Paisans après Teniers* (Peasants After Teniers).<sup>10</sup> Because neither weaver nor subjects are specified in the case of these Teniers scenes, it is difficult to identify the correct series. There is one series that may possibly have been designed by Lucas Achtschellinck. Only a few examples of that edition have been preserved.<sup>11</sup> Several elements of the landscapes in these scenes bear comparison with the work of Lucas Achtschellinck.<sup>12</sup> None of the series bear any marks and each of them has a different border.

The inventory of the estate of Albrecht Auwercx (1629–1709) in 1718 mentions a pattern depicting peasants (six pieces) painted by Coppens and Van Orley, which was included in the distribution after his death in 1714.<sup>13</sup> In this case, Augustin Coppens (1668–1740) painted the



landscapes and Jan van Orley supplied the characters. In 1718, the firm of Leyniers also ordered patterns for a room of tapestries depicting peasants by the same designers. Moreover, they also had a version in which the figures of Van Orley had been updated by Nicolas de Haen, a pupil of Zeger-Jacob van Helmont (1683–1726).<sup>15</sup>

The inventory of Urbanus Leyniers (1674–1747) makes clear that he probably owned patterns for a total of four series, or 33 representations, with peasants as the subject.<sup>16</sup> Some of these cartoons were possibly bought by Jacob II van der Borcht after the closure of the Leyniers workshop in 1768, because they were found with his mark.<sup>17</sup> The fact that the same artists are suppliers of cartoons for two or three different series with similar scenes in the same period points to the fact that the genre was in demand at the time. Every supplier of tapestries felt obliged to have this subject in their portfolio.

Other painters who are also mentioned as suppliers of cartoons in connection with this subject are: Ignatius de Hondt (c. 1685–c. 1715)<sup>18</sup> and his brother Philippe de Hondt (1683–1741),<sup>19</sup> Theobald Michau (1676–1765),<sup>20</sup> and Alexander van Bredael (1663–1720), for workshops in Oudenaarde and Amsterdam.<sup>21</sup> In some cases, they are merely the providers of the landscapes or the figures. Due to the lack of precise documents, it is difficult to tell whether these painters supplied an entirely new version or whether they reworked or updated groups of figures already in existence.

Because the style of all the Brussels series is very similar, they are also interchangeable. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the four representations of the series discussed here probably have a different origin. Weavings of the same cartoons have been preserved that bear the marks of different workshops, such as those of Frans van den Hecke, his brother Peter van den Hecke, Frans van der Borcht and Urbanus Leyniers. A similar remark must be made about a series of seven pieces that used to be in Uppark House.<sup>22</sup>

In an undated inventory of the series available at Peter van den Hecke (c. 1675–1752) a series of *Fêtes des paysans, en petites figures peintes d'après Teniers* is mentioned.<sup>23</sup> Among the nine representations with small figures, two have the same subjects as those in the museum – a fair and a maypole. This corresponds to preserved and marked tapestries containing these scenes. No designer is mentioned in the document. In 1755, Van den Hecke's workhouse and tools were sold. Drawings for some series were also sold but the peasant scenes are not mentioned. However, it is striking that (Jan-)Frans van der Borcht (1697–1774) was appointed testamentary executor.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore not surprising that designs that can be attributed to Van den Hecke have been found bearing his mark.<sup>25</sup> The series of seven pieces in Schloss Regensburg bears the marks

of Peter and Frans van den Hecke and of Peter van der Borcht. The series was purchased new in 1740.<sup>26</sup>

The borders are missing, and the series was probably woven without them, because the tapestries were integrated in a wooden panelling as was the fashion from the end of the seventeenth century.

[84.1]

**RETURN FROM HARVEST**

294 × 424 cm

Inv. 1997

At the end of the summer, the harvest wagon arrives at the inn where an extended company of people is waiting for it. The setting is nicely divided into a landscape with perspective and a more closed section on the left with a farm and a barn.

*Commentary*

As mentioned in the introduction, the four tapestries might have been produced by any of three different workshops, all of which have already had replicas of this subject assigned to them.

Thanks to the De Grois document concerning the output of Urbanus Leyniers, we know that a series containing *Teniers Scenes* in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam was supplied by this firm for the Huygens House in Amsterdam. As already stated in the introduction, this is a version in which the figures of Van Orley had been updated by Nicolas de Haen, a pupil of Zeger-Jacob van Helmont. To that series of four belongs a similar *Bringing the Harvest*, but in the form of a narrower version without characters at the farm on the left. Other versions are also sometimes narrower and feature different borders of varying widths. An example with the same dimensions formed part of a series of three in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Orléans.<sup>28</sup>

Some editions bear the mark of Peter van den Hecke,<sup>29</sup> or Van der Borcht.<sup>30</sup> Others, like our series, do not carry any marks.<sup>31</sup> Except for the width of the tapestry and the type of border, none of these editions differ substantially. This version is definitely among the better weavings.

[84.2]

**THE MAYPOLE DANCE**

292 × 386 cm

Inv. 1999

The maypole was usually erected in the village square around the 1st of May. The maypole refers to the tree of life, as a sign of fertility. This event was accompanied by a



[84.2]





[84.3]



[FIG. 1] *The Maypole Dance*, from *Country Scenes*, Brussels, c. 1700. Private collection.

great celebration, with dance and music, as shown in this representation.

Here, too, the composition is balanced between a beautiful vista in the middle, with rather big buildings around it.

The representation with the maypole was the most frequently found, and it appeared in two different versions. The boy in the foreground might be sitting on a horse, as in the version preserved in Brussels,<sup>32</sup> but was also sometimes on a wall in the same position with a tree behind him. In this version, a herd of sheep was added to the open area in the centre (fig. 1).<sup>33</sup>



[FIG. 2] *The Kermesse*, from *Country Scenes*, Brussels, workshop of Peter van der Borcht, c. 1700. Private collection.

All replicas are the same size, and the decor is identical. As with the others from the series, there are different frame borders. The signature of Peter van den Hecke is the only one to appear on some copies. The majority, however, do not bear any marks at all.

[84.3]  
**THE KERMESSE – THE INN**

306 × 326 cm  
Inv. 1998

Fair (*kermesse*) scenes at an inn were included in all series. The variation is therefore considerable, although the same elements often recur – men and women drinking, musicians, dancers, an inn and household goods.

This scene belongs with the next one, which represents dancing and partying peasants. It was most likely woven from the same cartoon that was split into two parts for the specific order. This right-hand part of the representation is undoubtedly more important and, due to the larger number of figures it contains, is more expensive than the left-hand part. Replicas of it were also found in much greater numbers, sometimes bearing the mark of Peter van der Borcht.<sup>34</sup>

Three examples were found in which the two scenes occur together in an organic whole of almost 6 metres to 7.20 metres wide. This version carries the mark of Peter van der Borcht (fig. 2).<sup>35</sup> In the wide tapestry, there is plenty of room to develop the landscape with harbour views in the background in detail.





[FIG. 3] *The Kermesse*, from *Country Scenes*, Brussels, workshop of Frans van der Borcht, c. 1700. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. Tap L1/5.

Besides these various identical representations, either separately or as part of a larger whole, several others have been preserved in which the left part with the dancing peasants has been developed differently. A fine example, measuring 6.45 metres in width, belonged to the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (inv. Tap L1/5) (fig. 3).<sup>36</sup> It bore the mark of Frans van der Borcht. Many replicas have been found, especially of this version, but without marks and surrounded by different borders.<sup>37</sup>

Only a few replicas are known of the right part only, the inn scene. A somewhat terse and different example, without marks, was sold in Paris.<sup>38</sup>

We note that the few weaver's marks that were found refer to the Van der Borcht family.

The Residenz in Würzburg preserves a large fairground scene that was delivered in 1696 by Jerome le Clerc and Jacob van der Borcht (A Castro) (fig. 4).<sup>39</sup> This may have been the first weaving of a kermesse of that type on which the second version was based. Most of the figures at the inn on the right are identical. The elaboration of the setting with the inn is different, however, as the pergola is missing. The fiddler has also been moved from the right to the centre of the foreground. The left part is completely different in design. In general, the composition is more closed, with less room for a vista.

[84.4]

**THE KERMESSÉ – DANCING PEASANTS**

305 × 320 cm

Inv. 2000

As mentioned in the discussion of inv. 1998 (cat. 84.3), this scene belongs with the tavern scene in some editions (fig. 2). One finds the same round dance, with a company



[FIG. 4] *The Kermesse*, from *Country Scenes*, Brussels, workshop of Jerome le Clerc and Jacob van der Borcht (A Castro), 1696. Bayerische Schösserverwaltung, Munich, inv. BNS W.10.



[84.4]



of drinking men to its right and the bagpiper accompanying the dancers to its left. On the far left, near a pond, a man is leaning on a well with all kinds of utensils in front of it.

In the inn scene, the dancing peasants originally belonged to the same cartoon, but both scenes could also be woven separately. An example with the dancing peasants was sold in Paris in 1981. The image bears the mark of Peter van der Borcht.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, individual elements were found in other versions. Interestingly, the pair of dancers at the far right had already been used in an earlier edition. In a *Return from Harvest*, woven by the Le Clerc-Jacob van der Borcht (A Castro) association, the same couple has been given a place next to the bagpiper.<sup>41</sup> For the rest of the cartoon, for the inn scene, the tapestry maker harked back to the same early examples. An attribution to the Van der Borcht workshop in the case of this cartoon (i.e., both parts – inv. 1998 and 2000) seems justified. [IDM]

1. Henne & A. Wauters 1845, vol. III, p. 390.
2. Brosens 2006, pp. 62–63.
3. Vlieghe 2011, p. 71.
4. Idem, p. 72.
5. Vlieghe 1959–60, pp. 86–89; Vlieghe 2011, pp. 146–154, 76–81; De Meüter 2016, pp. 171–173.
6. Vlieghe 2011, pp. 41–43.
7. Wauters 1878, pp. 324–325; Vlieghe 1959–60, pp. 86–87.
8. Brosens 2006, p. 63.
9. De Ghellinck d'Elseghem 1994, pp. 71–75; Vlieghe 2011, p. 73.
10. Denucé 1936, p. 316.
11. In three different series, consisting of a total of fourteen tapestries, nine different subjects were recorded. Four tapestries belong to the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (inv. BK-NM-177-180), see Hartkamp-Jonxis and Smit 2004, no. 44 and De Meüter 2008–09, pp. 198–199.
12. De Meüter 2009, p. 199.
13. Brosens 2012, pp. 185–186.
14. Brosens 2004, pp. 160–170.
15. Idem, pp. 108, 277–278; Smit 2003, pp. 154–157.
16. Brosens 2004, p. 108.
17. Brosens 2004, pp. 160–162.
18. Idem, p. 277.
19. De Meüter 2016, pp. 176–177; Brosens 2004, p. 277; Brosens 2006, pp. 54, 60–61. Brosens attributed a series of *Teniers Scenes* to Philippe de Hondt solely on stylistic grounds, i.e., starting from the series entitled *War Exercises*, which is the only one that can be attributed to him with any certainty.
20. Delmarcel 1999, p. 352.
21. De Meüter 2016, pp. 262–278; Duverger 2008, pp. 357–360.
22. Campbell 1995, pp. 32–34. It was found that two different borders were used, which rather points to the fact that tapestries of different origins were brought together at a later date. Four of the seven tapestries were lost in a fire in 1989.
23. Wauters 1878, pp. 356–357.
24. Idem, p. 360; Gallemaerts 1975, pp. 161–162.
25. A similar observation can be made with the series *Story of Psyché*, the designs of which were sold in 1755, see Brosens 2005, pp. 403, 405. The *Story of Don Quixote* was also woven by both workshops. Peter van den Hecke and Jaspar van der Borcht were brothers-in-law, see Brosens 2006, p. 58.

26. Piendl n.d., pp. 58–71. None of the representations corresponds to the examples discussed here.
27. Smit 2003, pp. 153–157.
28. Guérinet n.d., pl. 21–23. On enquiry, they turned out not to be there anymore.
29. Auctioned in Berlin, at Graupe, on 17 May 1935 with mark and frame border; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive, no. 97.P.7; Original DB ID: 615; Web DB ID: 303344, narrower version with mark and same border.
30. Auctioned in Paris, Goulden Collection, at Galerie Petit, 8/9 December 1919, a narrower edition with only the right part, a narrow frame border and with a mark.
31. The widest version recovered, which is wider on the left and without marks or borders, has been part of the collection of Galerie Chevalier in Paris, inv. 5864. There is another version at Uppark House with a wide acanthus border, see Campbell 1995, 33.
32. None of the examples of this version bears a weaver's mark. Christie's, London, 9 October 1980, no. 155; Palais d'Orsay, Paris, 23 March 1978; Harris collection, London, see RMAH, 1725.74.
33. Christie's, London, 19 July 1927, Barrington collection, see Marillier 1932, pl. 32a; two separate pieces in the Chevalier collection, Paris, nos. 3935 and 3442; Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, French & Co. Archive, no. 97.P.7; original DB ID: 557; web DB ID: 303402. The following three bear the mark of P. van den Hecke: an earlier example in the castle of Pau, destroyed in a fire in 1997; an example in the Boccara collection, see Boccara 1971, p. 161; and another in the collection of the San Francisco Art Museum, inv. 1957.172.
34. Lempertz, Cologne, 21–23 May 1981, no. 1294.
35. Collection of Galerie Hadjer, Paris; Christie's, London, 12 April 1984, no. 10. Belongs to a series of five pieces of which two bear the mark of F. Van der Borcht. None of these other scenes match any of the ones in the museum; Christie's, Elveden Hall, 22 May 1984, no. 1756, without marks.
36. It was lost in a fire at the Hofburg in 1992.
37. New York, Wildenstein collection, see RMAH, G1700.17; Paris, Galerie Petit, 16 December 1922, see RMAH, G1725.2; Leningrad collection, see RMAH, 1725.75; one example was destroyed in the fire of the museum in the cloth hall in Tournai in 1940. For a photo, see Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage ACL B15473; Boccara collection, Paris, see Boccara 1971, p. 166.
38. Paris, Drouot, 21/22 May 1970, no. 250. There are several differences because here a woman is looking out of the window at the side of the inn and the flag is different.
39. Bayerische Schlösserverwaltung, München, inv. BNS W.10; a version with a different frame border was auctioned in London at Sotheby's, 3 July 2012, no. 29, as part of a set of four by the same weavers.
40. Paris, Hôtel George V, 9 December 1981.
41. Marillier 1932, pp. 3–7, pl. 16a. Another example was auctioned at Drouot, Paris, 12 June 1906, see RMAH, 1700.68.





[85]

## FIRE SCREEN WITH TAVERN SCENE

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, eighteenth century

Workshop unknown

Design after David III Teniers (1610–1690)

Wool and silk; 93 × 65 cm; 6 to 7 warps per cm

Inv. v2919

Provenance: 1911, bequest by Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1926, pp. 68–69;

Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 85, no. 93.

The inn scene takes place inside in front of a burning fire-place. The beautiful view through to a small landscape breaks the interior open. It is not clear whether the company is playing a card game or having a conversation. The pose of the man on the left with a beer mug in his hand is very typical of Teniers' work, as is the innkeeper standing next to the gathering of peasants. Such gatherings also appear in various tapestries with *Teniers Scenes* (cat. 84).

This small tapestry with an exquisite composition is fully adapted to its function. At the centre is an impression of a painting with a scene of rural life, surrounded by symmetrically arranged decorative volutes and fruit festoons.

The tapestry was probably placed in a wooden fireplace screen on a base. Such small representations in laid-in weaving were woven on a large scale to decorate the interior. The quality of both the composition and the weave is very good. [IDM]



[85]



## THE TRIC TRAC GAME

Southern Netherlands, Brussels, eighteenth century

Workshop unknown

Design after David III Teniers (1610–1690)

or Adriaan Brouwer (1605/06–1638)

Wool and silk; 102 × 131 cm; 10 warps per cm

Inv. 3649

Provenance: 1901, purchased from the Somzée collection

Literature: Somzée 1901, no. 572; Göbel 1923, p. 362, pl. 314;

Marillier 1932, p. 64, pl. 41b; Crick-Kuntziger 1959, p. 85, no. 94;

Arras-Aubusson 1988, p. 30.

In an inn, a large, motley crew is gathered around a table where two players are playing the Tric Trac game, one sitting down, the other standing up. On the left, a man is writing on a doorpost. In the back, there is a couple kissing by the fireplace. The woman pointing at them is the matchmaker of a brothel.

The scene is entirely in keeping with the paintings David Teniers made in the seventeenth century, which presented all manner of scenes from rural life. All the typical elements of his inn scenes are united here. In the course of the eighteenth century, several series of engravings were published, based on the paintings of Teniers. It

is possible that such an engraving was used as a basis for this depiction.

The tapestry was probably conceived as a woven painting and therefore finished without a woven border, in a wooden frame. Such weaves are rather uncommon.

This type of board game became immensely popular in France from 1500 until the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

David Teniers the Younger painted several tavern scenes in which a game is being played, often including a scene in front of a fireplace at the back right. Such subjects were widely distributed, with the help of engravings. Around 1635–37 he also made a drawing (fig. 1),<sup>2</sup> after a painting by Adriaan Brouwer with the same subject and composition (fig. 2).<sup>3</sup>

Despite the larger number of figures, there is a strong resemblance between the tapestry and the work of both painters.

The standing figure on the left is probably keeping score, as in another Teniers-inspired depiction of card players (cat. D4). [IDM]

1. Arras-Aubusson 1988, p. 30. The tapestry was then exhibited there.
2. Drawing in Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, inv. Z 907, see Brussels 1980, no. 230.
3. Painting in Leipzig, Museum der Bildenden Künste, inv. G 1556.



[FIG. 1] David Teniers the Younger, *The Tric Trac Game*, drawing, 1635–37. Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Brunswick, inv. Z 907.



[FIG. 2] Adriaan Brouwer, *The Tric Trac Game*, oil on canvas, before 1635. Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig, inv. G 1556.



[86]





[87]

[87]  
DANCING COUNTRYMEN

France, Lille, first half of the eighteenth century  
Workshop of Guillaume Werniers  
Designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 226 × 386 cm; 6 to 7 warps per cm  
Inv. 9248

Provenance: 1958, bequest by Peltzer-De Mot

Literature: De Meüter 2016, pp. 360–362.

This rural scene is made up of groups of figures standing apart. Most striking are the dancing peasants with a musician with a hurdy-gurdy, accompanied by a boy with a triangle. Furthermore, there is a group of three peasants chatting and on the right a farmer smoking a pipe. The combination of these peasant figures in the foreground of a formal park view is a bit of an anachronism.

The narrow border is a simple, but well-executed version of a classic frame border that resembles a wooden picture frame.

The depiction of a rural scene in a park view belongs to the *Teniers* genre. Such representations were very popular from the end of the seventeenth century and continued to be woven in all workshops in the eighteenth century (cat. 84). By comparing it with similar representations, we know that the work was woven in Lille, in the workshop of Guillaume Werniers – or of his widow if produced after 1738.

The elaboration of the park view closely resembles the parks that Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711) developed as a setting for several series for the Oudenaarde firm Van Verren.<sup>1</sup> His compositions could be taken up in Lille through the Flemish colony there. Weavers from Oudenaarde were in contact with the Werniers family, the most famous manufacturers in Lille. Originally from Brussels, Guillaume Werniers (†1738) settled in Lille, where he married the daughter of Jean de Melter, another weaver from Brussels, who had worked in Lille since 1688. After the death of his father-in-law, Guillaume took over the management of his workshop. Following his own death in 1738, activities were continued by his second wife, Catherine Ghuy, until 1778. Numerous tapestries bearing the mark of Guillaume

Werniers or his widow have been preserved. The attribution to Spierinckx is purely stylistic, because no documents relating to their collaboration were found.

Similarities with the Oudenaarde tapestries can be seen not only in the landscape, but also in the groups of figures attributed to Alexander van Bredael.<sup>2</sup> As in Oudenaarde, Lille tapestries play with groups of figures and different decors that are interchangeable.

Interestingly, a series of five representations, each composed of different groups of figures, was sold in 1930 in entirely the same Spierinckx style. Three of the scenes have an almost identical border.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the city mark of Lille, these bear the mark of *G. Werniers* or *La veuve de G. Werniers*, thereby making a clear link with this workshop. In one of the representations, the same duo of musicians appears, but in a smaller format. The same musicians were also given a place in another scene with dancing peasants, also woven by the widow Werniers. In this version, they used the same park view, but a different frame border.<sup>4</sup> We also encounter the same setting with the same groups of figures: the musicians, the dancing couple and the chatting peasants. In the middle, two more farmers were added and the smoker on the right was replaced by an old man leaning on a stick.<sup>5</sup> The piece has no border and bears no marks. Another edition with the same park view, but with a company of farmers playing cards at a table, bears the name of the widow Werniers.<sup>6</sup>

These are all examples of the flexibility with which the cartoons were used in Lille, just like in Oudenaarde. [IDM]

1. De Meüter 2016, pp. 360–362.

2. Idem, pp. 360–362, 262–278.

3. Auction G. Petit, Paris, 31 March 1930, nos. 85–89, see RMAH: 1725.95-99. Only the ornament in the middle is slightly different on the borders of the three tapestries. The other two have a wider volute border.

4. Boccara 1971, p. 177.

5. New York, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1 November 1974, no. 154.

6. Arras-Aubusson 1988, no. 1.





[88]

[88]

## LANDSCAPE WITH COUNTRYMEN

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde, mid-eighteenth century  
 Workshop of Albert Goeman (1680–1761)  
 Figures designed by Alexander van Bredael (1663–1720)  
 and landscapes designed by Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711)  
 Wool and silk; 295 × 362 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm  
 and 7 warps per cm for the figures  
 Inv. 2016.0104

Provenance: 2016, purchased through  
 the Carlo Bonte auction house in Bruges

### History

In the photographic catalogue of tapestries compiled by H. C. Marillier (1865–1951) for the V&A Museum in the 1920s–1930s, a series of five tapestries depicting peasant scenes with the same coat of arms was included.<sup>1</sup> This tapestry belonged to that series.

The coat of arms belongs to Count Finck von Finckenstein.<sup>2</sup> The family belonged to the Prussian nobility and received the title of Count in 1710. Between 1716 and 1720, the baroque castle, Schloss Finckenstein, was built by Albrecht Konrad Finck von Finckenstein (1660–1735).<sup>3</sup> It is possible that the order for the five tapestries dates from after that renovation.

In 1932, the series was in the hands of the Bernheimer art gallery in Munich.<sup>4</sup> According to Marillier, it was previously owned by Duke von Reuss at Schloss Greiz and even earlier by George III, though this could not be confirmed.

Three tapestries from the series were sold at the end of 1932. Only one tapestry is depicted, a *Peasants' Dance*.<sup>5</sup> Two of them – the *Peasants' Dance* and *Fishermen in a Park View* (fig. 1) – later ended up at the French & Co. art gallery in New York.<sup>6</sup> The tapestry with the fishermen was sold in London in 1994.<sup>7</sup>

In a broad landscape with a closed forest section with a country road on the right and a wide panoramic view of a town on a waterway on the left, a group of peasants are sitting in the foreground, resting and smoking their pipes. To the right of the main group are two more peasants and another one is arriving on the left. The three large



**[FIG. 1]** *Park View with Fishermen*, from *Country Scenes*, Oudenaarde, workshop Albert Goeman, mid-eighteenth century. Private collection.

bushes at the very front are also typical of Oudenaarde's production.

The tapestry is in an exceptionally good state of conservation. The colours are still very fresh. From a comparison with old photographs, it can be seen that a small section was once reduced in height. This was done in an almost invisible way and does not detract from the tapestry.

Despite the absence of marks, the tapestry can without doubt be attributed to Oudenaarde on the grounds of documentary evidence. Indeed, no marks were woven-in during this period, so we must rely on documents relating to orders to make a solid attribution.

This is the case for the two tapestry series preserved in the castle of Warfusée, near Liège. According to the preserved workbook of the merchant Albert Goeman (1680–1761),<sup>8</sup> they were ordered by the Count d'Oultremont in 1761.<sup>9</sup> Some broad tapestries are composed of two or more scenes. In the large salon is a series of tapestries entitled *Story of Don Quixote* (fig. 2). The left-hand section of one of the tapestries corresponds to the landscape with the resting peasants discussed above.





[FIG. 2] *Don Quixote is Robbed by Duchess's Ladies and Sancho is Sent to the Duchess by Don Quixote*, from *The Story of Don Quixote*, Oudenaarde, workshop Albert Goeman, 1761. Castle of Warfusée.

By combining cartoons – the successful working method of the workshops in Oudenaarde – several other tapestries can be attributed to the same workshop. The same landscapes were used in combination with other figures. Those versions can therefore also be attributed to the manufacturer. This is also the case with series of peasant scenes, *Italian Peasant Figures... Figures by Teniers* in the manuscript, a theme in which this tapestry fits.<sup>10</sup> In the second room of the castle in Warfusée, there is a similar series of *Italian Conversations or Italian Peasants*, all of which feature peasants in similar landscapes.<sup>11</sup> Although the same figures were not found in this series, they undoubtedly belong to this group.

In these versions, it is always the beautiful panoramic, Italianate panoramas that capture the attention. The landscapes were possibly designed by Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711), a landscape painter who worked extensively for the tapestry industry in the early eighteenth century. He specialised in both park views and Italianate landscapes.

From correspondence, we know that the painter Alexander van Bredael (1663–1720) was the supplier of peasant figures for the Oudenaarde workshops in the same period. He supplied Pieter van Verren with several patterns in 1698 and 1700.<sup>12</sup> In 1711, he owned the peasant figures in three different sizes, so that he could also provide them to less wealthy customers. In the Naulaerts memorial in 1707, his peasant figures are mentioned with landscapes by Spierinckx in connection with various series. The group of figures with smoking and resting peasants fits into his oeuvre.

Here, it is clearly a case of three different groups of figures being combined. In his catalogue of photographs,

Marillier mentions a copy in Stift Göttweig in Austria depicting the same figures in a different landscape.<sup>13</sup> The central part with the resting peasants was not found in exactly the same form in later auction catalogues or publications. However, the pair of chatting peasants combined with another peasant dance,<sup>14</sup> or alone in a fragment was found.<sup>15</sup>

It is noteworthy that there is a great difference in the detailing of the figures and greenery due to adjustments in the density of the warp threads.

The frame border, an imitation of a wooden frame as was common in the eighteenth century, was used around several versions attributed to Oudenaarde. [IDM]

1. Marillier archive, Teniers II.
2. In 1710, the field marshal Albrecht Konrad Finck von Finckenstein was elevated by Joseph I to the rank of Count of the Holy Roman Empire. He was also a Knight of the Order of the Black Eagle (Prussia) and a member of the Brandenburg Bar of the Order of St John.
3. The castle was destroyed in 1945.
4. Marillier 1932, p. 90.
5. Christie's, London, 15 December 1932, no. 95. No descriptions are given of the two other tapestries, so we do not know if the tapestry depicting resting peasants was also sold at that time.
6. Getty Archive, French & Co., GCPA 0241646-0241647.
7. Christie's, London, 15 December 1994, lot 316.
8. Vermeiren-Vanwelden 1998, pp. 215–227.
9. De Meüter 1998, pp. 229–238.
10. Vermeiren-Vanwelden 1998, pp. 221–223.
11. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, p. 235–265; De Meüter 2016, pp. 278–283.
12. Idem, pp. 262–283, 408–411.
13. Marillier archive, Teniers II.
14. Amsterdam, Frederick Müller & Cie, 5 May 1922, no. 578.
15. Bruges, Carlo Bonte, 21 March 2018, no. 976.







[89.1]

[89]

## LES PORTIÈRES DES DIEUX

Two tapestries

France, Paris, Manufacture Royale des Gobelins, 1722–28

Signature LE FEBVRE of the workshop of Jean Le Febvre

Design by Claude III Audran (1658–1734), 1699

Wool and silk; 8 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 2 & Tp 3

Provenance: 1967, purchased from French & Co., New York<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Brussels 1967, no. 353;

Delmarcel in Aanwinsten Brussel 1974, no. 56.

The two tall and narrow tapestries belong to a series of a total of eight subjects with a decor made up of grotesques, combined with allegorical representations of the four elements and the four seasons, each linked to a god (Air/Juno; Earth/Diana; Water/Neptune; Fire/Jupiter; Spring/Venus; Summer/Ceres; Autumn/Bacchus; Winter/Saturn). These two represent the respective combinations of Summer/Ceres and Winter/Saturn. Each season is figured by a combination of a god, zodiac signs, attributes and activities of the season, and the accompanying fruits.

The new series was commissioned by Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646–1708), First Architect and Superintendent of Buildings to the King. In 1699, he was responsible for the reopening of the Manufacture Royale des Meubles de la Couronne and he developed a new strategy. Five years earlier, the company had closed due to financial difficulties. From now on, the company would not only weave wall tapestries for the residences of King Louis XIV, but also for other wealthy people. These tapestries were specifically conceived to decorate the wide interior doors of the castles.

The commission for the design of the first series according to this new philosophy, the *Portières des dieux*, was given to Claude III Audran the Younger (1658–1734) in 1699. For the figures, he was assisted by Louis de Boulogne the Younger (1654–1733) and Michel II Corneille (1642–1708). The animals were provided by the famous animal painter, François Desportes (1661–1743).<sup>2</sup>

Audran first worked for his uncle Claude II Audran, a

painter and collaborator of Le Brun, Jouvenet and Coypel. In 1699, he was appointed painter to King Louis XIV. Arabesques and grotesques formed the bulk of his decorative language.<sup>3</sup>

Many of his decorations in buildings were destroyed, but thousands of drawings survived. The surviving tapestries made to his designs also bear witness to his talent. He brought about a break with the older designs of Charles Le Brun (cat. 69) and enhanced the profile of the decorative arts.

The composition with an airy portico architecture was probably inspired by the series *Triumphs of the Gods* woven by the same workshop. These cartoons were painted from 1684 onwards by Noël Coypel (1628–1707), but he based his work on the Brussels Renaissance series owned by the King and designed by Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564) and other collaborators of Raphael (1493–1520).<sup>4</sup> Audran's version is clearly less overloaded and could more easily be incorporated into customers' interiors.

The choice of the subject and the execution method were certainly also determined by the search for a new target audience. The patron who commissioned the tapestry was able to choose from gold or a variety of colours of silk (pink, blue or daffodil yellow) for the background.<sup>5</sup> Three different framed borders were available, the first two of which were designed by Audran.

The series was produced in two periods, between 1700 and 1736 and again from 1771 to 1789. A total of 30 editions were woven, accounting for 235 pieces in total. They were produced in several workshops, in both high and low warp. Because of the preserved records and the small variations, we know that the pieces discussed here were woven with high warp and can be dated fairly precisely.<sup>6</sup> This edition from the workshop of Jean Le Febvre was woven between 1722 and 1728 on high-warp looms without gold thread.

The imitations of sculpted wooden mouldings are bronze coloured with gold effects. They are fully decorated with a succession of ornaments, the most striking of which are shell motifs in the corner, in the emerging rocaille style. In the centre of each border, different putti are in action, each encased in a cartouche. The border used here belongs to the first type.



[89.1]

**CERES OR THE SUMMER**

349 × 256 cm

Inv. Tp 2

An airy portico, on a plain narcissus-coloured ground, is decorated with rich cloth and surrounded by flower and fruit festoons, sometimes held up by birds. In the hanging decoration, suspended from branches with fruits, one distinguishes on the left the sign of Cancer and on the right that of Virgo. The sign of the Lion appears in the medallion at the top. The whole is completed with two birds' nests above.

Centrally, under the open portico, Ceres, the goddess of summer, sits on a cloud, holding a corn sheaf in her right hand and a torch in her left. She is flanked by a boy with a sickle in hand. The pedestal below the goddess is decorated with attributes for the harvest period (sun hat, tools), children at play with attributes typical of the summer, and a dog in the middle. The consoles to the left and right of Ceres are decorated with jugs and braided bowls with rabbits next to them.

*Commentary*

Numerous examples were found in auction catalogues and collections. Ten copies are kept in the Mobilier National in Paris alone. Some deviate from the original drawing due to adjustments to other dimensions required by the customer. If the requested height was considerably lower and/or the width was narrower, the result would inevitably have been less balanced.<sup>7</sup> Differences can also be noticed in the details, however. Sometimes ears of corn are located under the front legs of the dog at the bottom, and/or the postures of the rabbits left and right on the consoles can be different.<sup>8</sup> Both versions in two series were already being produced by the first workshop in 1700.<sup>9</sup>

[89.2]

**SATURN OR WINTER**

Signature LE FEBVRE from the workshop of Jean Le Febvre

346 × 241 cm

Inv. Tp 3

A similar portico to that on 89.1 is placed in the middle of the composition.

The sign of Capricorn hangs on holly branches to the left, and that of Pisces to the right. The sign of Aquarius appears in the medallion at the top. The whole is completed with owls above.

Centrally, under the open portico, Saturn, god of winter, sits in profile on a cloud, holding his scythe in his right hand. In the clouds below him, a child is blowing the wind while another child, on the right, is generating the snow. The pedestal under the god is decorated with a brazier on a tripod with playing children with attributes specific to the winter and with a monkey in the centre, wearing blue trousers and playing with a fool's cap and tambourine. The consoles to the left and right of Saturn are decorated with various ornaments, including headgear, masks, a lantern, a cat and a dog, or naked cat.

*Commentary*

The tapestry renders the original sketch very well (National Museum, Stockholm, fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> This is also the case with a wide replica preserved in the V&A Museum in London (inv. T 767-1950).<sup>11</sup> The only difference lies in the fact that the decoration was supplemented along both sides with extra festoons and volutes, without affecting the composition as a whole.

Numerous examples were found in auction catalogues and collections. Ten copies are kept in the Mobilier National in Paris. As in the case of Ceres, the details of some



[FIG. 1] Claude Audran III, *Saturn*, drawing, 1699. National Museum, Stockholm, inv. NMH CCI 161.



[89.2]

differ from those of the original drawing. On a number of examples, the owls at the top are developed differently, cats have become dogs or the monkey at the bottom is depicted differently.<sup>12</sup> The changes can already be seen in examples woven in 1701.<sup>13</sup> As in the case of Ceres, there are no explanations for these changes. [IDM]

1. These were most probably sold in Paris, Palais Galliera, on 19 June 1964, nos. 274B and 275D. Several examples from the series were sold at the same auction.  
2. Fenaille 1904, pp. 7, 29-33; Vittet & Brejon de Lavergnée 2010, p. 234.  
3. Duplessis 1892, pp. 36-40.  
4. Vittet & Brejon de Lavergnée 2010, nos. 114-115, 129.  
5. The first edition had a ground in gold, see Vittet & Brejon de Lavergnée 2010, no. 112.

6. Fenaille 1904, pp. 7, 29-33; Vittet & Brejon de Lavergnée 2010, nos. 112, 113, 120, 121, 122, 123, 132, 134, and 33.  
7. Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 18-19 November 1981, no. 163 (261 x 226). See also Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GOB-239-000 (290 x 237); GMTT-161-002 (354 x 178) and IAT 13-000 (397 x 195).  
8. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 636-000, inv. GMTT 168-001, inv. GMTT 169-001, inv. IAT 13-000 and GOB 239-000.  
9. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 636-000 and inv. GMTT 350-001.  
10. The Nationalmuseum in Stockholm preserves a fund of 2000 drawings, including a study for Saturn, the dimensions of which are 34 x 25 cm (inv. NMH CCI 161). Several drawings and preliminary studies in various stages of the representation *Autumn/Bacchus* have also been preserved.  
11. It was woven in 1740-1760 and fitted with a different frame border. Its width is 305 cm, that is to say, 64 cm wider. Its height is 325 cm.  
12. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. IAT 101-000, GMTT 164-000, IAT 15-000 and GMTT 170-001.  
13. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 164-000 and inv. GMTT 170-001.





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## MARS AND VENUS

France, Beauvais, 1754–1779

Signature A.C.C. BEAUVAIS, preceded by the French lily, from the workshop of André-Charlemagne Charron (active 1754–1779)

Design by François Boucher (1703–1770)

Wool and silk; 365 × 375 cm; 8 to 9 warps per cm

Inv. 8986

Provenance: 1955, purchased from the art dealer Delplace, Brussels

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 92–93, no. 111; Brussels 1994 B, pp. 82–84.

We witness the clandestine meeting between Mars and Venus, before they are caught by Venus's husband Vulcan (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, IV, 171–189).

In the centre, Venus looks from a settee at the half-naked Mars next to her. Two putti are holding up a mirror. Mars points to it, as well as to his armour on the stone floor in front of him. Behind them hangs an elegantly draped lilac-coloured cloth. On the far right, two of the Graces are observing the scene. In front of them, too, is a purple cloth draped over a console down to the floor. They are surrounded by beautiful vases. The crowning glory on the right is a large baroque vase and a sculpture with a fountain. On the left-hand side, there are also beautiful fountains at a pool of water in which an elegant third Grace is washing a cloth. In the sky, putti with doves are playing around the chariot of Venus.

### Commentary

*Mars and Venus* forms part of the series *Amours des Dieux* (Loves of the Gods), first created in Beauvais between 1747 and 1749. It became a much sought-after series that was repeated until 1778.<sup>1</sup> This tapestry was first woven in 1750.

François Boucher painted no fewer than forty-six compositions for six series for the manufacturer between 1736 and 1755. The *Amours des Dieux* originated in 1747. The business partners, Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755) and Nicolas Besnier (1686–1754), who had led the company since 1734, renewed the range of cartoons and adapted them to the latest tastes of their customers. A shift

therefore occurred both in the choice of themes and in the way they were elaborated.

Partly due to the contribution of Boucher, the workshop achieved its greatest successes and made its presence felt on an international level.<sup>2</sup> After Oudry's death, Boucher succeeded him as painter at the Gobelins. André-Charlemagne Charron was appointed director in 1754 and continued to use the existing cartoons. It was not until 1760 that new cartoons were woven. Under his direction, the Beauvais workshop worked mainly for the court of Louis XV (1710–74), primarily for the Foreign Department. In 1779, Charron was relieved of his position.<sup>3</sup>

The series *Loves of the Gods* consisted of nine designs, each depicting a love affair between two gods. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were the source of inspiration. The series was chosen several times as a diplomatic gift. According to the workshop's records, five series were woven for the King himself. These are among the largest expenditures of the Court and the royal coat of arms was applied to them. The piece in the museum's collection is one of those large expenditures, and Pascal Bertrand pointed out that the coat of arms was later removed.<sup>4</sup> The work is said to have been part of the collection of Mme. Hériot and came from the old, entailed estate of Leuchtenberg, in Bavaria.<sup>5</sup>

In total, *Mars and Venus* has been woven thirteen times.<sup>6</sup> Other scenes of the series even achieved as many as seventeen new editions. Some preparatory drawings for the series have been preserved.<sup>7</sup> Of those, a number of them specifically relate to *Mars and Venus*.<sup>8</sup> In 1754, an inventory in Beauvais mentions Boucher's nine canvases and the designs for the borders. In 1820, an inventory lists the number of strips for the nine cartoons. The cartoons present were no longer complete.<sup>9</sup> The three strips for *Mars and Venus* were sold in 1829 and have not been seen since.<sup>10</sup> A preparatory sketch in mirror image has been preserved in Cambridge (fig. 1).<sup>11</sup> There are differences with the tapestry such as the lack of water in the foreground and the items placed in the upper register. The postures of the putti around the chariot of Venus differ and naked figures have been added next to the baroque vase. Boucher used the couple in a similar pose combined with the cupid with mirror in his painting of Rinaldo and Armida in the Louvre.<sup>12</sup>





**[FIG. 1]** François Boucher, *Mars and Venus*, oil on canvas, c. 1736–1755. The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, inv. PD.14-1980.

Alongside the monumentality of the whole, its most striking feature is the decorative way in which the composition is elaborated. The delicacy and lightness of the whole is sustained by the colour palette and the use of a lot of silk.

The borders are an imitation of a wooden and gilded frame border, as was customary in this period. The corners are emphasised by asymmetrical scroll motifs. [IDM]

1. Standen 1986, p. 65.
2. Idem, pp. 39–46.
3. Idem, pp. 49–52.
4. Written communication from Pascal-François Bertrand. When compared to other preserved editions without woven-in arms preserved in

Rome, Quirinale (see Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 524) and Paris, Mobilier National (inv. GMTT 388), it is clear that in the middle, an entire section of the sky was rewoven. Thanks to the skill of the weavers, this is not noticeable.

5. Written communication from Pascal-François Bertrand. For more on this, see a future publication by Charissa Bremer-David and Pascal-François Bertrand, *Registres de fabrication de la manufacture de Beauvais, 1724–1793*. This is a publication of the Mobilier national, the Getty Center and the Université Bordeaux-Montaigne.
6. Forti Grazzini 1994, pp. 523–526.
7. Joulie 1988.
8. Forti Grazzini 1994, pp. 523.
9. Standen 1986, pp. 65–66.
10. Forti Grazzini 1994, p. 523.
11. Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. PD.14-1980.
12. Standen 1986, pp. 74–77.







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[91]  
THE BIRDCAGE

France, Aubusson, 1755–70  
Workshop of Jean-François Picon (1702–1761)  
or his son, Pierre Picon de Laubard (†1821)  
Design by Jean Joseph Dumons (1687–1779)  
Wool and silk; 300 × 325 cm; 5 to 6 warps per cm  
and 7 to 8 warps per cm for the faces  
Inv. v2918

Provenance: 1911, bequest of Gustave Vermeersch

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1926, pp. 69–71;  
Crick-Kuntziger 1956: p. 93, no. 112; Bertrand 2013, pp. 89–113.

Two orientally inspired constructions stand in a rather sparsely outlined landscape, in which only palm trees suggest an exotic décor. On the right in the background, a man looks on from within an open pavilion built on stilts in the water. At the front left, an exotic warrior is opening a beautiful, large birdcage decorated with dragons and Fenghuang, the Chinese mythological bird. Some multi-coloured birds are escaping. A tall lady stands next to the birdcage and looks on with a bird on her hand. Next to her, two small children are playing. A closed parasol lies at her feet. With a few small elements, Dumons has succeeded in sketching an oriental framework.

The series with Chinese-inspired, exotic scenes was one of the success stories featuring amongst the tapestries produced in Aubusson after 1754. From 1730 onwards, the quality of production was improved considerably. An important contribution towards this resulted from the king's appointment of the painter and draughtsman Jean-Joseph Dumons (1687–1779). He was commissioned to produce paintings each year that could be used as patterns for the tapestry industry. He remained active in Aubusson until 1755.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the cartoons, attention was also paid to the dyeing of the silk and the wool, resulting in an increasing quality of production. One of the most important merchant weavers in Aubusson, Jean-François Picon, played a part in this.<sup>2</sup>

The arrival of Dumons heralded a boom in production in Aubusson. He also collaborated with François Boucher (1703–1770) (cat. 90) for the cartoons used in Beauvais.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1732 and 1755, he drew twenty series for the Manufacture d'Aubusson, and also two for the workshop of Felletin.<sup>4</sup>

One of his creations was a variation on the *Tenture Chinoise*<sup>5</sup> series, originally drawn by Boucher for Beauvais between 1743 and 1775.<sup>6</sup> In 1742–43 he painted the cartoons for the Beauvais<sup>7</sup> workshop according to Boucher's design drawings. The version for Aubusson, a second Chinese series, fell outside his official brief and was a private commission from Jean-François Picon in around 1754.<sup>8</sup> Unlike the six pieces of a series in Beauvais, the series in Aubusson consists of nine pieces, eight intermediate pieces and three upper-door pieces. The number of designs is so large that two groups of cartoons are thought to have been used.<sup>9</sup> One of the new topics was the *Bird Cage*.<sup>10</sup>

The series was a great success and at least one hundred and forty tapestries were woven from it.<sup>11</sup> Several examples woven to this cartoon have been preserved, however none of them bear any marks.<sup>12</sup> The original cartoon was faithfully followed in all cases. Only the dimensions differ slightly.

The border is an imitation of a wooden, gilded and polychromed frame border, as was customary in that period. A continuous decorative motif forms the narrow innermost frame, while red and blue cabochons, surrounded by curled acanthus leaves, alternate. Picon also ordered this design from Dumons.<sup>13</sup>

The same frame borders were found around other pieces with representations of the Chinese series.<sup>14</sup> A single representation of *The Tea* has the name "Picon" woven-in next to M D AUBUSSON.<sup>15</sup>

That the example with the birdcage, without marks, comes from the Picon's workshop is beyond dispute. They were among the most important weavers and dealers in Aubusson.<sup>16</sup> They had a large trading area via traders in Paris and other important European cities.<sup>17</sup> Through these contacts, they knew the taste of their customers and their preference for exotic subjects.<sup>18</sup> The new Chinese series was distinctively decorative and, with its playful and airy character, was fully in keeping with the spirit of the age.



The tapestry was conserved in 2019–20 as part of a project on the conservation and restoration of tapestries, organised by the textile workshop of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, in collaboration with the Périer-d'Ieteren Foundation, supported by the King Baudouin Foundation, and the Royal Museums of Art and History.

During treatment, it was found that the weave is very uneven. The quality of the raw materials also varies very considerably, due to the differing thicknesses of the woolen threads and the different lustre with the silk threads.<sup>19</sup> [IDM]

1. Chevalier & Bertrand 1988, pp. 103, 118–120.
2. Idem, p. 104; Bertrand 2013, pp. 60–61.
3. Chevalier & Bertrand 1988, p. 108.
4. Idem, p. 109.
5. Bertrand 2013, p. 95.
6. Idem, pp. 86–87.
7. Collection of Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie de Besançon, inv. D843.1.1-D843.1.7 and 983.191.
8. Bertrand 2013, p. 89.
9. Idem, pp. 86, 90–93.
10. Chevalier & Bertrand 1988, p. 112; Bertrand 2013, p. 91.
11. Bertrand 2013, p. 89.
12. For an overview of the known copies of the series, see Bertrand 2013, pp. 100–110. A copy without borders is kept in the Louvre, Département des Objets d'Art. For an illustration, see Brive 1989, no. 18 and Chevalier & Bertrand 1988, no. 18. Another example without borders was auctioned at Christie's in Monaco, 05 December 1993, no. 192, at Christie's, London, 13 December 1996, no. 21 and at Drouot, 7 December 2018, no. 287. A narrower replica was at Versailles, Palais des Congrès, 3 March 1968, no. 168 C, as part of a series of three. A copy with the same border was auctioned in Geneva, 3 May 2014, no. 732 and a slightly wider edition at Drouot, 25 March 1982, no. 104. There was one in the Denver Art Museum, inv. E-627 and another was auctioned in Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Palais Galliera, 11 June 1965.
13. Bertrand 2013, p. 95.
14. See Crick-Kuntziger 1926, p. 69, and Bertrand 2013, pp. 100–111.
15. See Crick-Kuntziger 1926, p. 69, and Aubusson 1983, no. 16. An example of *The Tea* without border in the Louvre bears traces of the mark M R D P I C O N. *The Tea* was also one of three cartoons whose origin could not be traced back to Boucher.
16. Bertrand 2013, pp. 60–73.
17. Idem, p. 61.
18. Idem, pp. 86, 89–90.
19. The Conservation treatment report by Michelle De Brueker, conservator at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage. This observation is remarkable because the literature and auction catalogues usually emphasise that the quality of these tapestries is very high and that they are among Aubusson's best work.





## CHRIST ON THE CROSS

Paris, Manufacture Royale des Gobelins, 1775

Signature LANIE 1774 of the workshop

of Etienne Lanier (c. 1698–c. 1783)

Designer unknown

Wool and silk; 93 × 54 cm; 8 warps per cm

Inv. 7846

Provenance: 1945, purchased from an art dealer in Brussels

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1955, pp. 39–42;

Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 93–94, no. 113.

The crucifixion of Christ is represented as a *trompe l'oeil* of a sculpted cross standing alone against a dark background. Above his head is a kind of parchment with the letters I.N.R.I. Below the cross writhes a snake with an apple close to its open mouth. This is a reference to the temptation of Eve and the original sin for which, according to Christian doctrine, Jesus died on the cross.

A sad, even frightening atmosphere accompanies the depiction of a sculpted crucifix on a black background. The fineness and regularity of the weaving is striking. At the end of the eighteenth century, the *Manufacture Royale des Gobelins* started to produce small-sized pictures as a genre in themselves. Existing paintings were regularly used as models and portraits also formed part of these smaller pieces of work.

The dating of 1775 and the name of the weaver are important clues that enable us to situate the work. Marthe Crick-Kuntziger refers to unpublished archival records that identified the weaver and the work.<sup>1</sup> Etienne Lanier/Lanié worked as a workshop manager of a high-warp workshop at the *Manufacture Royale des Gobelins*.<sup>2</sup> He was the third generation in that position. His name was found on two other small-format works: a painting by Raphael, dated 1746, and a portrait of a young lady, dated 1724.<sup>3</sup> A *Notre Seigneur en croix*, dated 1744, is listed in 1766 in the catalogue of the sale that took place after the death of Madame de Pompadour,<sup>4</sup> under the name *Lainé*. Fenaille links this to a similar representation based on a model by Jean-Baptiste van Loo, dated 1731 and woven by Cozette at the Gobelins in 1771, but the attitude of Christ as well

as the background is totally different.<sup>5</sup> The author also mentions a document from 1775 requesting an allowance for the daughter of Etienne Lanier. At that time, he was seventy-seven years old and was still working with the Gobelins on the most difficult pieces. As an example of his skill, reference is made to a Christ which he wove, and which was given a place in the chamber of the late Dauphin. In view of the woven-in date and the nature of the depiction, it is possibly the same or a very similar piece.<sup>6</sup> [IDM]

1. Crick-Kuntziger 1955, pp. 39–42.

2. *Idem*, p. 42, note 7.

3. *Idem*, p. 41.

4. Fenaille 1907, p. 338; Göbel 1928 I, p. 194.

5. Fenaille 1907, pp. 338, 346–347; Göbel 1928 I, p. 194, and II, fig. 191.

6. Fenaille 1907, p. 349; Göbel 1928, I, p. 195; Crick-Kuntziger 1955, pp. 41–42, with the full text in note 7.



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[93]

## PORTRAIT OF CATHERINE II OF RUSSIA

Paris, Manufacture Royale des Gobelins (?), 1782–96  
 After a painting by Fedor Rokotov (1735–1808)  
 Wool and silk; 83 × 65.5 cm; 9 warps per cm  
 Inv. 8332

Provenance: 1946, bequest of Baroness Lemonnier

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 94, no. 114.

Catherine II is represented in bust and slightly in profile in gala dress. She wears the great ribbon, which is partially covered by the chain of the Order of St Andrew, instituted by Peter the Great. Her hair with long curls is decorated with a diadem. Her cloak is finished with ermine and the neckline of her dress with lace and a decorative pin.

The oval shape is framed in a sculpted and gilded frame. At the top, it is decorated with the Imperial Russian eagle, on which is a heart-shaped shield with the letter *Е* (the first letter of her name in Russian).

The tapestry was framed in a custom-made wooden frame. The frame is beautifully sculpted with references to the person portrayed.

The *Manufacture Royale des Gobelins* started to produce small-size pictures as a genre in themselves at the end of the eighteenth century. In their wake, they were also woven in smaller local workshops, such as in St Petersburg or San Michele in Rome (cat. 94, 95). These smaller pieces of work were often modelled upon well-known paintings, including portraits. Finishing them off by fitting a beautiful frame put them on the same level as paintings. They were exquisite gifts.



[FIG. 1] *Portrait of Catherine II of Russia*, Paris, Manufacture Royale des Gobelins (?), 1782–96. Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. T 15576.



[FIG. 2] *Portrait of Catherine II of Russia*, St Petersburg workshop, after 1782. Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. ЭРТ-16192.





[FIG. 3] Fedor Rokotov, *Portrait of Catherine II of Russia*, oil on canvas, 1770. Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. ЭРЖ-3283.

One of the portraits that was repeatedly woven was that of Catherine II, Empress of Russia (1729–96). Fenaille mentions an example from the workshop of Pierre-François Cozette (1714–1801), which was kept in the palace of Tsarkoé-Selo in 1786.<sup>1</sup> Crick-Kuntziger also lists several examples that have been preserved. Some have a frame and some do not.<sup>2</sup> No known example bears any marks.<sup>3</sup> Comparison indicates that they always used the same cartoon and no compositional differences between the editions can be identified. A specimen in the Hermitage, St Petersburg (inv. Т 15576) (fig. 1), for example, in a simpler oval frame, also displays the same colour shades. But auctioned copies also share the same characteristics.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the woven portraits are attributed to the St Petersburg workshop (inv. ЭРТ-16192) (fig. 2). The Imperial Workshop was run by weavers from the Gobelins. There, too, they devoted themselves to weaving portraits of members of the court. According to Heinrich Göbel, Catherine's portrait in bust was woven there from 1782 onwards.<sup>5</sup> Since the same cartoon was used each time, it is difficult to determine the exact origin. When making a comparison, we can only agree with our colleagues who noted that the effect of the shadows in the Russian version is less subtle.<sup>6</sup>

In 1782, three such portraits, woven by Cozette in the Gobelins, were delivered to Catherine II. It is striking that the model would have been woven simultaneously in Paris and St Petersburg. Catherine II was very satisfied with the result. She wrote to her friend, Baron Grimm, "Ils sont les plus beaux du monde" (They are the most beautiful things in the world). The number of known woven portraits exceeds the number of three. Since such portraits were important as diplomatic gifts, it is very likely that Catherine ordered further copies.<sup>7</sup> Her interest may have encouraged the workshop in St Petersburg to weave their own versions.

The cartoon was based on a painting by Fedor Rokotov created in 1770 (fig. 3).<sup>8</sup> The same hairstyle and clothing with lace at the neckline and the ermine robe can be found on those versions.<sup>9</sup> [IDM]

discussed here is from the Gobelins. In the collections of the Hermitage Museum, she has both a version woven at the Gobelins and another woven in St Petersburg. In her opinion, the shadows in the latter are less delicately executed in the work produced in St Petersburg. Crick-Kuntziger also assumes that in the examples from St Petersburg, Catherine II has harsher features, see Crick-Kuntziger 1956, p. 95.

7. Paris 1986–1987, no 494.

8. Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. ЭРЖ-3283.

9. According to Crick-Kuntziger, the painter of her portrait was Dimitri Levitzky (1736–1822). His portrait of 1783 is too late to have served as a model, as the first delivery was made in 1782. Catherine is also wearing different clothes.

1. Fenaille 1907, p. 351.

2. Crick-Kuntziger 1956, pp. 94–95.

3. Göbel mentions several examples of portraits woven by Cozette (see Göbel 1928, pp. 192–194), but none of these involved a portrait of Catherine II. Portraits of Louis XV and Queen Maria Leszcinska, framed and signed "Cozette 1769", were auctioned, see London, Sotheby's, 9 November 2006, no. 5.

4. One has no frame while the other has a similar frame, on which the eagles are replaced by a crown, see London, Sotheby's, 11 June 2003, no. 79 and 9 November 2006, no. 61. Other copies are mentioned alongside both entries.

5. Göbel 1933–34, p. 243 and fig. 196a. Two of them are thought to have been woven in 1782, and this is not a reference to the Gobelins versions.

6. According to our colleague, Titiana Lechovich, the example being



## MATER DOLOROSA – OUR LADY OF SORROWS

Italy, Rome, Workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele,  
led by Pietro Ferloni, mid-eighteenth century

Designer unknown

Wool and silk; 74 × 70 cm; 7 warps per cm

Inv. Tx 2464

Provenance: 1897, gift from Mrs Montefiore

The woman with a tearful face, surrounded by a halo on a plain background, refers to representations of Mary looking up to the crucified Christ. Our Lady of Sorrows is presented here in a very sober manner. The portrait is small and surrounded by a wide border. The reverse side shows that the original colours were quite a bit more vibrant and nuanced than the beige tones seen today.

During the course of the eighteenth century, small-scale representations of this type were woven in various production centres. Most of the related examples seem to have originated in Rome.<sup>1</sup> A praying Madonna with her head raised, as here, but cut off at breast height and with her hands crossed, is preserved in the Vatican. That piece was woven in the workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele and gifted in 1747 by Pope Benedict XIV (1740–58).<sup>2</sup>



[FIG. 1] Guido Reni, *Madonna Addolorata*, oil on canvas, 1630–1640. Galleria Corsini, Rome, inv. 284.

The workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele (see also cat. 95) was founded in 1710 by Pope Clement XI (1649–1721) and he called in the help of Parisian weavers. The workshop remained active until the end of the eighteenth century, weaving for successive Popes.<sup>3</sup> Pietro Ferloni was in charge from 1717 to 1770 and it is in this period that this devotional tapestry must have left the workshop.<sup>4</sup> They mainly worked on large decorative cycles, but devotional paintings were also taken as models. These could be contemporary designs, but well-known, older paintings were often used as examples. They were given as gifts by successive Popes.

For example, *l'Addolorata*, a famous painting by Guido Reni (1575–1642), was taken as a model on a number of occasions. Numerous versions and copies of this painting are in existence, but the best version is preserved in the Galleria Corsini in Rome (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup>

A very similar woven representation of the *Mater Dolorosa*, though in oval and mirror image, forms part of the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>6</sup>

The position of Mary's head displays strong similarities with the Madonna in a *Crucifixion* woven in the Workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele that bears the arms of Clement XII (1730–40).<sup>7</sup>

The imitation of a wooden framed border has been executed with considerable width, just like the painted versions. The fineness of the weaving and the baroque frame are highly successful in creating the impression of a painted representation.<sup>8</sup> [IDM]

1. Fellow researchers, Lucia Meoni and Concha Herrero Carretero, endorse this view.
2. Göbel 1928, II, p. 425 and fig. 460; de Strobel 1989, p. 59, fig. 55.
3. Göbel 1928, I, pp. 424–426; Guiffrey, Müntz & Pinchart 1878–1885, dl II, pp. 51–54; Ferrero Viale 1961, pp. 56–58; recent overview in De Strobel 1989, pp. 51–75.
4. De Strobel 1989, pp. 55–56, 59.
5. Inv. 284.
6. Inv. 88.3.8, Standen 1985, II, no. 146.
7. Vatican Museums, inv. 3771, see De Strobel 1989, p. 60 and fig. 58; Göbel 1928, II, p. 424 and fig. 449.
8. The remnants of a blue webbing that still surrounds the tapestry confirm that it was originally stretched on a support within a wooden frame.



[94]



## REST DURING THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Italy, Rome, Workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele, c. 1790  
Signature FILIPPO CETTOMAI R.[omae] F.[ecit] bottom left  
Silk; 68 x 57 cm; up to 12 warps per cm  
Inv. 1949

Provenance: 1871, purchased from M. Hanicq

Literature: Crick-Kuntziger 1942B; Crick-Kuntziger 1956,  
pp. 95–96, no. 115.

On the left, Our Lady is seated on the ground while she feeds and nurses the child Jesus. Next to her, St Joseph sits, looking on, leaning on his travel stick. The palm trees behind them refer to the legend that the palm trees bent their branches to hide them from Herod's soldiers who were pursuing them.<sup>1</sup> On the right, in front of the Holy

Family, is a young peasant couple. At the back right, we can see buildings on a hill.

Given its small size and the use of only silk for both the weft and warp, this scene is not woven to be used as a cushion or fireplace screen, but rather as a wall decoration to replace a painting.

The quality of the weaving is questionable. On the one hand, it is all in silk and fine, but the weaving is irregular and the hachures (hatching) seem to run randomly. The figures are also very angular. The piece lacks any refinement and must have been realised by a less talented weaver. The colour palette is mainly pastel and is completely different from the colours used in the Southern Netherlands.

The woven signature of Cettomai refers to the San Michele workshop in Rome. Three similar scenes are known with the same name woven into them.<sup>2</sup> Two belong to the collection of the Mobilier National in Paris



[95]



[FIG. 1] *Flight into Egypt*, Rome, workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele, Filippo Cettomai, c. 1790. Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GOB 151-000.



[FIG. 2] *Weaver at Work*, Rome, workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele, Filippo Cettomai, 1790. Victoria & Albert Museum, London, inv. T.36-1914.

and are slightly smaller, measuring 61 x 48. One depicts a *St Christopher*<sup>3</sup> and the second a different version of the *Flight into Egypt* (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> Here, the Holy Family is preceded on its way by an angel. The figures are very similar to those depicted in the tapestry *Rest During the Flight into Egypt*. The background is also similar, with a road with palms on the left and buildings on a hill on the right.

A third example is known, now at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (fig. 2), which bears a date of 1790 next to the signature, in which the weaver depicts himself at work on a high-warp loom.<sup>5</sup> These were the looms used at San Michele.<sup>6</sup>

The workshop of the Ospedale di San Michele was active from 1710 until the end of the eighteenth century and wove tapestries for successive Popes.<sup>7</sup> It was, however, also permitted to weave on behalf of private customers.<sup>8</sup>

From 1767 onwards, Felice Cettomai became papal tapestry producer there and had a specific status.<sup>9</sup> He was one of the most skilled weavers in the workshop and was the only one who was allowed to weave in his name during that period.<sup>10</sup> As before, they mainly produced copies of paintings (cat. 94) or of old Brussels tapestries.<sup>11</sup> In that period, the quality declined both in terms of drawing and technical execution.<sup>12</sup>

Several authors suspect that Felice was a relative of Filippo Cettomai.<sup>13</sup> The latter worked for the workshop between 1790 and 1796.<sup>14</sup> His small tapestries do not show bravura, but are rather popular in nature. The comparison was made with embroidery and the result gives the impression that no model had to be followed.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned, the workshop in Rome often wove famous paintings, but the model of the *Rest on the Road to Egypt* has not been found. [IDM]

1. Kirschbaum 1994, 2, col. 45.
2. M. Crick-Kuntziger made the connection with these other works in 1942.
3. Paris, Mobilier National, inv. GOB 152-000. Signed Filippus Cettomai. It was acquired together with the other example in 1811.
4. Inv. GOB 151-000, signed "Filippus Cettomai Romanu".
5. Inv. T.36-1914, signed "Philippus Cettomai F[ecit] MDCCXC". Formerly belonging to the collection of Samuel I. H. Fitzhenry, see Thomson 1906, p. 453, data reincorporated in Thomson 1930, pp. 468–469; Göbel 1928, 1, p. 426; De Strobel 1989, p. 72.
6. Guiffrey, Müntz & Pinchart 1878–1885, vol. II, p. 51.
7. Göbel 1928, 1, pp. 424–426; Guiffrey, Müntz & Pinchart 1878–1885, dl II, p. 51–54; Ferrero Viale 1961, pp. 56–58; recent overview in De Strobel 1989, pp. 51–75.
8. Most of the tapestries that left the workshop depicted Christian themes, but landscapes with small figures and scenes of country life were also woven there, see Ferrero Viale 1961, pp. 55–56 and figs. 71–72; Göbel 1928, II, figs., pp. 444–445; De Strobel 1989, fig. 57.
9. De Strobel 1989, pp. 68–72. The finds in the archives made by De Strobel contradict earlier publications, in which it is said that he was put in charge of the workshop from 1771, see Guiffrey, Müntz & Pinchart 1878–1885, dl II, p. 53; Thompson 1930, p. 468.
10. A *Nativity* is kept in the Vatican Museums, inv. 3713, with his signature, see De Strobel 1989, pp. 68–69; Ferrero Viale 1961, p. 57.
11. De Strobel 1989, pp. 68, 70; Ferrero Viale 1961, p. 57.
12. De Strobel 1989, p. 68; Guiffrey, Müntz & Pinchart 1878–1885, vol. II, p. 53.
13. Müntz refers to the piece in the museum and according to him, it was purchased from M. Fulgence. The origin of this information is unknown, see idem, note 8; Ferrero Viale 1961, p. 57; Göbel 1928, p. 18 regarding the marks.
14. De Strobel 1989, p. 71.
15. Ferrero Viale 1961, p. 57.





-VI-

THE NINETEENTH &  
TWENTIETH CENTURIES



**A**FTER THE ANCIEN RÉGIME, tapestry production did not come to a complete standstill. In the French town of Aubusson, weaving continued on a small scale. In 1856, a new workshop was started in Ingelmunster (West Flanders) involving the Braquenié brothers – Alexandre (1812–1879) and Henri-Charles (1815–1897) – who came from Tournai. They had a trading house in Paris, from which they commissioned weaving to be performed in Aubusson and Felletin. On the initiative of Count Charles A. Descantons de Montblanc, Lord of the Castle in Ingelmunster, the Braquenié company was ultimately established there for a period of twelve years. After the departure of the brothers, the Ingelmunster weaving workshop continued to operate until the end of the nineteenth century. The museum owns a decorative panel from this workshop (cat. 98). The Braquenié brothers settled in Mechelen in 1868. Another decorative panel in neo-Renaissance style probably comes from their workshop (cat. 96). Willem Geets (1838–1919), a painter from Mechelen, designed cartoons for Braquenié. He had a predilection for historical painting and folk scenes. The preserved cartoons for the tapestries in the Gothic Hall of the Brussels Town Hall, painted in oil on canvas in 1876, and the two cartoons for the Senate are typical of his work (cat. 99). They refer to the glorious history of Brussels and Belgium.



[96]



[100]



[103]

A separate example in the collection is *The Nativity*, a tapestry made in Merton Abbey in England (cat. 100). Under the influence of William Morris (1834–1896) and the Arts and Crafts Movement, a new interest in crafts developed, including weaving techniques. Other traces of this renewed interest can be found in the collection in the form of the decorative tapestry entitled *Spring*, after a design by Paul Haesaerts (1901–1974) (cat. 102). He was the most productive designer in the workshop of Elisabeth de Saedeleer (1902–1972), founded under the initiative of her father, Valerius, in the 1920s in Etikhove. The workshop was ultimately invited by the Belgian government to participate in the World's Fair in Paris in 1937 by providing small-scale works. Large-scale tapestries were also displayed in the hall of honour. The cartoon *Le Doudou de Mons*, an oil on canvas designed by Rodolphe Strebelle (1880–1959) and woven by the Royal Manufacturers Braquenié, gives a good idea of this ambition on behalf of Belgium to bring tapestry back to the fore (cat. 103). That ambition was maintained when creating the Belgian pavilion in New York in 1938. Two tapestries after a design by Floris Jaspers (1889–1965), *Belgium* or *La Belgique ancienne* and *Dynastie* or *Belgique moderne*, were given on deposit and included in the collection (D9). They were woven by the De Wit workshop. Théophile de Wit (1863–1941) was apprenticed



to Braquenié in 1875 and established his own workshop in Mechelen in 1889. After the First World War, his son, Gaspard de Wit (1892–1971), became head of the Royal Manufacturers Gaspard de Wit. The *Forces Murales* movement provided a major impetus to the revival of tapestry art. Cartoons by the three protagonists, Roger Somville (1923–2014), Louis Deltour (1927–1998) and Edmond Dubrunfaut (1920–2007), were donated to the museum. Several rolls of paper cartoons by Peter Colfs (1906–1983) for the gigantic tapestry *The Action of the United Nations* – woven by the De Wit workshop and donated by the Belgian State to the United Nations in New York in 1952 – are also kept in reserve. When the weaving workshop of Georges Chaudoir (1890–1969) closed down, numerous rolls of paper cartoons designed by Michel Borin (°1933) and José Crunelle (1924–2012) were donated. The paper cartoons were not included in the catalogue.

The museum has a fine range of twentieth-century tapestries, including several examples from the 1930s to 1968 after designs by Jean van Noten (1903–1982) (cat. 104–106). From Julien Van Vlasselaer (1907–1982), the most productive Flemish designer of his day, the museum has the famous design known as *Venus* from the 1950s–60s (cat. 107). Designs by Dubrunfaut from the 1960s–80s and realised in various workshops, including that of De Wit workshop, are also represented (cat. 108–111). A tapestry by Gaspard de Wit from 1971 also forms part of the collection (cat. 112). [IDM]



[105]







[96]

[96]  
**PERGOLA**

Aubusson or Mechelen (?), second half of the nineteenth century  
 Braquenié workshop (?)

Designer unknown

Wool and silk; 236 × 345 cm; 8 to 9 warps per cm

Inv. 2017.0014

Provenance: 2017, purchased at DVC auction, Ghent

Under a pergola with female caryatids stands a beautiful table with a sculpted base that carries a large vase with bouquet. The architecture is centrally overgrown with grapevines and to the left and right are baskets of flowers. At the top, the pergola is crowned by a balustrade with a central bas-relief of a painter with a palette. With one hand, he points to a shield below him, on which there are three small shields.

The eclectic whole is typical of the Napoleon III style: the scroll and band work and caryatids refer to the Renaissance, and the border is an imitation of a wooden and gilded moulded framed border elaborated like the eighteenth-century examples.

Commentary

Representations of pergolas with vases of flowers beneath them had a long tradition in the production of tapestries in the Southern Netherlands from the mid-sixteenth century onwards (cat. 65).

A link can be established between this nineteenth-century creation and the eighteenth-century creation of Jean-Baptist Oudry (1686–1755) for a series first woven in Beauvais and then in Aubusson. In 1732, the series *Métamorphoses en animaux* was created.<sup>1</sup> In the scene, *The Palace of Circe*, a similar pergola construction with twisted female figures as pillars is combined with vases and bouquets.<sup>2</sup> Several preparatory drawings have been preserved<sup>3</sup> and in the collection of the tapestry firm Braquenié in Aubusson in the nineteenth century there were also eleven cartoon strips of the series, so the composition was certainly known to the firm.<sup>4</sup> Following the closure of most of the workshops after the Revolution, a certain amount of activity survived in the nineteenth century,

in particular due to the activities of the Braquenié workshop. Besides Aubusson and Paris, they were also active in Mechelen. After their period in Ingelmunster (cat. 98), they moved to Mechelen in 1868 to set up their own workshop (cat. 99). The depiction of the painter at the top, drawing attention on the shield of the Guild of St Lucas, is possibly a reference to Mechelen as the place of production.<sup>5</sup> [IDM]

1. Coural & Gastinel-Coural 1992, p. 43; Chevalier & Bertrand 1988, p. 153; Bertrand 1991.
2. Göbel 1928, p. 253 and pl. 274. Then in the Bernheimer collection.
3. Including in Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. RF 41020, recto and in private collections, see Bertrand 1991, pp. 102–103.
4. Bertrand 1991, p. 102 and notes 59 and 60; Aubusson 1983, no. 21; Bertrand 2013, pp. 216–219. One of the cartoons in grisaille to have been preserved was recently acquired by the Cité internationale de la tapisserie in Aubusson; the eight bands from the left side illustrated in *Connaissance des Arts* best show the structure of the pergola and the caryatids, see Dumont 1957, p. 55.
5. With thanks to Guy Delmarcel for the tip; a silver insignia of the guild is preserved in Antwerp which has almost completely the same shape and is dated 1825–1850; see Antwerp, DIVA, inv. S5378.



[97]  
GREENERY

France or Belgium (?), Braquenié company (?),  
final quarter of the nineteenth century  
Wool, silk and cotton; 303 × 134; 4 to 5 warps per cm  
Inv. G 492

Provenance: 1916, bequest by Godtschalck

A detailed tree with a large plant with acanthus leaves in front are the only motifs on this narrow tapestry. The background was kept sober. The border is beautifully decorated with acanthus and all kinds of attributes such as lambrequins, vases of flowers and baskets of fruit.

Despite its slightly different dimensions, the tapestry was conceived as such and was not reduced in size. Most likely it was used as a piece to be hung in between the windows.

All the ingredients are present to enable us to situate the tapestry at the end of the seventeenth century, including the design of the tree and the large plant in the foreground, as well as the composition of the border. Nonetheless, other elements are not in keeping with that date, which suggests that this is a nineteenth-century interpretation of an older model. For example, the drawing of both the greenery and the border has been kept very flat, and the plain inner and outer borders are disproportionately large overall.<sup>1</sup>

The tapestry entered the collection as long ago as 1916, but it has never been exhibited since. The fact that the colours are very well preserved may indicate that it was not much exhibited even before 1916.

A company to which copies of this type could be attributed is Braquenié, which was active in Paris and Aubusson and later also in Ingelmunster and Mechelen (cat. 96, 98, 99).<sup>2</sup> Important data are missing, so it is not possible to give a conclusive answer about the place in which the piece was produced.<sup>3</sup> [IDM]

1. With thanks to Mr Yvan Maes, Royal Manufacturers De Wit, for his evaluation.
2. According to information from Mr Maes, the drawing was not part of the catalogue of the de Wit company in Mechelen.
3. Between 1920 and 1950, the Woedstad company in Ghent devoted itself to the weaving of copies of old verdures, but to make them look older they used pale colours, which is not the case here. See De Meüter 1996, pp. 26–29.



[97]





[98]

[98]

## DECORATIVE PANEL

Belgium, Ingelmunster, end of the nineteenth century  
Signed *Ingelmunster* at the bottom of the left-hand border  
Designer unknown  
Wool, and cotton for the warp threads; 330 × 162 cm;  
10 warps per cm  
Inv. Tp 19

Provenance: 1985, purchased from the Thuy collection, Brussels by the museum and the non-profit organisation "The Friends of Jean van Noten"

Literature: Delmarcel 1988, p.133; Antwerp 1994, pp. 88–89.

A purely decorative background of diamonds filled with a cruciform motif. A floral basket flanked by garlands hangs from the arabesques at the top. The arabesques at the bottom support a brasero or brazier. The fine framing of the decor imitates a wooden panel. On the right-hand side is an additional frame. The creation was probably intended to be encased in panelling.

After Belgium's independence, the first workshop to start up again was a private initiative. Count Charles A. Descantons de Montblanc (1785–1861), Lord of the Castle in Ingelmunster (West Flanders) resided on a part-time basis in Paris. There, he met the Braquenié brothers, Alexandre (1812–1879) and Henri-Charles (1815–1897). Originally from Tournai, they had set up a trading company in Paris in 1824 and commissioned tapestries to be woven in Aubusson and Felletin. In 1857, the Count concluded an agreement with the Braquenié brothers to set up a workshop in Ingelmunster for the duration of twelve years. He would have a building constructed for that purpose near his castle. The Count's intention was to breathe new life into the industry that had been lost in Belgium and to offer new prospects to unemployed linen weavers, who were trained by weavers from Aubusson. Around 1860, more than fifty weavers had been trained and were active in the Tapisseries de Flandres. However, that number systematically decreased. It is noteworthy that the building itself was designed to accommodate four hundred employees.

After the Count's death in 1861, his wife took over. She continued the business in Ingelmunster after 1869, once the contract with Braquenié had expired.<sup>1</sup> After her death in 1889, her two sons continued to work, but from 1895 until the closure in 1914, there was very little production.<sup>2</sup> This *entrefenêtre* can be situated in this final period. Only a limited number of tapestries and designs and cartoons have been preserved.<sup>3</sup>

A great deal of attention was paid to the dyeing.<sup>4</sup> This, together with the high density of the weave, indicates that their intention was to deliver weaving of high quality. From a description, one can deduce that the weaving took place on horizontal looms.<sup>5</sup>

This decorative panel goes back to examples from Aubusson or Beauvais, more specifically to decorative elements of the models of Jean-Baptiste Huet (1745–1811)<sup>6</sup> or the ornamental drawings of the Parisian Henri Salembier (c. 1753–1820) from the end of the eighteenth century. [IDM]

1. In 1868, after their contract had expired, the Braquenié brothers relocated to Mechelen to start their own workshop where they used the weavers from Ingelmunster. They became major competitors, appearing opposite each other at exhibitions, see Verscheure 1988, pp. 95–99.
2. For an overview of their activity, see Verscheure 1988 and Antwerp 1994, pp. 83–84.
3. For details about the preserved works, see Verscheure 1988, pp. 113–132; Antwerp 1984, pp. 84–89; and Verscheure 2010, pp. 53–67. At the auction on 19 to 21 September 1986, some tapestries and cartoons were for sale. The curator, G. Delmarcel, had intended at the time to acquire a tapestry or cartoon for the museum, but the prices reached when the hammer fell were too high for the budget provided. A letter shows that in 1942, Count de Montblanc was already offering cartoons from his workshop to Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, see Archives Crick Correspondence 1930–42. The curator was allowed to make a choice. Evidently, this did not happen.
4. Antwerp 1994, p. 84; Verscheure 2010, p. 62.
5. Verscheure 1988, p. 105.
6. Chevalier & Bertrand 1988, pp. 175–179; Coural & Gastinel-Coural 1992, p. 59.





[99.1]

[99]

## TAPESTRY CARTOONS BY WILLEM GEETS

Eight cartoons  
Belgium, Mechelen, 1877–1879  
Cartoons by Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Oil on canvas  
Inv. Decorative painting 59–68

Provenance: Inscribed in the "Peinture decorative" inventory in 1892 as a gift from the Belgian government

Literature: Caen 2015.

[99.1]

### TAKING THE OATH AND GUILDS

Each cartoon from the series *Taking the Oath and Guilds* depicts a full-length male character. Each time, it concerns a dean of a guild who is depicted in sixteenth-century costume. The attributes with which they are painted indicate the guild to which they belong. The blazons on the collar decorated with flowers and ribbons also refer to this. The name of the craft is shown in both Dutch and French in decorative letters on a banderole under the feet of the characters.

**The Painters, 1879**  
Signature W. Geets INV. 1879 PINX. Malines (Mechelen) [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Signature "Manufre royale de Tapis Braquenie & Cie" [in mirror writing]  
Inscription in banderole "De Schilders/Les Peintres" (The Painters) [in mirror writing]  
350 × 160 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 59

**The Embroiderers, 1879**  
Signature W. Geets 1879 [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Signature H. Braquenie & Cie  
Inscription in banderole "Les Brodeurs/De Borduurders" (The Embroiderers) [in mirror writing]  
350 × 160 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 60

**The Brewers**  
Signature W. Geets [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Signature "Manufre royale de Tapis Braquenie & Cie" [in mirror writing]  
Inscription in banderole "Les Brasseurs/De Brouwers" (The Brewers) [in mirror writing]  
350 × 160 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 61

**The Goldsmiths, 1878**  
Signature W. Geets INV. 1878 [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Signature "Manufre royale de Tapis Braquenie & C" [in mirror writing]  
Inscription in banderole "De Goudsmeden/Les Orfèvres" (The Goldsmiths) [in mirror writing]  
350 × 160 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 63

**The Masons**  
Signature W. Geets PINX. [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Signature "Manufre royale de Tapis Braquenie & Cie Malines" [in mirror writing]  
Inscription in banderole "De Metsers/Les Maçons" (The Masons) [in mirror writing]  
350 × 160 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 64

**The Tapestry Weavers**  
Signature W. Geets [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
Signature "Braquenie & Cie" [in mirror writing]  
Inscription in banderole "Les Tapissiers/De Tapijtwevers" (The Tapestry Weavers) [in mirror writing]  
350 × 160 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 66





[99.1]



[99.1]





[FIG. 1] Gothic Hall with tapestries set *The Guilds*, Mechelen, workshop of Braquenié, 1877. Brussels Town Hall.

[99.2]

#### SMOKING ROOM OF THE BELGIAN SENATE

The cartoons depicting *Art* and *The Nobility* form a whole thanks to the architectural framework: the figures are placed on a continuous balcony with a Renaissance arch in front decorated with festoons. Each cartoon depicts two characters dressed in sixteenth-century attire. *Art* is symbolised by a seated lady flanked by a page carrying a laurel wreath with shield on a stake (cat. 96). The attributes depicted are the painter's palette, a lute, and a book. *The Nobility* is symbolised by a standing man bearing a banner with the Belgian lion on a lance. A standing girl carries a large shield containing several coats of arms. Other coats of arms are hanging on the column supporting the arch.

##### The Nobility

Signature W. Geets 1891 [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
350 × 140 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 67

##### Art

Signature W. Geets 1891 [in mirror writing] for Willem Geets (1838–1919)  
350 × 140 cm  
Inv. Peinture décorative 68

#### Commentary

A series of eight tapestries was commissioned for the Gothic Hall of the Brussels Town Hall in 1877. They are still preserved in situ (fig. 1).

In 1892, the complete series of cartoons was entrusted to the Royal Museums of Decorative and Industrial Arts, as the Museum of Art and History was known at the time. Indeed, a few months after the museum was established in the Cinquantenaire Park, a Royal Decree stipulated that decorative painting, cartoons, drawings and sketches were part of the collection policy.<sup>1</sup> This was a logical destination for the cartoons that the Belgian state had been allowed to keep after the tapestries had been woven.<sup>2</sup> The State had negotiated this after committing to bear half the price of the tapestries.<sup>3</sup> Two cartoons for the largest tapestries – each of which depicts two deans of a guild, namely the Archers together with the Arquebustiers, and the Crossbowmen together with the Fencers (respectively, inv. Peinture décorative 62 and 65) – disappeared after they were given on loan to the Royal Military Academy in 1958.<sup>4</sup>

The ordering of the tapestries was not the original idea for the decoration of the Gothic Hall. In the late 1860s, the Ministry of the Interior decided to have the room decorated with murals by the famous history painter, Henri Leys. Due to his unexpected death in 1869, this plan had to be abandoned and another project had to be found.

Around 1876, the choice fell on a series of tapestries on the history of Brussels and its most emblematic figures. For some reason unknown to us, this commission was cancelled and replaced in 1877 by the project *Taking the Oath* and *Guilds* by Willem Geets. It is thanks to the tapestry weaver Braquenié from Mechelen that the city of Brussels called on the Mechelen-based history painter.<sup>5</sup>

When Willem Geets was entrusted with this commission, he enjoyed a certain reputation in his native Mechelen, where he had been director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts since 1869. He trained as a painter at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, where his teachers included Jan Antoon Verschaeren (1803–1863) and Nicaise de Keyser (1813–1887). It was also during his stay in Antwerp that he came into contact with the history painter Henri Leys (1815–1869), who would become an important source of artistic inspiration for him. Leys stimulated his interest in portrait and historical painting. These are two important characteristics of this series.

After the contract between Count Charles A. Descantons de Montblanc and the brothers Alexandre and Henri Charles Bracquenié had expired (cat. 98), Bracquenié was allowed to set up weaving workshops in Belgium themselves, except in East and West Flanders. That is why they relocated their activity to Mechelen.<sup>6</sup> In December 1868, they bought the Hôtel Stassaert in the Stassaertstraat where they started their new production centre. Production got under way quickly and from 1871 onwards, they participated in important exhibitions where they displayed artistic tapestries.<sup>7</sup> For major commissions, Willem Geets was the most important artist called upon by the firm.

What is remarkable about the cartoons and the tapestries is that Geets opted to integrate realistic portraits of contemporaries. It is evident that the Bracqueniés and

their associates occupy an important share. It is therefore logical that the image of Henri-Charles Braquenié (1815–1897), the founder of the workshop, was chosen for the Tapestry Weavers. His sons Alexandre Paul (1856–1882) and Henri Alexandre Braquenié (1856–1883) were used for the Masons and the Embroiderers respectively. Philippe Dautzenberg (1849–1935), Henri's son-in-law, appears as a goldsmith. The portrait of the painter Louis Gallait (1810–1887) was chosen for the Painters, and for the Brewers, the historian Paul Frédéricq (1850–1920).<sup>8</sup>

The cartoons depicting *Art* and *The Nobility* were included in the Peinture décorative inventory, along with the cartoons depicting the *Oath-Taking* and the *Guild*, but the cartoon on the subject of the Nobility was incorrectly recorded as “La Guerre” (War).<sup>9</sup> The two cartoons are part of a series of six tapestries that the Braquenié firm wove to the designs of Willem Geets for the smoking room at the Belgian Senate between 1882 and 1891. The theme was ‘Belgian’ political history. *Art* and *The Nobility* are the smallest and last tapestries designed and woven for this commission. They hang on either side of the large salon window and are linked by the architectural framework of the composition. The allegories of *Art* and *The Nobility* were chosen as important elements in Belgian history, but do not depict great scenes as the other four tapestries do: Rubens receives Albrecht and Isabella in his studio in Antwerp; Philip of Artevelde, son of Jacob, is baptised by Philippine of Hainaut, Queen of England; Margaret of Parma receives the alliance of the nobles led by Bredero; and Philip the Good receives the Asian princes (fig. 2).<sup>10</sup> Whether those cartoons still exist is not known, but the tapestries still form part of the smoking room of the Belgian Senate. [WA]



[FIG. 2] *Philip the Good Receives the Asian Princes*, from *The Allegories of Art and The Nobility*, Mechelen, workshop of Braquenié, between 1882 and 1891, Brussels, Belgian Senate.

1. Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Instruction publique. Administration des Beaux-Arts. Musées royaux des arts décoratifs et industriels. Règlement organique, in *Moniteur belge, Journal officiel*, Royal Decree of 12 January 1889, p. 156.
2. Van Hammée 1897, p. 12.
3. Caen 2015, p. 127, note 8.
4. Royal Museums of Art and History, files concerning items on loan. The cartoons probably disappeared after the Royal Military Academy underwent extensive renovation between 1994 and 2008. Enquiries as to the current whereabouts of the cartoons did not yield any information.
5. Caen 2015, p. 127, note 8.
6. Els Maréchal in Antwerp 1994, p. 89.
7. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, p. 36.
8. Caen 2015, p. 127, note 8.
9. Royal Museums of Art and History, *Inventaire de la Peinture décorative. Nos 1 to 456*, n.p., no. 67.
10. Els Maréchal in Antwerp 1994, p. 93.





[99.2]



[99.2]



## NATIVITY

Great Britain, Merton Abbey, 1907  
 Design by John Henry Dearle (1859–1932), woven by  
 Walter Taylor and John Glassbrook of the firm Morris & Co.  
 Wool and silk; 134 × 217 cm; 5 warps per cm  
 Inv. 6893

Provenance: Purchased by the Belgian State in September 1912<sup>1</sup>  
 in London at the shop of Morris & Co in Oxford Street, under  
 director Harry Marillier, it was registered at the museum in the  
 “Inventaire des industries d’art Moderne” under inv. no. 335

Literature: Marillier 1927, p. 35, ill. 18.

The occasion for the purchase was the exhibition *Exposition d’art religieux d’art moderne*, which took place during the IVth “Salon de printemps” in May–June 1912 in the premises of the Cinquantenaire.<sup>2</sup> The intermediary for the museum was Dom Bruno Destrée, a monk at Keizersberg Abbey in Leuven and member of the organising committee.<sup>3</sup>

The oblong format confirms the tapestry’s use as an antependium. The figures were placed on a closed ground of flower bushes and large lilies. Only the carpet on which the figures are standing suggests any depth. In the centre appears Our Lady, sitting on a sort of throne with Christ



on her lap. She is flanked by two praying angels. Above their heads, a banderole reads: QVIA NATVS EST VOBIS SALVATOR [Because for you the Saviour of the world is born].

Commentary

William Morris (1834–1896) developed an interest in the Gothic period during his studies and established himself as a designer of applied arts. In 1861, with a few friends, he founded his first company to develop quality home-furnishing products on a commercial basis. In so doing, he set out to oppose industrial production and wanted to see a revival of craftsmanship inspired by the medieval guilds. In 1875, he became the sole owner of the firm which became known as Morris & Co. In 1881, he established the workshops in the old silk-weaving workshop at Merton Abbey.

Morris had an early interest in tapestry weaving, but it was not until 1877 that he installed the first high-warp loom. In 1879, he started weaving his first tapestry. From the start, he emphasised the importance of a good drawing. He was inspired by the verdures of the sixteenth century that he saw during his travels (cat. 33–34). For practical and commercial reasons, he also preferred to use verdures or greenery in the figurative representations, because weaving them was simpler and therefore faster.<sup>4</sup>

The collaboration with his friend, the painter Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833–1908), as designer of the figures for the tapestries was very successful. His designs were rewoven numerous times.<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the tapestry workshop followed the general trend of the firm in trying to operate in a more commercial way. The designs that were rewoven were mostly successful old drawings, together with some new creations by Dearle.<sup>6</sup> John Henry Dearle (1859–1932) was the first apprentice at the tapestry workshop and proved to be very gifted. He was soon given responsibility for the workshop. He had to convert Burne-Jones’ small design sketches into the cartoons. He also filled-in the grounds around the figures with greenery. He delivered his first design for a tapestry within Morris & Co. in 1887.<sup>7</sup> Dearle clearly had a predilection for greenery with hunting scenes. He also designed two religious scenes, the first of which was the *Nativity* in 1907.<sup>8</sup> This was also the first design that he produced with figures. The antependium, or altar front, fitted in with the firm’s strategy of promoting the use of tapestries for the decoration of churches.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of Burne-Jones is clearly recognisable in the figures.

A second edition was woven from the same drawing and is preserved in the church of St Mary the Virgin at

Dallington (Northampton). It was purchased in 1909 by Lord Spencer and given by him to the parish church.<sup>10</sup> When comparing the two, the composition is identical, but there is a difference in the design of the flower bushes in the foreground and in the elaboration of the lilies.<sup>11</sup> [IDM]

1. Marillier 1927, p. 35. According to the receipt in the purchase file 1213 “Salon de Printemps” in the archives of the Royal Museums of Art and History, the amount paid was £147.
2. In the catalogue published at the time, the tapestry is listed on page 43 under H. Dearle, and again on p. 45 under Morris W, with two different catalogue numbers.
3. Correspondence relating to the purchase is kept in purchase file 1213. At the same time, cartoons for stained-glass windows were purchased from participating English artists (Walter Crane, Selwyn Image and Christopher Wahl) and registered under nos. 336–339.
4. Parry 1994, pp. 100–101.
5. Idem, pp. 108–109, 112–118.
6. Idem, p. 121.
7. Idem, pp. 108–110.
8. Idem, pp. 120–121.
9. Fairclough & Leary 1981, p. 64.
10. Idem, p. 121; Marillier 1927, p. 35. Marillier mentions that in 1905 the design was repeated for Earl Spencer. This must be a mistake as the work was not created until 1907.
11. It is clear that the second specimen suffered more exposure to the light. Many thanks to Mr Derek Le Vaast for the information and the photo.



## PUFFINS

Scandinavia, possibly Norway, c. 1910  
 Wool and cotton; 77 × 59.5 cm; 3 warps per cm  
 Inv. Tx 0984

Provenance: Purchased from Norske Husflidsforening in Christiania (Oslo) in 1912 by Isabelle Errera (1869–1929), who donated it to the museum in 1929 through a bequest, after it had first been on loan

Literature: Errera 1927, p. 396, no. 479.

On a cliff in front of an undulating sea stands a group of five puffins with a seagull above their heads. An island appears in the background.

Commentary

Although the small tapestry was bought in Norway, it is stylistically more related to items produced in Scherrebek (Germany). As far as can be ascertained, the subjects in Norway are more folkloric in their inspiration or are linked to national legends. Designs from Scherrebek often took nature as their starting point, whether or not influenced by the Japanese art that was in vogue around 1900. Both elements are clearly reflected in this design in the elaboration of the puffins.

But the birds pictured possibly indicate that the tapestry was created in Norway and not Denmark or northern Germany because these puffins live in the North Atlantic. The tapestry was bought by Isabella Errera from the Norske Husflidsforening in Oslo, during one of her many travels. This association was founded in 1891 by the housing associations in existence at that time, which supervised housing.<sup>1</sup> They also sold household and small industrial products to boost rural incomes.<sup>2</sup> Knitting and weaving featured amongst the activities typically undertaken. They had outlets and set up exhibitions. In the first decades, the Norwegian Homecraft Association had a strong relationship with the Museum of Art Industry in Oslo. From its foundation, the museum collected folk tapestries from the eighteenth century. These old tapestries served as examples for new creations that were actively encouraged.<sup>3</sup>

Just before the turn of the century, a weaving school was founded in Trondheim, Norway, which operated similarly to the one in Scherrebek.<sup>4</sup> The Norwegian Jens Thiis (1870–1942) was active in the foundation of the Norske Husflidsforening's Christiania. With Thiis' help, Justus von Brinckmann (1853–1915), the founder and director of Hamburg's Museum of Arts and Crafts, developed the idea of establishing a school in rural Schleswig-Holstein, inspired by the theories of William Morris (1834–96) (cat. 100).<sup>5</sup> From 1896 to 1905, the Scherrebeker Kunstwebschule operated in Scherrebek.<sup>6</sup> The training was entrusted to a weaver trained in Norway. After completing their training, women could continue to work in Scherrebek or elsewhere after signing a contract.<sup>7</sup> The school's brand was usually woven in and the designs were marketed in numerous copies.

Among the representations of nature, one often encounters designs including graceful birds, as in this example.<sup>8</sup> This tapestry lacks the mark, so its place of production is uncertain. After the weaving school went bankrupt in 1905 due to internal disputes, weavers trained there continued to weave in places such as Kiel. In 1907, a tapestry of *Seagulls* was woven there to the design of the German artist Friedrich Missfeldt (1874–1969),<sup>9</sup> which shows a similar stylisation of the animal motif to that of the *Puffins*. [IDM]

1. <https://www.heimenhusfliden.no/1892-den-norske-husflidsforening>; Schlee 1984, p. 29.
2. Wieber 2015, p. 338.
3. Schlee 1984, p. 27.
4. Idem, p. 31.
5. Wieber 2015, p. 332.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skærbæk>.
7. Wieber 2015, p. 333.
8. Idem, p. 340.
9. Idem, p. 233, no. 64.







[102]

[102]

## SPRING/"BICHE" – GIRL WITH GOAT KID

Belgium, Etikhove, c. 1925

Signature EDS of the studio of Elisabeth de Saedeleer (1902–1972)

Signature PH of the designer Paul Haesaerts (1901–1974)

Wool and cotton; 200 × 125.5 cm; 5 warps per cm

Inv. 2019.0027

Provenance: 2019, purchased at an auction at De Vuyst, Lokeren.

In 1952, the tapestry probably formed part of the collection of Doctor Julien Deleersnyder in Beveren-Leie.<sup>1</sup>

On a closed background, sprinkled with lilies-of-the-valley that seem to be randomly placed, stands a slender woman. She is standing on a tiled floor wearing a long skirt in a fabric with an ethnographic motif. Her bare upper body is solely adorned by a beaded necklace. She is lifting a white baby goat above her head with both her hands.

The tapestry was not lined and was hung on five wide, woven loops through which a stick was inserted.

This is a fine example of the early work of the Studio Elisabeth de Saedeleer. The foundations for this workshop were laid during World War I by the painter Valerius de Saedeleer (1867–1941). In 1914, he fled with his family to Wales. Together with George Minne (1866–1941) and Gustave Van de Woestyne (1881–1947), he ultimately settled in Aberystwyth.<sup>2</sup> The daughters are said to have studied at the London School of Weaving. All articles published about the workshop from 1924 onwards tell the story of their encounter with a weaver, a former employee of the William Morris Company. The family came up with the idea of setting up a workshop in order to provide work for the local population,<sup>3</sup> an ambition they would later realise in the region of Etikhove, near Oudenaarde. In Aberystwyth, they owned several looms and the first suppliers of drawings were De Saedeleer and Van de Woestyne. The latter went on to produce the cartoon of a classic *Annunciation* tapestry that was woven several times.<sup>4</sup>

In 1921, the family returned to Flanders and De Saedeleer moved into the Villa Tynlon in Etikhove, where an artists' colony would be established with him as its central figure.<sup>5</sup> Three of his daughters would continue the weaving workshop there. In the 1920s and 1930s, the studio was



[FIG. 1] Paul Haesaerts, *Spring*, drawing, c. 1925. Private collection.



best known for its carpets, which were very progressive. Those floor carpets were realised using the knotting technique, which differs from the technique that is used to create tapestries. The museum owns several examples of these carpets.<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned above, they wove a tapestry after Van de Woestyne in the early period in 1926, but further information about other tapestries in that period cannot be found in the available literature.<sup>7</sup> Yet we know from surviving patterns and cartoons that drawings by Paul Haesaerts were also being woven at that time. The tapestry *The Spring* or *Girl with a Goat Kid*, which bears both a workshop mark and the designer's initials, is by far the most interesting example to have survived. In later publications it is titled *De lente* (Spring), but on the drawing it says *Biche - Fille à la chèvre* at the end.<sup>8</sup> The French word *Biche* means young doe, and also metaphorically, a young, fragile girl.

No other versions are known. When compared with the preliminary drawing, in mirror image, the drawing was faithfully followed (fig. 1). Only the background and the flowers at the back have not been coloured in.

The brothers Luk and Paul Haesaerts became involved in the workshop at the end of 1924 and in early 1925 and in association with the sister of De Saedeleer, they entered into a business association under the name Société de tapis d'Art de Saedeleer et Co., also called Studio De Saedeleer. From then on Paul would supply numerous designs for floor carpets, but also for some tapestries as well. The workshop was at its busiest between this period and up to 1930 or so, when all the protagonists moved to Brussels. Elisabeth was asked to head the textile class at La Cambre (the Higher Institute for Decorative Arts), the school recently founded by Henry van de Velde.

The dimensions of the tapestries are much more limited and the way they are mounted differs from that of the historical tapestries. Also, no border has been woven around the tapestry. This is remarkable because Haesaerts often conceives a border in his numerous designs for floor carpets.

Later, in 1937, the Belgian government called upon Elisabeth De Saedeleer to bring about a revival of the art of tapestry. The technical committee tasked with preparing the Belgian contribution for the World's Fair in Paris in 1937 felt that the role of wall tapestries deserved more attention.

Their submission was awarded a gold medal. Their work was also exhibited at the international exhibition in New York in 1939. On both occasions, they also created small-scale tapestries, based on a cartoon by Edgar Tytgat (1879–1957).<sup>9</sup> [IDM]

1. This assumption is based on a 1952 photograph kept at the Design Museum in Ghent, on which one can see the tapestry, together with furniture by Emiel Veranneman in the hall of the house. The tapestry was bought at De Vuyst, Lokeren on 2 March 2019, number 130.
2. Ghent-Wijhe-Cardiff 2002, pp. 49–50, 60–67.
3. Apparently, his daughters soon excelled and they went on to teach weaving and tapestry art, see idem, pp. 50, 65.
4. De Meüter 1993, p. 12, and nos. 47–48.
5. Idem, pp. 8–10, 11–13.
6. Inv. nos. Car. 2–4, 7 and 10.
7. For an overview of the publications, see the bibliography in De Meüter 1993, pp. 108–110.
8. Idem, no. 50.
9. Idem, pp. 77–78.

[103]

## LE DOUDOU DE MONS

Belgium, c. 1936

Cartoon by Rodolphe Strebelle (1880–1959)

Gouache on canvas; 603 × 392 cm

Inv. Tp30

**Provenance:** Purchased by the government from the artist in 1946 and given on loan to the Royal Museums of Art and History, but not listed as part of the collection until 2001.<sup>1</sup>

The representation is very flat and filled with different scenes with many figures next to each other.

The somewhat chaotic interpretation fits in with the subject of “Le Doudou”, a folk festival that has been celebrated every year since the fourteenth century on Trinity Sunday in Mons. The various facets of the celebration are depicted within the setting of the historic city centre.<sup>2</sup>

The most spectacular part is the so-called “Lumeçon” fight, the fight between St George and the dragon, which takes place on the main marketplace surrounded by a crowd of people. During the carefully organised fight, both the saint and the dragon are accompanied by warriors who help them.

The fight is preceded by a procession through the city. At the bottom, the golden coach is drawn by six horses. The coach carries the reliquary of Sainte Waudru (Waldetrudis, 612–686/688), the founder of Mons, surrounded by 1500 extras who commemorate the history of the city.

At the top, activities are evoked that belong to a folk festival, with a popinjay-shooting contest on the right and on the left, a fair with a merry-go-round and puppet show. A couple is also depicted, with the man wearing the equipment of a miner. This is a clear reference to what is an important activity in the region. At the bottom right, the celebration continues with a dance party.

The explanatory text appears in mirror image. This was a technical requirement, as this is a cartoon. The text says: “C'EST L'DOUDOU C'EST L'MAMAN C'EST L'POUPEE SAINT GEORGES QUI VA”. This is the song that the inhabitants of Mons sing out loud when the procession passes by.

### Commentary

The tapestry, woven after the cartoon by the Royal Manufacturers Braquenié in Mechelen, was given by the Belgian State to Sir Winston Churchill and is still in his family's possession (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup>

It was created, along with three others, in 1937 for the *Exposition internationale Arts et Techniques dans la vie moderne* in Paris.<sup>4</sup> The tapestries were given an important place in the Belgian pavilion under the theme “Industries et métiers d'art en Belgique” (Industries and artistic



[FIG. 1] *Le Doudou de Mons*, Mechelen, workshop of Braquenié, c. 1936. Private Collection.





[103]



[FIG. 2] View of the hall of honour of the Belgian pavilion, Exposition internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la vie moderne in Paris, 1937.

professions in Belgium).<sup>5</sup> The Belgian participation was put together under the supervision of the government, with the technical committee being led by Henry van de Velde (1863–1957), who was also the architect of the pavilion.

The guiding principle in the selection of the participating artists was to bring about a revival of the arts and crafts. Industry was required to work with these artists.<sup>6</sup> Tapestry art played an important role in this. Founded in Brussels by Van de Velde, the Institut supérieur des arts décoratifs / La Cambre also paid attention to the art of weaving from its inception in 1927.<sup>7</sup> In 1937, the Belgian pavilion was the result of the increased attention being paid to Belgian artistic crafts.<sup>8</sup>

Four monumental tapestries were exhibited in the hall of honour of the Belgian pavilion (fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> Four religious and folkloric subjects were chosen with tourism in mind. Explanatory texts were added all around, as borders. Two designs by Floris Jaspers (1889–1965),<sup>10</sup> namely *The Antwerp Ommegang Procession* and *The Atonement Procession in Veurne*, were woven by Gaspard De Wit.<sup>11</sup> Braquenié not only wove the *Doudou de Mons* (collection of the heirs of W. Churchill), but also the *Martyrdom of Saint Evermarus* (Hasselt, Onder de toren) after a design by Sander Wynants (1903–1953). In each of these four designs, the composition is equally full and busy, but they were well received by art critics at the time.<sup>12</sup>

In the Belgian pavilion, smaller tapestries were also shown, two of which were woven by Elisabeth De Saedeleer (1902–1972) (see cat. 102) after designs by Edgard Tytgat (1879–1957).<sup>13</sup>

The Manufacture Royale de Tapisseries Braquenié & Co. was one of the workshops, which, in the 1930s, had the capacity to produce tapestries of such dimensions

(cat. 97–98). A tapestry designed by Rodolphe Strebelle (1880–1959), *Les quatre saisons*, also woven by Braquenié, had already been exhibited at the *Exposition internationale des Arts Décoratifs et industriels modernes* in Paris in 1925.<sup>14</sup> He was called upon once again for the exhibition in 1937. Strebelle was trained at the Academy of Brussels by such figures as the symbolist painter Jean Delville (1867–1953). He himself belonged to the group of Brabant fauvists and expressionists. He painted cartoons for tapestries and also for stained-glass windows. [IDM]

1. It is possible that it was not registered as part of the tapestry collection in 1946 because it was a cartoon.
2. In 2005, the folk festival was recognised by UNESCO as a “masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity”.
3. For some time, the tapestry was hung in the House of Commons in London, but when it had to be removed, the heirs gave it to the Royal Museums of Art and History on loan in 2006. It could not be exhibited there at the time. For tax reasons, the tapestry had to be kept in Great Britain and it was therefore reclaimed by the heirs in 2016. Its current location is not known.
4. Poulain 2006, pp. 230–248.
5. In the catalogue of the Belgian entry, entitled *Industries et métiers d'art en Belgique/Kunstambachten en nijverheden in België*, the full tapestry is shown, together with a detailed view, in colour. See Brussels 1937, n.p.
6. Brussels 1937; and Poulain 2006, pp. 240–234.
7. Idem, pp. 231–244; De Meüter 1993, pp. 15–17.
8. Poulain 2006, p. 245.
9. The four tapestries were given on loan by the Ministry of Economic Affairs to the Royal Museums of Art and History, because in 1938 they were exhibited in the room displaying a compendium of ceramics in the section containing the modern pieces. According to M. Crick-Kuntziger in a letter from 10 June 1938 to Henri Nicaise, the curator of ceramics, who was unwell at the time, it was not easy to find a place to exhibit the tapestries, as they were 6 metres high. See the Royal Museums of Art and History, Archives Crick, Dossier correspondance 1933–40. How long they remained in storage is not known. However, *The Antwerp Ommegang Procession*, then still in the Cinquantenaire, was loaned, along with the cartoon of *Le Doudou*, for an exhibition entitled *Art Mural* at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in 1952. It is not known when this tapestry was moved to Mechelen.
10. For other designs by F. Jaspers, see cat. D9.
11. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, pp. 65–70. In 2022, *The Antwerp Ommegang Procession* was on temporary loan at the De Wit Manufacturer in Mechelen and *The Atonement Procession in Veurne* on temporary loan in the St Nicolas Tower in Veurne – with thanks to An Volckaert.
12. N. Poulain in Antwerp 1994, p. 112; Poulain 2006, pp. 234–237, with illustrations of the four tapestries.
13. Idem, pp. 237–240; De Meüter 1993, p. 77–78 and cat. 51–53.
14. Poulain 2006, p. 224. For more information about this exhibition, see cat. D8.



## PROMETHEUS – FORCES



[104]

Brussels, Manufacture de Tapisseries d'art of  
Georges Chaudoir (1890–1969), 1926–30 (?)  
Signatures VAN NOTEN at the bottom right  
and G. CHAUDOIR EXCUDIT B B on the left  
Design by Jean van Noten (1903–1982)  
Wool and cotton; 235 × 190 cm; 4 warps per cm  
Inv. Tp 17

Provenance: 1982, given by Mr and Mrs Jean van Noten

Literature: Delmarcel 1984 B, p. 120; Sosset 1989, pp. 84–85.

The kneeling demigod Prometheus, his head encircled by three rays, stole fire from the heavens from the gods to breathe life into the first man he modelled himself. He was helped by Minerva, but in doing so went against Zeus' will. The woman in front of him is probably Minerva.

The two nudes are built up in solid planes in mainly muted colours. The figurative composition is classical, clear and simple.

This is the first tapestry designed by Jean van Noten at the beginning of his career, in the period 1926–1930.<sup>1</sup> The composition is still quite classical and rather academic. At that time, very few tapestries were woven to contemporary designs. The earliest creations of Jean Lurçat (1892–1966), the leading exponent from France during the revival of tapestry art, were still embroidered in this period. It was not until 1936 that his first design was executed using tapestry weaving. In 1937, he moved to Aubusson, the centre of tapestry weaving on looms operating with a horizontal warp, and it was there that he began his large-scale production.<sup>2</sup> Jean van Noten's design is much more sober than anything that had been woven before, nor were these copies of paintings, like the pieces that had been produced until that time in Belgium.<sup>3</sup>

This is the oldest of the three copies designed by the artist that have been included in the collection. The remaining two date from the 1950s and late 1960s (cat. 105–106).

The artist called his design *Prometheus*, but on the back, a label from the manufacturer gives the title as *Forces*.

Jean van Noten was a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels. He was taught there by Constant Montald

(cat. D8) and Victor Horta, among others. From 1934 to 1961, he was artistic adviser to the National Commission for Arts and Crafts, tapestry department, of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. In that capacity, he was art adviser to international exhibitions throughout Europe, North and South America, and Africa,<sup>4</sup> and spent most of his time abroad.<sup>5</sup> In addition to tapestry cartoons, he also designed stained-glass windows, posters, postage stamps and banknotes. He was one of our most renowned decorative artists.<sup>6</sup>

The workshop of Georges Chaudoir (1890–1969), a weaver and cartoon painter, known as the Manufacture de Tapisseries d'art, was the last weaving workshop in Brussels. In 1910, Chaudoir took over the workshop of Arthur Lambrechts, founded in 1878.<sup>7</sup> He claimed the right to mark his tapestries with the historic city mark of Brussels, a shield between a double B. After his death, the workshop continued under the direction of his widow and his grandson, Michel Borin, until the widow's death in 1984. Through Mr Borin, some twenty cartoons from the workshop were donated to the museum.<sup>8</sup> [IDM]

1. Date communicated verbally to G. Delmarcel at the time of the donation. See Delmarcel 1984 B, p. 120. According to Sosset, the cartoon only dates back to 1958 and was given the title *Sacrifice* alongside its other title, *Prometheus*, see Sosset 1989, p. 84.
2. Paris 1958, pp. 13–14; Antwerp 1994, p. 123; Paris 2016.
3. Antwerp 1994, pp. 104–105.
4. Antwerp 1994, p. 137.
5. Duchateau & Hardouin 1980, pp. 123–125.
6. *Idem*, p. 11.
7. Antwerp 1994, p. 103.
8. The collection consists of designs by Michel Borin (inv. Tp 40–53) and José Crunelle (1924–2012) (inv. Tp 55–59).



## FESTIVAL AT WAMBA

Brussels, Manufacture de Tapisseries d'art  
 by Georges Chaudoir (1890–1969), 1957  
 Signatures VAN NOTEN PINXIT at the bottom right  
 and G. CHAUDOIR EXCUDIT on the left  
 Design by Jean van Noten (1903–1982)  
 Wool and cotton; 206 × 161 cm; 4 warps per cm  
 Inv. Tp 16

Provenance: 1981, donated by the widow of Frans Olbrechts  
 (1899–1958), director of the Museum for Central Africa  
 in Tervuren and the first owner of the tapestry

Literature: Brussels 1984, no. 111; Delmarcel 1984B, p. 122;  
 Delmarcel 1988, pp. 133–134; Sosset 1989, pp. 84–85.

Two Africans are making music, one on a slit drum and the other on two flutes. The dynamics of an African festival are designed with powerful lines. The colour areas are purely delineated with a dominance of reddish-brown and blue tones. Shapes and colours explode from the core in all directions, just like a halo. The influence of Cubism is undeniable.

The tapestry was designed by Jean van Noten (cat. 104) in memory of his trip to the then Belgian Congo in 1957, where he experienced an African music festival in Wamba (Ituri). Here, the designer has tried to reflect the exhilaration and dynamism of the dances and the music.<sup>1</sup>

The subject was very suitable for the original owner of the tapestry: the ethnologist Frans Olbrechts, Director of the Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, near Brussels. They had a close bond. Jean van Noten illustrated several of his books as a graphic artist and in 1936 he painted the portrait of Olbrechts. After his death in 1958, Van Noten designed a stained-glass window in his memory for the church in Tervuren.

The artist succeeds in expressing the rhythm and liveliness of music and dance in this angular, graphic work that is almost kaleidoscopic. As is often the case, he develops the composition from a core.<sup>2</sup>

The tapestry was woven in the Brussels workshop of Georges Chaudoir (cat. 104).

In his correspondence with the museum in 1981, Jean van Noten mentions two editions, both woven by the Chaudoir workshop in Brussels. The first copy was also woven for another private collector. [IDM]

1. The artist himself gave a description of his impressions, see Delmarcel 1984 B, p. 122.
2. Duchateau & Hardouin 1980; examples can be found on pp. 29, 45, 99, 109, 120, and 121.



[105]



[106]

## RESURRECTION

Mechelen, workshop of Gaspard de Wit, 1968

Signatures G. DE WIT at the bottom left

and VAN NOTEN at the bottom right

Design by Jean van Noten (1903–1982)

Wool and cotton; 211 × 146 cm; 4 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 18

Provenance: 1982, donated by Mr and Mrs Jean van Noten

Literature: Delmarcel 1984 B, p. 124; Sosset 1989, pp. 84–85.

Suggesting a blazing red fire with blue, purple and green lights on a black background, life emerges as a delicate white flower and a green animal resembling a salamander, a symbol of fire. The colour contrasts of the layers against the black ground make the drawing strong and refined at the same time.

This is the oldest of the three copies, designed by Jean van Noten, that have been included in the collection (cat. 104–105). It is also the most abstract of the three and is clearly typical of his style at the end of his career.<sup>1</sup>

This representation was prompted by the death of the artist's mother. His turmoil is depicted by the intense image and use of colour.<sup>2</sup> As with other creations, his composition starts from a central core that fans out.

The tapestry was woven in the workshop of Gaspard de Wit in Mechelen (cat. 112). [IDM]

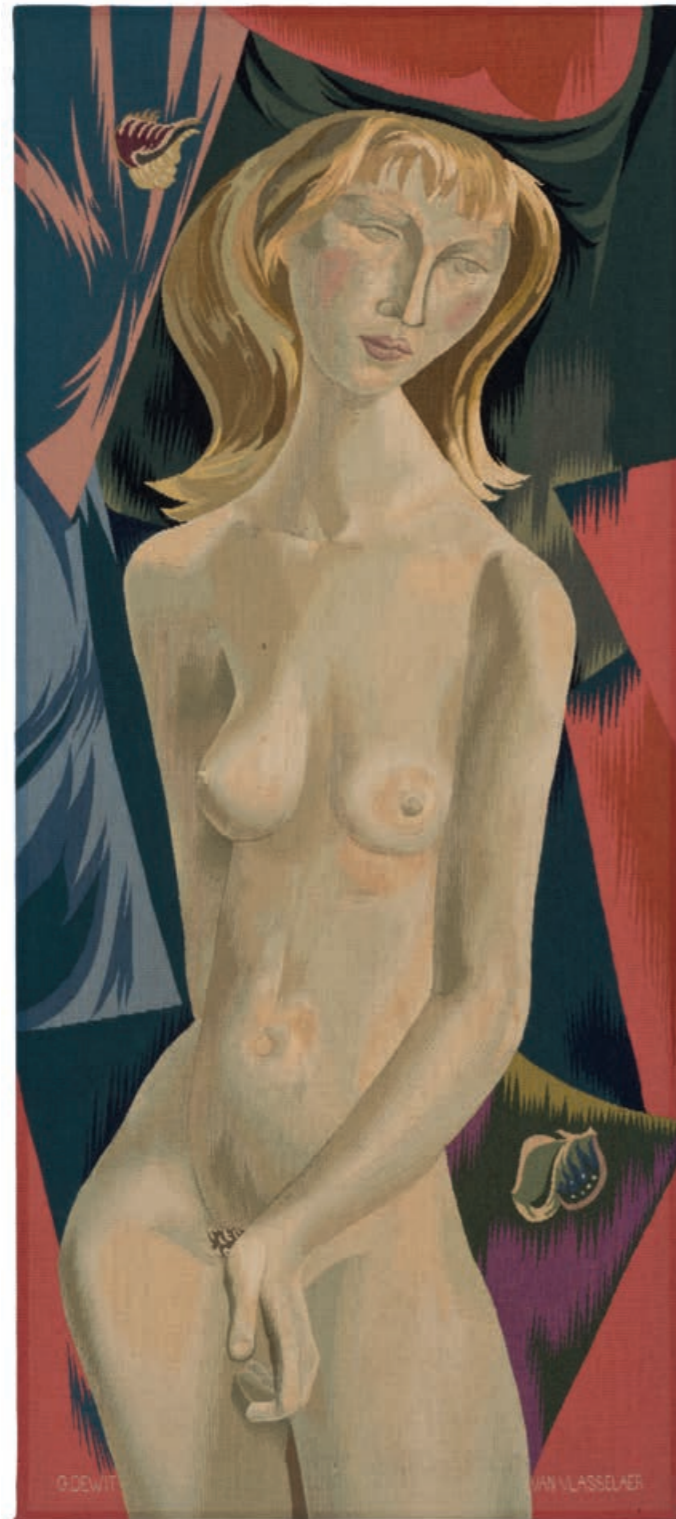
1. Duchateau & Hardouin 1980, p. 13.

2. Idem, p. 127.



[106]





[107]

[107]  
**VENUS**

Mechelen, workshop of Gaspard de Wit, 1958–69  
 Signatures VAN VLASSELAER at the bottom right  
 and G. DE WIT on the left  
 Design by Julien van Vlasselaer (1907–1982)  
 Wool and cotton; 130 × 58 cm; 7 warps per cm  
 Inv. Tp 27

Provenance: 1999, purchased from Mr Mariman

Literature: Avermaete 1973, pp. 33, 113.

The stylised figure of the naked Venus is presented against a background of abstract colour planes that suggest a curtain. The woman is cut off just above the knees. She timidly holds her left hand in front of her genitalia, a gesture that harkens back to the sculptures of antiquity. Like the classical *Venus Pudica*, the figure is slightly rotated.

The tapestry *Venus* is a detail from another representation *The Toilet of Venus*, woven – according to the directory of the Royal Manufactures De Wit – from 1954 onwards. Two versions were released under this title, though they were given different titles in later publications.<sup>1</sup> All these versions were designs by Julien van Vlasselaer (1907–1982), a most prolific Flemish designer.

In *Venus*, the figure has been recreated from the central one, flanked by two clothed women in the broader version of *The Toilet of Venus*. There, the figures are shown at full length.<sup>2</sup> Two versions of the narrower representation were also marketed. The cartoon was one of the most frequently woven of the Van Vlasselaer tapestries by Gaspard de Wit.<sup>3</sup>

Van Vlasselaer played on a tendency to give the tapestry a place within architecture. The Belgian government stimulated it by organising competitions or granting commissions,<sup>4</sup> initially for monumental decoration, but later also for the decoration of the private home.<sup>5</sup>

Van Vlasselaer was trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels in the studio of Constant Montald (cat. D8). From 1932 onwards, in addition to painting, he became interested in the monumental arts. He designed furniture and glass objects for companies and was commissioned to paint a large mural for the World Exhibition in Brussels

in 1935. In 1947, he became a teacher at the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp, as the head of the Monumental Arts workshop. It is only from 1949 onwards that he also became interested in tapestry. All of his tapestries were woven in Mechelen at the Manufacture Royale de Tapisseries Braquenié & co and at the Royal Manufacturers De Wit. The latter in particular went on to realise many of Van Vlasselaer's designs.<sup>6</sup> In 1976, the artist published a treatise on the integration of tapestry into architecture. He outlined the role that Henry van de Velde played in the revival of tapestry art, including at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937. He stated in the treatise that the creation of an architecture best precedes the creation of the tapestry that has to find a place in it. Cooperation is recommended.<sup>7</sup> In the 1950s, Van Vlasselaer went on to design his own home according to these principles. [IDM]

1. We wish to thank Yvan Maes De Wit of the Royal Manufacturers De Wit for the details taken from the available archives. The poses of the three women are not identical in the two versions, but the main difference is that in the version known as the *Toilet of Venus*, the development of the figures is more cubist in its nature. The pose of the *Venus* in the collection, with one hand in her lap, is more in keeping with the *Birth of Venus*. Both versions are kept in the collection of the Ministry of the French Community.
2. Avermaete 1973, p. 112; Sosset 1989, p. 70; Antwerp 1994, pp. 136–137.
3. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, p. 106.
4. Idem, pp. 85–97.
5. Antwerp 1994, pp. 136–137.
6. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, p. 106.
7. Van Vlasselaer 1976.





[108]

[108]

## DANS LES DUNES (IN THE DUNES)

Mechelen, Royal Manufacturers De Wit, 1960

Signatures G. DE WIT at the bottom left and

DUBRUNFAUT at the bottom right

Design by Edmond Dubrunfaut (1920–2007)

Wool and cotton; 240 × 340 cm; 4 warps per cm

Inv. Tp 25

Provenance: 1998, donated by the Ministry of Communications

Literature: Chalmet 2000, pp. 58–59.

Three fishermen return from the sea. They are accompanied by a Brabant draught horse carrying the baskets for the shrimp catch. This way of fishing is typical for the Belgian North Sea coast and is an old tradition, now recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO.

The figures are monumental, but the horse gets the most attention.

Edmond Dubrunfaut (1920–2007) began to take an interest in tapestry during his training at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tournai in 1937. He studied the medieval tapestries preserved in Tournai, an historically important weaving centre. In 1940, Dubrunfaut went to Brussels to study monumental arts at the Higher Institute of Architecture and Decorative Art at La Cambre. Like Jean Lurçat in Aubusson, the Belgian designers follow the medieval examples in their creations by not including borders, by using a limited range of colours, and by emphasising figuration rather than the representation of nature and architecture. Under the influence of the tragedy resulting from World War II, his oeuvre took on a pronounced social dimension. During his training in Brussels, he met Roger Somville (1923–2014). They shared the same social commitment, and regarded art as a means of communication that made it possible to reach a massive audience, preferably by means of monumental techniques in public buildings.<sup>1</sup> The two artists went on to publish a manifesto *Forces Murales – un art manifeste* in 1947, together with Louis Deltour (1927–1998).<sup>2</sup> They formed a collective for the design and execution of monumental wall techniques, in collaboration with the Centre de la Rénovation de la Tapisserie à Tournai. Their subjects, the solidarity

of labour, justice and leisure, sought to counter the then reigning pessimism.<sup>3</sup> Their ideas were disseminated, thanks to many orders from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the decoration of the Belgian Embassies.<sup>4</sup>

Dubrunfaut designed hundreds of cartoons for tapestry.<sup>5</sup> An important cycle consisting of fifty-five pieces is *Les temps de l'homme* (The Age of Man). Man and his achievements are presented in an idealised way.<sup>6</sup> The tapestries in the series can be viewed separately. The cycle depicts Man and his work, his interests and his discoveries, as well as nature. The four examples in the collection painted by Dubrunfaut in the 1960s–1980s and produced in various workshops form part of this cycle (cat. 108–111). In line with his earliest work, he glorifies the labour of the rural population in a first group, to which *In the Dunes* belongs. The compositions are compact. The human figure is robust and gets all the attention, against a plain ground and colour and shape are used expressively.

More information about the Royal Manufacturers De Wit in Mechelen can be found under the tapestry *Composition II* in the collection (cat. 112). [IDM]

1. Antwerp 1994, pp. 125–127.

2. La Louvière 1997.

3. Sosset 1989, p. 63.

4. Antwerp 1994, pp. 128–129.

5. The quantities recorded range from 300 cartoons to 500 cartoons and 450 tapestries, and finally 800 woven tapestries.

6. Chalmet 2000, p. 33.



## LA MOISSON DE LA MER (THE HARVEST OF THE SEA)

Belgium, Mechelen, Royal Manufacturers De Wit, 1966  
 Signatures G. DE WIT at the bottom right and  
 DUBRUNFAUT at the bottom left  
 Design by Edmond Dubrunfaut (1920–2007), 1964  
 Wool and cotton; 210 × 391 cm; 4 warps per cm  
 Inv. Tp 24

Provenance: 1996, given as an acceptance in lieu by  
 Mrs A. Turine and Mr R. Dumont

Literature: Chalmet 2000, pp. 90–91.

Three fishermen are sitting on the beach, sorting out their catch, “the harvest of the sea”. Behind them the nets are hanging out. In front of them, a few fish lie on the sand and a single one hangs out to dry. On the left, two women with parasols look on.

Chronologically, this is the second tapestry in the collection designed by Edmond Dubrunfaut. Like the first one entitled *In the Dunes* (cat. 108), it forms part of the cycle *The Age of Man*, in which he glorifies the labour of the rural population.

The area that contains the image is well filled. The figures are presented in action and are surrounded by attributes that help to evoke a certain atmosphere. As is usual for this artist, the figures are monumental and robust. The composition is completed by two female characters whose function is not clear.<sup>1</sup> Also typical of his designs is the use of a very subtle colour palette.

More information about the Royal Manufacturers De Wit in Mechelen can be found under the tapestry *Composition II* in the collection (cat. 112). [IDM]

1. It is clear that he had a preference for female characters, see Chalmet 2000, p. 33.





## SUR LA GLACE (ON THE ICE)

Baarn, The Netherlands, atelier De Cneudt, 1972  
 Signature DUBRUNFAUT bottom left  
 Design by Edmond Dubrunfaut (1920–2007), 1969  
 Wool and cotton; 225 × 328 cm; 4 warps per cm  
 Inv. Tp 22

Provenance: 1995, donation by Mr E. Dubrunfaut  
 together with the cartoon

Literature: Chalmet 2000, p. 98.

The figures receive all the attention in this simple composition. The three skaters are in full swing on the ice. Behind them on the frozen water are some ducks and other waterfowl.

Chronologically, this is the third tapestry in the collection designed by Edmond Dubrunfaut. Just like the previous two, it forms part of the cycle *The Age of Man*, in which he glorifies the labour of the rural population (cat. 108).

Once again, the figures are typically monumental and robust, and the colour palette is very subtle.

The De Cneudt workshop in Baarn was founded by Edmond de Cneudt (1905–1987), a Belgian-Dutch textile designer and artist who was born in Ghent, but moved to the Netherlands with his parents in 1919. He trained as a teacher of drawing and weaving at the Academy of Art in Rotterdam. He quickly set up his own weaving workshop, first in Rotterdam, then Soest, and finally, from 1942 onwards, in Baarn. He designed interior textiles and tapestries. The weaving workshop was one of the leading workshops in the Netherlands and wove some two hundred and fifty tapestries for businesses, as well as for the Dutch government, producing work to designs by leading – mostly Dutch – artists.<sup>1</sup> Between 1973 and 1983, the business was taken over by his son Ric. [IDM]

1. Brouwer 2008. The article does not mention any commissions carried out for E. Dubrunfaut, although he did regularly have recourse to this workshop, see Chalmet 2000.



[110]



[III]

## LE TEMPS DE L'ATOME (THE AGE OF THE ATOM)

Portugal, Oporto, *Manufacturas e Tapeçarias MURO*, 1981  
Signatures DUBRUNFAUT and MTM at the bottom left  
Design by Edmond Dubrunfaut (1920–2007), 1962  
Wool, woven on a Jacquard loom; 285 × 550 cm  
Inv. Tp 23

Provenance: 1995, donated by Edmond Dubrunfaut,  
along with the cartoon and the chalk drawing

Literature: Chalmet 2000, pp. 122–123.

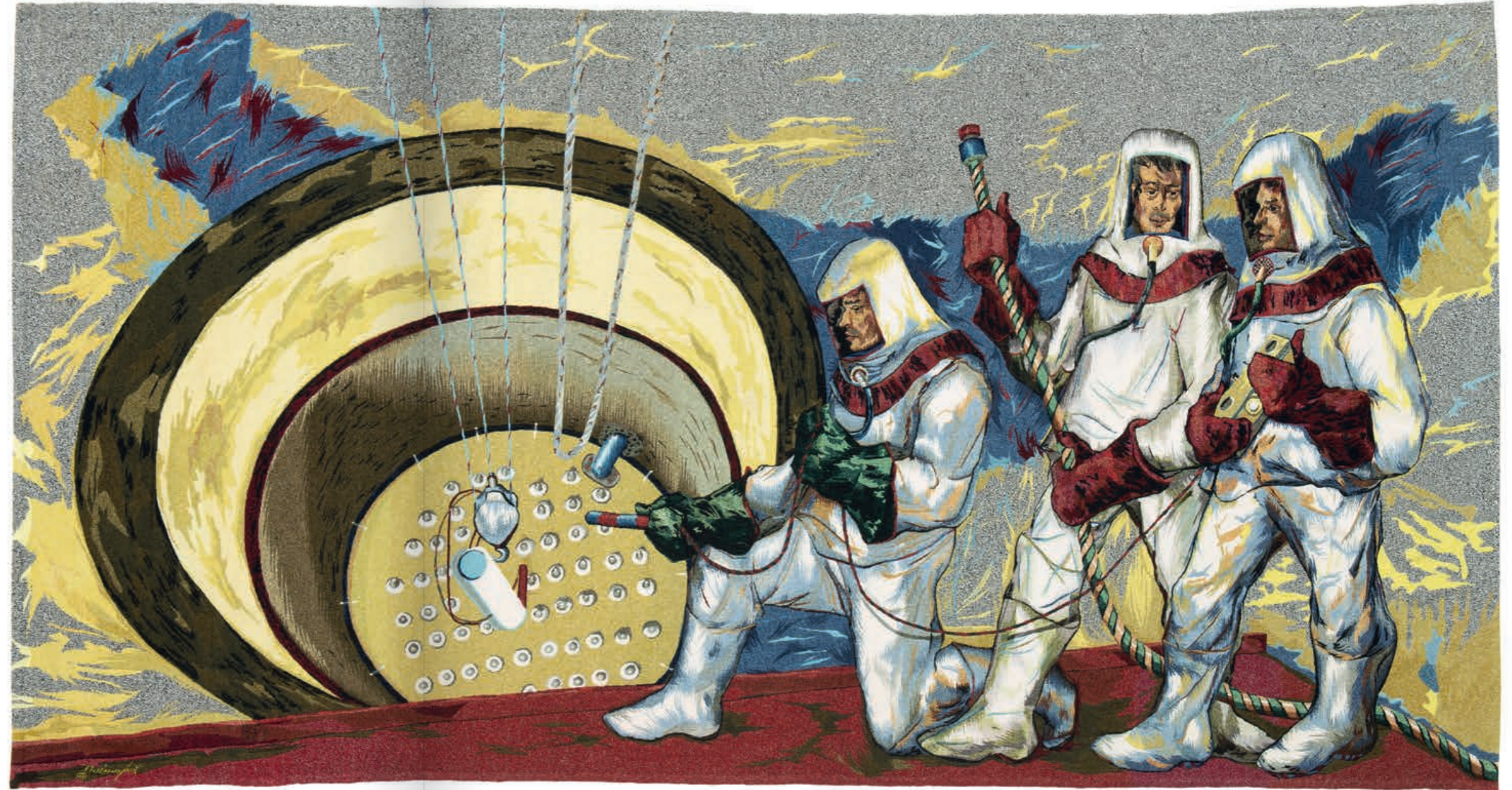
Three men are fully wrapped in a suit for safety reasons. In addition to an airtight suit, they are also wearing boots, large gloves and a face visor. They are working as technicians on the core of an atomic reactor, but they remain at a safe distance. They are apparently measuring the reactivity.

Chronologically, this is the fourth tapestry in the collection designed by Edmond Dubrunfaut. The tapestry also forms part of the cycle known as *The Age of Man*. Unlike the other three tapestries, which depict the activities of man in an idealised manner with the emphasis on manual labour (cat. 108–110), *Le temps de l'atome* belongs to a group about the industrialised world. Besides electricity, the biggest advance has been the development of atomic energy. Another aspect that is covered by Dubrunfaut is the conquest of the cosmos alongside ecological concerns.<sup>1</sup> The contrast between these people with those performing manual labour in the other group representations is significant.

The tapestry is mechanically woven which makes the outlines less pure.

Nothing more is known about the activities of the MTM workshop, which operated in Portugal (Oporto). [IDM]

1. Chalmet 2000, pp. 34–35.



[111]



## COMPOSITION II

Belgium, Mechelen, Royal Manufacturers De Wit, 1980s  
Coat of arms of Mechelen at the bottom centre and  
the signature G.DE WIT of the Royal Manufacturers De Wit  
Design by Gaspard de Wit (1892–1971), 1971  
Wool; 200 × 270 cm; 5 warps per cm  
Inv. Tp 20

Provenance: 1986 gift from the Royal Manufacturers De Wit,  
together with the original design, parts of the cartoon and  
a loom with accessories

Literature: Delmarcel 1988, p. 134, no. 91; Mechelen-Tapei 1989,  
pp. 88–89; Brosens & Maes de Wit 2019, pp. 128–129 (picture).

The title makes it clear that this is a purely abstract drawing  
with absolutely no reference to reality.

The colour palette is limited, but the contrasts are  
very strong with a striking red ground. To elaborate on  
the abstract form, only about twenty tones of grey were  
used, complemented by a touch of blue and yellow in  
the centre. Technical virtuosity was called upon when play-  
ing with different weaving structures. The mid-tones are  
woven thicker to make the speckled colours stand out  
better against the more finely woven solid red ground.

From the second half of the 1960s onwards, there was  
a growing number of purely abstract drawings in the tap-  
estries produced by the Royal Manufacturers De Wit in  
Mechelen, under the direction of Gaspard De Wit. When  
his father, Theophiel de Wit (1863–1941), started up the  
workshop in Mechelen in 1889, the firm specialised in  
the supply of upholstery fabric produced with tapestry  
techniques.<sup>1</sup> Theophiel de Wit followed the same track  
as the Braquenié company, where he began his career  
(cat. 96–97). Copies or pastiches of old historic tapestries  
also sold well.<sup>2</sup> In 1910, Theophiel adapted the weaving  
method by no longer using painted cartoons for weav-  
ing, but a drawing on which the colours were indicated  
by numbers. Designed to increase production, this was a  
method that had already been used by William Morris at  
Merton Abbey (cat. 100).<sup>3</sup>

His son Gaspard (1892–1971) received his training as an  
artist at the Academy of Fine Arts in Mechelen between

1904 and 1911. He then went on to study Decorative and  
Monumental Arts at the National Higher Institute for  
Fine Arts in Antwerp. Gaspard took over the management  
of the company in 1924.<sup>4</sup> He continued to weave textiles  
for furniture and copies of historic tapestries. In many  
cases, items from the collection of the Royal Museums of  
Art and History were used as examples.<sup>5</sup> He also restored  
historic tapestries. Gradually, as with the other manufac-  
turers, scope emerged for new creations. An important  
stimulating force in that regard was the Belgian govern-  
ment, which commissioned the creation of tapestries, the  
national pride, for successive international exhibitions. In  
1935, De Wit also participated at the World Exhibition in  
Brussels.<sup>6</sup> In the creations produced after World War II,  
the influence of Jean Lurçat (1892–1966) became obvious.  
Flat drawings with a limited colour palette were selected.  
The coarser designs with fewer warp threads made the  
work cheaper.<sup>7</sup>

In the first contemporary creations, the figurative rep-  
resentations have the upper hand. It was only from the  
early 1960s onwards that fully abstract tapestries were  
woven. In this, the influence of the *Biennale de la tapisserie*  
held in Lausanne was decisive.

From 1965, Gaspard himself started creating designs.  
Until his death in 1971, he realised fifty-seven designs.<sup>8</sup>  
This abstract composition is the last design by the master  
weaver Gaspard De Wit to be placed on the loom during  
his lifetime. It was woven several times. No difference can  
be observed between the different versions.

With the disappearance of the Chaudoir and Braquenié  
workshops, the Royal Manufacturers De Wit is still the  
only one in Belgium where the traditional art of weav-  
ing tapestries is practised in low warp and in a workshop  
setting. [IDM]

1. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, p. 43.
2. Idem, pp. 46–47.
3. Idem, pp. 44–45.
4. Idem, p. 50.
5. Idem, pp. 57–62.
6. Idem, pp. 56–58, 62 ff.
7. Antwerp 1994, pp. 123–124.
8. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, pp. 105–113.



[112]





-VII-

LONG-TERM DEPOSITS



[D1]

## GROTESQUE WITH FORTUNA

Southern Netherlands, Oudenaarde (?),  
final quarter of the sixteenth century  
Designer and workshop unknown  
Wool and silk, 235 × 170 cm, 5 warps per cm  
On long-term loan from the National Lottery of Belgium (inv. 7053)

Provenance: 2003, purchased by the National Lottery of Belgium  
from the Royal Manufacturers De Wit, Mechelen;  
on deposit since 2020

On a dark-blue background with floral elements is a large cartouche, connected to the sides by elements of scrollwork. There are two satyrs at the top, two harpies at the bottom and four fantasy characters around the central section. A figure with a sceptre is enthroned at the top. Another crowned figure, framed in a cartouche with a grotesque head, appears to carry the middle cartouche on its shoulders. It shows a woman, her right leg balanced on a ball in a vast landscape with a city and mountains in the background, and her robe billowing.

### Commentary

The central female figure is the personification of Fortune, in the form of the so-called *Fortuna Velata*. This image, of Italian origin, often appears naked and on the waves of a sea (cat. 28), but in the Northern Renaissance she also stands on land, next to and on a sphere, as in the prints of Hans Sebald Beham (1541) and Heinrich Aldegrever (1549).<sup>1</sup>

Both the central cartouche and the “scrollwork” of wrought-iron constructions around her are in keeping with this type of ornamentation that originated in Antwerp around 1545 in the work of Frans and Cornelis Floris. A print of the latter, published in 1554, shows a similar scheme.<sup>2</sup>

The borders are symmetrically decorated with all kinds of trophies of weapons, tied to a rod with bows. The banners respectively contain a yellow crescent on blue ground, and a checkerboard of white and red squares, which may refer to the Ottoman Empire and to Croatia. One can possibly assume that the purchaser of the work

was involved in the ongoing wars against the advancing Ottomans in Central Europe.

Other pieces of the same size and with the same ornamentation, which together would form a series, are so far not known. In the absence of marks, the work can provisionally be attributed to a workshop in Oudenaarde: the motifs on the fine outer frame also occur there in this period.<sup>3</sup> [GD]

1. See Princeton 1969, cat. 45 and 46, Lausanne 1981, pp. 51, 96.
2. Huysmans 1996, p. 149, no. 147
3. De Meüter & Vanwelden 1999, pp. 134, 137, 141, etc.



[D1]





[D2.1]

[D2]  
**THE STORY OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT**

Two tapestries  
 Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
 final quarter of the sixteenth century  
 Signature of the workshop of Jacques I Geubels (before 1585–  
 before 1605) – or of his widow Catharina van den Eynde († 1614/29)  
 Designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 8 to 9 warps per cm  
 On long-term loan from the European Community  
 (x19970006167 and 01BX19970006268)

Provenance: 2002, deposited by the European Community<sup>1</sup>

Literature: De Meüter 2001 A, pp. 103–120.

*Commentary*

Determining precisely what is depicted in the series is not easy. Thanks to the recovery of other representations that seem to belong to the same series, we were able to establish that the subject must be the life of the Macedonian prince Alexander, though the maker did not choose to depict the most obvious phases of his life.<sup>2</sup>

Seven scenes were found, all without marks, but often with very similar borders. Despite the differences, they probably originally belonged to the same series, but not to the same weave. Not all of them were woven in Brussels, as a series of four in the Museo Diocesano in Burgos is of lower quality and belongs to the Oudenaarde production.<sup>3</sup>

For the interpretation of the scenes, we relied on the sixteenth-century French translation by Jacques Amyot (1513–1593) of Plutarch's description of the life of Alexander (46–120).<sup>4</sup> Thanks to some typical scenes from his life, such as the wound to his thigh in the fight with Darius, there is no doubt whose life is being recounted here, but the interpretation of several scenes remains hypothetical and open to interpretation.<sup>5</sup>

The Geubels family was active in Brussels in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Other tapestries with similar depictions and borders bearing the mark of Jacques I Geubels have been preserved in Poznan and Nuremberg, but they do not belong to the same series.<sup>7</sup> Elements of the border were also found in an edition of

the *Acts of the Apostles* in Vienna with the same weaver's monogram.<sup>8</sup>

What is striking about the realisation of the *Story of Alexander* are the light colours and the frequent use of silk.

Specific to the last quarter of the sixteenth century is the alternation of bouquets with, mostly seated, mythological or allegorical figures in an architectural surrounding. As here, the surrounding is often in the form of an arbour. The fact that borders of the tapestries are the same enabled the seven subjects of the series to be linked.

As was usual in that period, the figures were placed in a landscape and can be identified by the attributes that accompany them. The four figures in the corners represent the four continents: Asia with a turban, America with a plumed headdress, Africa with lions, and Europe with a crown and a cornucopia. No engravings have yet been found that would have served as models for this very fine rendering. This is however the case for the other figures in the horizontal and vertical borders. Inspiration was drawn from the series of engravings *The Seven Liberal Arts* by Maarten de Vos (1531–1603), executed around 1580–90 by Johannes Sadeler I. The figures were copied but the number of attributes was reduced. The figures were actually placed in a landscape rather than an interior as in the engravings.

Less successful variations starting from the same engravings were found around other series with the mark of Martin Reymbouts (active from 1590 to 1619), or without marks.<sup>9</sup>

[D2.1]  
**THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BATTLE  
 OF ALEXANDER AGAINST POROS**

City mark of Brussels and signature of Jacques I Geubels  
 335 × 385 cm  
 Inv. 01BX19970006268

Alexander wants to go to war against Poros, the Indian ruler. On a bank of the river Hydaspes, Poros awaits him with his army, which includes elephants. In preparation for the battle, Alexander orders rafts to be built to cross the raging river. Both armies by the river and the soldiers





[FIG. 1] *The Preparations for the Battle of Alexander against Poros*, from *The Story of Alexander the Great*, Oudenaarde, end of the sixteenth century. Burgos Cathedral.

on the rafts stay in the background. According to the story, this took place during the night, but no allusion is made to this.

The series at Burgos includes another version of this scene (fig. 1). The differences are significant, both in the borders and in the elaboration of the scenes. The way they are elaborated, the density and the type of border point to the work having originated in Oudenaarde. The grouping of the figures in the foreground, but especially the making of the rafts in the background confirm that the subject is the same.

[D2.2]

#### THE MARRIAGE OF ALEXANDER TO STATIRA

Signature of Jacques I Geubels

337 × 510 cm

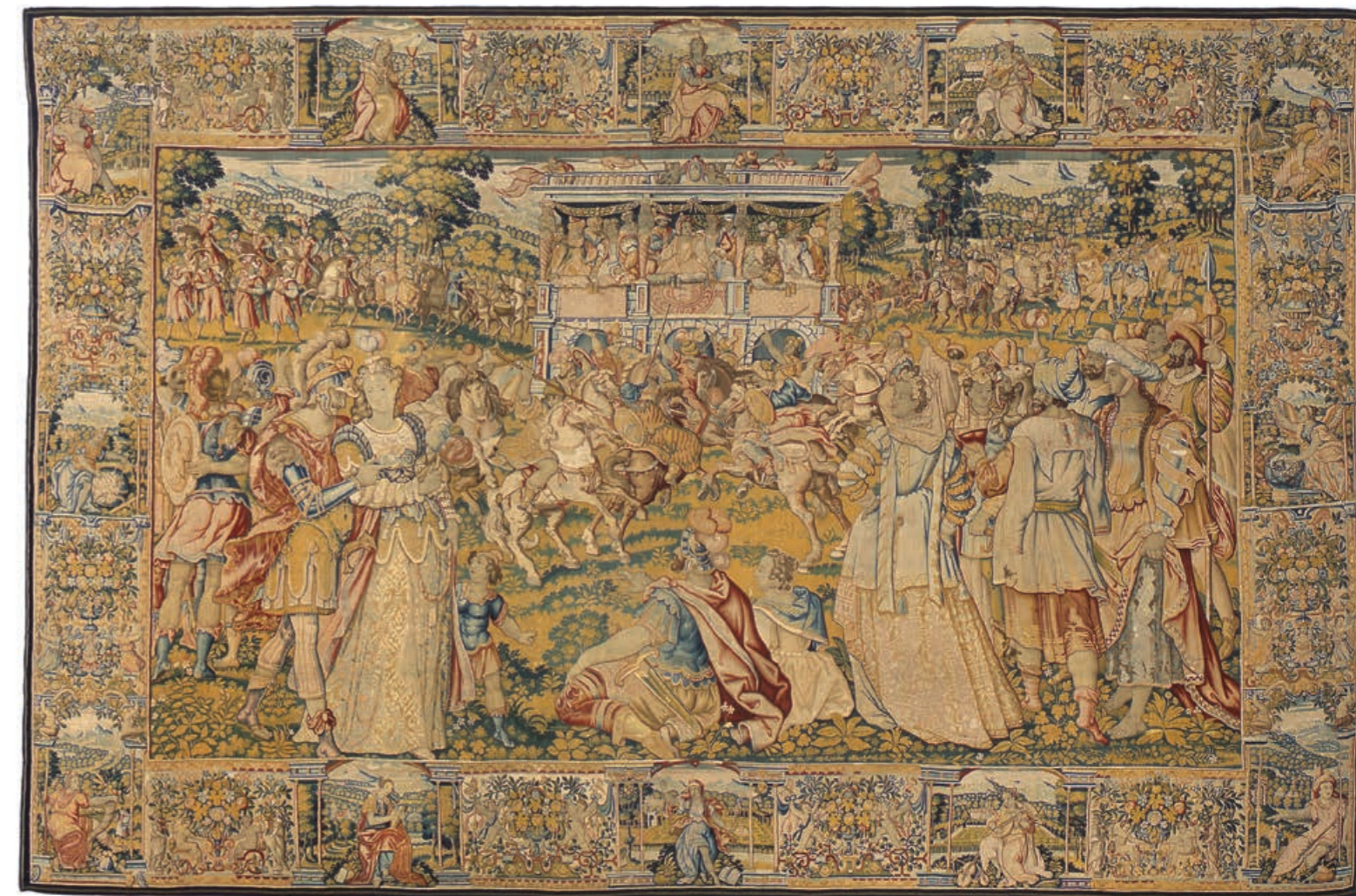
Inv. X19970006167

This probably depicts the marriage of Alexander and Statira, the daughter of the defeated king Darius. In order to perpetuate the ties, a great many Macedonians married Persians. One of the armies in the background has flags with crescents and the other with eagles. Oriental features also include the turbans of some of the horsemen

and spectators observing the battle in front of the tribune. The battle seems to form part of the festivities.

No other editions of this scene were found. [IDM]

1. Little is known about how the EU came to acquire the two tapestries. They probably formed part of the contents of a house that was purchased in Lisbon. For a number of years, they hung in the Berlaymont building in Brussels.
2. An article has already been written about the composition of the series in which all related pieces are depicted, and we therefore refer to this article for more information, see De Meüter 2001 A.
3. The comparison of the same scenes makes this clear, see De Meüter 2001 A, pp. 108–109. The best way to establish this is to compare a piece in the Toms collection with one in Burgos. Because of the difference in density (from 7 to 8 warps per cm to only 4), the design is not only coarser, but the parts that are more difficult to weave, such as the architecture, have also been left out.
4. De Meüter 2001 A, pp. 110–112.
5. Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, pp. 40–41.
6. Delmarcel 1999, p. 365; De Poorter 1979–80.
7. Poznan 1971, no. 5: *Scipio and Hannibal* (inv. MNPI43RW) and *Battle at Nuremberg*, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (inv. Gew. 826).
8. De Meüter 2001 A, pp. 104–105.
9. Idem, pp. 105–107.



[D2.2]





[D3]

[D3]

## TRIUMPH OF CLEOPATRA

Southern Netherlands, Brussels,  
third quarter of the seventeenth century  
Brussels city mark and signatures IAN DE CLERC  
and D.EGGERMANN  
Workshops of Jan le Clerc (active from 1633/34–†1672)  
and Daniel II Eggermans (1604–69)  
Design by Charles Poerson (1609–1667)  
Wool and silk; 375 × 505 cm; 7 to 9 warps per cm  
On long-term loan from the King Baudouin Foundation

Provenance: 2018, deposited by the King Baudouin Foundation  
after being purchased at auction in Brussels<sup>1</sup>

Literature: Brejon de Lavergnée, Reyniès &  
Sainte Fare Garnot 1997, p. 118, no. 38d.

A warlord and a crowned queen ride in triumph on a chariot drawn by four white horses. A winged Victoria holds laurel wreaths over their heads. The chariot is accompanied by warriors carrying trophies and precious loot. This story takes place in Alexandria in Egypt, as indicated by the man with the jug in the foreground, the classical personification of the Nile, and by the lighthouse in the background, a reference to the Pharos of Alexandria, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Here, the insignia that includes SPQR indicates the Roman warrior Antony, riding in triumph with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.

### Commentary

The depiction forms part of a series on the *Life of Cleopatra*, consisting of eight pieces, which tells the story of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra (69–30 BC), mistress of the Roman Antony (82–30 BC), based mainly on Plutarch's text, "Parallel Lives, Life of Antony". This scene appears in fifth position in the series, after four others showing the love between Antony and Cleopatra. This triumph, however, is difficult to situate in Cleopatra's life, and was apparently invented as a highpoint in their story. The scene is followed by the *Battle of Alexandria* (which was lost by Antony, who then committed suicide), the *Meeting of Octavius and Cleopatra*, and *Cleopatra's Suicide*.<sup>2</sup>

Cleopatra was very popular in the seventeenth century as several series were created using her life as a theme.<sup>3</sup>

By comparing the style with his painted oeuvre, one can certainly attribute them to the French painter Charles Poerson (1609–1667), a pupil of Simon Vouet (1590–1649), who was mentioned as a tapestry designer by Félibien in 1688.<sup>4</sup> Five series from Brussels can be attributed to him, including the series of Cleopatra, in addition to one series woven in Aubusson.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that these series were already created in the period from 1645 to 1650.<sup>6</sup>

Cartoons by French artists in the new French style were imported into Brussels manufacturers via merchants, who also exported Brussels tapestries to Paris. The best known of these was Jean Valdor (1616–1675), a diplomat from Liège who lived in Paris and was active there around 1660 as a dealer in tapestries. Around 1650, he introduced Charles Lebrun's models for the *Meleager* series.<sup>7</sup> Charles de La Fontaine (c. 1610/15–1678), a French entrepreneur residing in Brussels, was important for the dissemination of Brussels tapestries in France around 1650. He supplied an edition of the *Story of Cleopatra* in 1662 and 1664.<sup>8</sup> Another dealer, Adrien Parent (c. 1630–1705), who came from Lille but often resided in Brussels, owned two cartoons of the Cleopatra series at the time of his death.<sup>9</sup> In 1673, he commissioned the Le Clerc sons to weave a series of eight tapestries from the *Story of Cleopatra*.<sup>10</sup> This series clearly attracted a great deal of interest and was a success.

The series of Cleopatra is mentioned for the first time in a letter of 1663 sent from Brussels to the collector Johann Adolph Schwarzenberg in Vienna. In 1666, he proceeded with the purchase.<sup>11</sup>

The exact date of design cannot yet be determined. In any case, the series was certainly available for order in 1662. Based on a stylistic analysis, it is assumed to have been created in 1655.<sup>12</sup>

The signatures in the lower horizontal border were cut from the original border and integrated into more recent, reinforced blue edges.<sup>13</sup> Most of the surviving sets or single tapestries from the Cleopatra series can be attributed to the weaving workshop of Jan le Clerc (or de Clerck) and his descendants.<sup>14</sup> Originally from Chalon (France), this weaver was registered as a citizen of Brussels from 1633–34 and died in 1672.<sup>15</sup> One of his sons, who was also



active in tapestry production, was Jan II le Clerc, who was born in 1635 and also died before 1672.<sup>16</sup> So both namesakes qualify as a potential supplier of this series.<sup>17</sup> As far as the second weaver's name is concerned, a father and son with the same name, Daniel Eggermans, can also be considered. Since the first person of that name died before 1642, only the young Daniel – Daniel II – can be regarded as a potential producer of this tapestry.<sup>18</sup>

It can no longer be determined how many editions of the series were woven, but around twenty pieces in total are still known, including four with the Triumph.<sup>19</sup> Except for the dimensions and the borders, there is no difference between the editions that are known.

Seven different types of borders were woven around the tapestries depicting the *Story of Cleopatra*. Three have the same basic composition of flowers twisted around a stick.<sup>20</sup> A contract from 1678 between the weavers Le Clerc and Antwerp merchants mentions that Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601–78) supplied models for borders.<sup>21</sup> Since there are six floral borders, it is impossible to tell which version may have come from this famous painter of flowers. The borders around the *Triumph of Cleopatra* have thicker flowers in combination with fruits. In the centre is an equally thicker brass rod and beautiful corner motifs.<sup>22</sup> The composition and elaboration of the borders reminds us of the sixteenth-century renaissance borders. [IDM]

1. Brussels, Horta Auctions, 18 January 2018, no. 128. The tapestry was previously auctioned in Brussels, see Brussels, Galerie Moderne, 18 December 1990, no. 4163; the locations in which the tapestry was held prior to 1990 are not known. Possibly sold at Christie's in London in 1936, see London, Christie's, 23 April 1936, no. 134.
2. Brejon de Lavergnée, Reyniès & Sainte Fare Garnot 1997, pp. 113–127.
3. Idem, p. 113.
4. Idem, p. 107.
5. Idem, pp. 107–111.
6. Brosens 2007 B, p. 56.
7. Brosens 2005 C, pp. 63, 66.
8. Brosens 2007 B, pp. 53–56, 44–45.
9. Brosens 2005 C, p. 67.
10. Idem, p. 65.
11. Blazkova & Kvetenova 1960.
12. Brejon de Lavergnée, Reyniès & Sainte Fare Garnot 1997, p. 111.
13. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity, given the link that can be clearly established in the documents between the weavers and the series.
14. Idem, p. 114.
15. Brosens 2005 C, p. 69; Brosens 2007 A, p. 379.
16. Brosens 2005 C, p. 70.
17. The latter is also known to have used the signature IAN LECLERC D.I., this being the younger of the two namesakes. They also worked together on a series of Jordaens' *Story of Theodosius the Younger*, see Brosens 2007 A.
18. Brosens 2010, p. 26.
19. London, Christie's, 25 November 1971, no. 136. In Brejon de Lavergnée, Reyniès & Sainte Fare Garnot 1997, pp. 118–119, four others are mentioned at auctions, but two of them are definitely the same and correspond to our copy. The two others are shown, and each is finished with a different type of border.
20. Idem, p. 114. The tapestry mentioned above that was auctioned in London in 1971 is not mentioned by de Reyniès. The quality of the image in the catalogue is not good but we think that the wide border has continuous flowers and is interrupted in the middle above by a cartouche containing an unidentifiable, separate image.
21. Idem, p. 112.
22. De Reyniès does not include illustrations of any pieces with the same border as the example under discussion.

## [D4] THE CARD PLAYERS

France, Lille, c. 1710–20  
 Workshop of Guillaume Werniers (active c. 1701–1738)  
 Designers unknown  
 Wool and silk; 375 × 420 cm; 9 warps per cm  
 On long-term loan from the National Lottery of Belgium (inv. 6598)

Provenance: 1999, purchased by the National Lottery of Belgium from the Galerie Boccara in Paris; on deposit since 2020

Literature: Buffels 2010, pp. 124–125.

In front of an inn, a group of four men and a lady are sitting on a barrel with a plank. Two are playing cards while the others watch. The woman has a liquor jar in her hand. Against the wall of the inn behind the group, a man puts marks on a tally stick to keep track of the debt. Above their heads, a woman watches from the first-floor window. To the right of the table, a dog is waiting patiently. The landscape on the right is broad and elaborated in depth.

In the middle plane, on the right, a shepherd with a flock of sheep is passing by in the direction of a watering hole.

### Commentary

The scene with card players belongs to a series with scenes from country life or Teniers scenes – a theme that was frequently woven in all production centres from the end of the seventeenth century onwards and throughout the eighteenth century. As already mentioned in the discussion of the Brussels series with rural scenes of this type in the collection (cat. 84), the subjects were inspired by the typical genre paintings of the father, David II (1610–1690) and the son David III Teniers (1638–1685). In these paintings, card players are often depicted, but mostly inside an inn.<sup>1</sup> The main group is literally taken from a panel signed by David II Teniers and situated around 1648–50, now in Grenoble, at the Musée des Beaux-Arts (on loan from the Louvre, inv. 1885, fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> The players were moved from an interior to a beautiful open landscape. Only the woman



**[FIG. 1]** David II Teniers, *The Card Players*, oil on panel, 1643–1645. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble, inv. 1885.



in the window has been added. It is possible that she was copied from another painting by Teniers (cat. D5).

This example belongs to the best production created in Lille. Some of the editions bear the marks of Guillaume Werniers with the city mark of Lille.<sup>3</sup>

Werniers came from Brussels and in Lille in 1700, he married the daughter of the weaver Jean de Melter, who also emigrated from Brussels.<sup>4</sup> In 1701, he took over the management of the De Melter workshop. In 1709, Werniers employed fifty weavers.<sup>5</sup> After his death, his second wife Catherine Guys took over the workshop and signed with her name. Their production was considerable and varied.<sup>6</sup> In a petition filed shortly after 1714, the subject is mentioned along with a mention of borders incorporating flowers, fruits, and agricultural implements. Apparently, his father-in-law was already weaving Teniers scenes.<sup>7</sup>

Scenes of country life after Teniers formed the most successful theme of the workshop. They were able to supply different versions, as other tapestries show (cat. 87, D5). A fine example of a similar, signed series is kept in the Palazzo Quirinale in Rome.<sup>8</sup> A complete set probably consisted of eight pieces.<sup>9</sup>

The scene in the Quirinale and other editions, which appeared in the art trade, are identical to this creation.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes, the replicas are somewhat narrower or wider, but the cartoon was followed meticulously.<sup>11</sup> Only the vegetation on the foreground may differ slightly. The borders can also be different.<sup>12</sup>

The beautiful borders draw attention and emphasise the quality. Between the wreaths of flowers and vegetables all kinds of decorative elements were added. Most striking is the agricultural equipment in the middle of the four borders, and the musical instruments, but also the birds in the poultry yard provide a colourful touch. Everything is enclosed by two narrow frames, one with pearls and the other with leaves. A striking feature in this case is the play of light and shade, which provides the border with a sense of depth.

In other editions, slight differences can be observed in the way those narrow frames are elaborated.<sup>13</sup> [IDM]

*Card Players*, were at the art dealership Van Hove in Antwerp in 1960, see the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage and the RMAH, 1700.107. An edition with the city and weaver's mark were sold in Lille, J. Mercier, 27 October 1996, no. 334, and another was in an art dealership in 1987, see Angers 1987, p. 39. The latter had a simple floral border.

11. Among the five pieces preserved in the Quirinale, N. Forti-Grazzini mentions several other editions of the five scenes preserved there.
12. Some editions found in the art trade have a different, simpler border. It is often an imitation of a wooden frame, as sold at Sotheby's, London, 19 November 1982, no. 12, or at Kunsthandel De Vooght in 1988 at the antiques fair in Bruges. But a simpler flower and fruit border was also an option, see Angers 1987, p. 39.
13. Forti-Grazzini 1994, p. 357, and Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, p. 195.



[D4]

1. Klinge 1991, cat. 56 and 64.
2. Klinge in Buffels 2010, p. 125.
3. An almost identical copy with the marks was published in Angers 1987, pp. 38–39.
4. De Meüter 2016, pp. 360–361.
5. Houdoy 1871, p. 100.
6. An enumeration in Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, p. 195.
7. Houdoy 1871, pp. 106, 111.
8. Forti-Grazzini 1994, pp. 356–370. Other preserved series are mentioned in Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, p. 195.
9. Forti-Grazzini 1994, p. 357, and Delmarcel, Reyniès & Hefford 2010, p. 195.
10. Forti-Grazzini 1994, p. 358. Two subjects from the series, including *The*





[D5]

[D5]

## TRIC TRAC PLAYERS

Lille, first half of the eighteenth century  
 City mark L F for "Lille-France" and the mark G. WERNIERS  
 from the workshop of Guillaume Werniers  
 The designer of the landscapes is possibly Pieter Spierinckx  
 (1635–1711)  
 Wool and silk; 290 × 370 cm; 8 warps per cm  
 On long-term loan from the National Lottery of Belgium (inv. 6597)

Provenance: 2006, purchased by the National Lottery of Belgium  
 from the Royal Manufacturers De Wit, Mechelen;<sup>1</sup>  
 on deposit since 2020

Literature: Angers 1987, no. 14; Buffels 2010, pp. 126–128.

This rural scene is made up of groups of figures standing apart. The largest group are Tric Trac players gathered around a table. It was a common pastime, as was playing cards. The elaboration suggests that the composition was originally situated near or inside an inn.

The two figures on the right are standing apart from the scene and also apart from each other. The gardener is leaning on a shovel and is carrying seeds in his apron. Next to him sits a man smoking a pipe and looking the other way.

### Commentary

The depiction of a rural scene as the foreground to a park view belongs to the Teniers genre. Depictions of this type were very popular from the end of the seventeenth century and continued to be woven in all workshops in the eighteenth century. This piece was woven, at the latest, in 1738, as that was the year that Werniers died when working in Lille. His widow later signed editions with the same subjects.

The Tric Trac game is being played at the table. This type of board game was immensely popular in France until the middle of the nineteenth century (cat. 86).<sup>2</sup> There is a strong resemblance between the arrangement of the men around the table in the tapestry and a signed



[FIG. 1] David Teniers II, *Tric Trac Players*, oil on panel transferred to canvas, 1640. Cleveland Art Museum, Cleveland, inv. 1943.377.



painting preserved in the Cleveland Art Museum (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The woman in the window above their table appears again in a tableau depicting card players (cat. D4).

As seen on a tapestry with peasants woven in Oudenaarde (cat. 88), the combination of a very wide, Italianate landscape and what is actually the scene of an inn, is peculiar. Apparently, the working method in Lille was the same as in Oudenaarde, where separate cartoons were used for landscapes and figures. The number of possible permutations was therefore almost infinite.<sup>4</sup> In the Musée du Petit-Palais in Paris,<sup>5</sup> there is a narrower example with the same distant view and the same group of people. The border is also identical and the name of G. Werniers is also woven in. It is interesting that a series of five depictions in exactly the same Spierinckx style was sold in 1930.<sup>6</sup> In addition to the city mark of Lille, these also bear the mark *G. Werniers* or *La veuve de G. Werniers* (The widow of G. Werniers). In one of the tapestries, in the same setting, the same game scene recurs and includes a man on the right noting down the score on a tally stick.

The two figures on the right were also used as the main theme in a narrow example that was part of the – very varied – room in Anet Castle.<sup>7</sup> And both figures occur again, but in mirror image, in another edition with the name of the widow Werniers and with a narrow frame border.<sup>8</sup> Each time, the interaction between the two figures is missing.

The elaboration of the Italianate landscape is very similar to the one that Pieter Spierinckx developed as the backdrop for several series produced by companies in Oudenaarde.<sup>9</sup> In the middle, we see the view of a harbour town and on the right, among the trees, a winding path. On the left and right, the space is filled up with trees. The elaboration of the leaves is also identical to the one that appears in the items produced by Albert Goeman (1680–1761) (cat. 88).

The contacts with the Flemish weavers in Lille, through all kinds of channels, made it possible to transfer the style of this painter.<sup>10</sup> Weavers from Oudenaarde were surely in contact with the Werniers family, the most famous weaving family in Lille. The attribution to Spierinckx or his successor is purely stylistic, as no documents pointing to a direct collaboration between them have yet been found.

The classic frame border resembles a wooden picture frame. Bronze acanthus leaves provide a pleasing contrast with the blue background. In the corners and in the centre of the horizontal upper border are shell motifs. A framed border of this type was found around several tapestries by the Werniers family. [IDM]

1. In 1987, the tapestry formed part of a private collection, see Angers 1987, no. 14.
2. Arras-Aubusson 1988, p. 30.
3. Inv. 1943.377. M. Klinge in Buffels 2010, p. 128.
4. For examples, see De Meûter 2016, p. 362.
5. Inv. OA.77.168, see Arras-Aubusson 1988, no. 03.
6. G. Petit, Paris, 31 March 1930, nos. 85–89, see RMAH: 1725.95-99.
7. Marillier 1932: 73, pl. 60a and De Meûter 2016, p. 362. These six pieces – their current location is unknown – carry no marks, but the border and the various figures in the other representations also occur on tapestries in which the name of Guillaume Werniers is woven in.
8. Angers 1987, no. 15.
9. De Meûter 2016, pp. 360–362.
10. Idem, p. 360.

## [D6] CARD PLAYERS

France, Beauvais, second quarter of the eighteenth century  
Workshop of Antoine (?) Dosse (active 1726–58)  
Designer unknown  
Wool and silk; 310 × 233 cm; 8 warps per cm  
On long-term loan from the National Lottery of Belgium (inv. 7191)

Provenance: 2006, purchased by the National Lottery of Belgium from a private collection;<sup>1</sup> on deposit since 2020

Literature: Angers 1987, no. 16.

Three countrymen are playing cards at a table. Two other peasants are standing around and looking on. The whole company is clearly having a great time. Playing cards was an eminently social pastime that became very popular from the fifteenth century onwards, both at court and in the country.



[FIG. 1] *Inn Scene*, from *Country Scenes*, Beauvais, workshop of Antoine (?) Dosse, second quarter of the eighteenth century. Private collection.

They are sitting in front of a fence at an inn and behind them, a view of a pool, trees and country roads unfolds. On the left, near two farms, there are small depictions of other people.

### Commentary

The depiction of a rural scene as the foreground to a park view belongs to the genre of scenes attributed to Teniers. As stated already, depictions of this type were very popular from the end of the seventeenth century onwards and continued to be woven in all workshops in the eighteenth century. The group of card players around a table, near an inn, is entirely in keeping with the tradition of scenes of rural life woven in other production centres in Brussels, Oudenaarde and Lille. The elaboration of the characters is rather caricaturist due to the strong colours and sharp delineation. The landscape, on the other hand, is fluidly sketched in soft colours.

The classic frame border resembles a wooden picture frame. The most characteristic feature of the border are the bronze rosettes alternating with the central cartouches containing shell motifs. An additional leaf motif accentuates the corners. Pieces with *The Game of the Bulbs* and an *Inn Scene* with this type of border were available on the art market (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup>

Because of the type of moulding and by comparison with marked pieces, this specimen, which has no marks, is attributed to the weaving centre in Beauvais. It is very likely that the cartoon was first used in the workshop of Philippe Behagle, who was appointed director in 1684. Another piece of the same scene<sup>3</sup> gets a different, earlier-framed border and BEHAGLE, the director's name, is woven into the reinforced edge at the bottom right (fig. 2).<sup>4</sup> That same earlier border is also woven around a series of six peasant scenes, including one with *Card Players*, which also bears Behagle's name.<sup>5</sup>

Behagle worked in several places.<sup>6</sup> Just before Colbert's death, he went to Beauvais to lead the reorganisation of the workshop. At the time of the takeover in June 1684, he associated himself with Johannes Baert and Joris Blommaert, both also originally from Oudenaarde.<sup>7</sup> Under his management onwards, new designs were also marketed in





[06]



[FIG. 2] *Card Players*, from *Country Scenes*, Beauvais, workshop of Philippe Behagle, after 1684. Private collection.

Beauvais. In the inventory of the estate in 1706, after his death, *Teniers Scenes* are mentioned among the pieces that were present and were still being woven and in an inventory of the available patterns in 1710, six *Teniers* pieces are mentioned.<sup>8</sup> The link with the popular designs in Oudenaarde is obvious.<sup>9</sup> Identification is difficult, however, because tapestries woven in Beauvais, like those woven in Oudenaarde, usually lack marks.<sup>10</sup> After Philippe's death, his widow and sons continued the business.<sup>11</sup>

In an inventory drawn up in 1722 by the director Noël-Antoine Mérou, the cartoons are still in the workshop. The type of border involved was probably first woven under his direction in around 1724. According to documents concerning the Beauvais factory, the tapestry was made under Dosse in 1726. Antoine Dosse, the father, was active from 1726 to 1758.<sup>12</sup> The piece with the *Card Players* measured four ells. Six cartoon strips were needed for its realisation.<sup>13</sup> [IDM]

1. In 1987, the tapestry formed part of a private collection, see Angers 1987, no. 14.
2. At Auction in Paris, Francis Guiraud, 21–22 March 1935, n° 142 and Lille, Mercier & Cie, 12 May 2019, lot 484. 304 x 209. Thanks to colleague Pascal Bertrand for the information.
3. Formerly of the De Wit collection, Mechelen.
4. Old publications of the same tapestry make no mention of marks, see Marillier 1932, pl. 66b, Göbel 1923, pl. 460, and Göbel 1928, pl. 217. In the illustrations, the tapestry looks the same, but the name cannot be read.
5. Château de Plessis-Macé, 30 September to 5 October 1888, no. 17. The dimensions are the same. There is a chance that the pieces in the 1888 auction are the same as those in the 1909 auction and those in the Bernheimer collection in the 1920s. A copy published by Weigert as

originating from "Vente de F...12 juin 1902" may also possibly have belonged to the same room, see Weigert 1964, p. 339. However, other editions have come on the market, because the scene of two musicians and a woman was found with a very similar border. It is identical to the depiction in Bernheimer's series, except for the decorative element in the centre of the upper border, see London, Christie's, 1 October 1998, no. 240.

6. He was born in Oudenaarde and sent to Paris at the age of nineteen to train with the Flemish weavers who had emigrated there. When Oudenaarde came under French rule, he was called back in 1672 at the behest of Minister Colbert and in 1677, he settled in Tournai with a workshop of about fifty employees, see Coural & Gastinel-Coural 1992, p. 17.
7. From the entries in the parish registers, it can be deduced that the majority of the weavers recruited came from Brussels or Oudenaarde.
8. Coural & Gastinel-Coural, pp. 27–28. A set of six pieces, with Behagle's name woven-in, was sold at the Château de Plessis-Macé 30 September to 5 October 1888, nos. 15–20. The subject of no. 17 is *The Card Players*. Only the tapestry with the *Kermesse* is pictured. A *Ball Game* with the same border was sold in Paris, the Suarès collection, 1–2 July 1909, no. 260, see RMAH 1700.73. Marillier also mentions several *Teniers* scenes with the same border, including, in a series of five pieces in the Bernheimer collection (auctioned at Christie's on 20 May 1909), the theme of card players, see Marillier 1932, pp. 96–97, pl. 65–66. It is clear that the style of these examples is identical to *The Card Players* and that they belonged to the same edition.
9. We know that Pieter Spierinckx (1635–1711) supplied patterns to Behagle and that the Oudenaarde painter Simon III de Paep (1663–1751), Behagle's cousin, went on to run the drawing school in Beauvais from 1684 onwards. At the same time, his brother was working for the merchant Van Verren in Oudenaarde, see De Meüter 2016, p. 358.
10. Illustrative of the confusion is the fact that in 1923, in his survey of production in the Low Countries, H. Göbel first considers a version of the card players in the Bernheimer collection, Munich, to be an Oudenaarde product, but a few years later, when he reviewed production in the Romanic countries, he classified a *Kermesse* from the same room at Bernheimer as Beauvais, see Göbel 1923, pl. 460, and Göbel 1928, pl. 217.
11. Coural & Gastinel-Coural 1992, p. 31.
12. For further information about this, see a future publication by Charissa Bremer-David and Pascal-François Bertrand, *Registres de fabrication de la manufacture de Beauvais, 1724–1793*. This is a publication from the Mobilier National, the Getty Center and the Université Bordeaux-Montaigne.
13. It is striking that the ell, the unit of measurement in Flanders, was still being used in Beauvais. As in the Southern Netherlands, the pieces belonging to a room consisted of different widths. For the specific tapestry, Pascal Bertrand gives the following reference: *Registres de fabrication de la manufacture de Beauvais, Archives du Mobilier national, Paris, B 161, fol. 78*.





[D7-1]

[D7]  
**LEGEND OF THE SACRED HOSTS**

Six tapestries  
 Southern Netherlands, Brussels, 1769–85  
 City mark of Brussels and signature F. V.D.BORGHT and IAC.V.D.BORGHT of the workshop of Jan-Frans (1697–1774) and Jacob II van der Borght (†1794)  
 Designers – Maximiliaan de Hase (1713–81) and Jan de Landtsheer (1750–1828)  
 Wool, silk and gold thread; 7 to 8 warps per cm  
 On long-term loan from the Cathedral of St Gudula and St Michael, Brussels

Provenance: Deposited in 1994 by the Cathedral of Saint Gudula and Saint Michael

Literature: Gallemaerts 1975; Brussels 1994 B, pp. 85–92; Brosens 2013.

History

Two of the tapestries (1 and 5) were donated to the cathedral in 1770 by Nicolas-Henri Luyckx (†1783), a citizen of the city, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Miracle of the Blessed Sacrament. The next two tapestries were woven as the result of a commission by Johan Jozef Gabriel von Golden van Santberg, Baron of Lombeek, Lord of Strythem (1730–96) in 1780. The last two may also have been donated by him.<sup>1</sup>

Commentary

The series is very closely linked to Brussels for several reasons, as is the series known as the *Legend of Our Lady of the Sablon* (cat. 11). First of all, there is the depiction, which tells a local legend. It is also the final series to have been created and, moreover, was only woven once by the last tapestry workshop in Brussels. Lastly, it was destined for the local Cathedral of Saint Gudula and Saint Michael.

The Chapel of the Holy Sacrament was already built in the Church of St Gudula between 1436 and 1438. The current chapel dates from 1530–42. In the 1530s, it was decorated with stained-glass windows by Bernard van Orley and Michiel Coxcie.<sup>2</sup> As long ago as the fifteenth century,

tapestries were hung in the church during ceremonies. From a donation in 1539, it is known that these tapestries included two subjects from the legend. In 1777, they were still preserved in the church.<sup>3</sup>

The miracle of the bleeding hosts as proof of the real presence of Christ during the Eucharist played an important role in positioning the Catholics opposite the Jews and Protestants.<sup>4</sup> The memory was kept alive with an annual procession and festivities every fifty years. This was accompanied each time by new editions of the story.

The legend originates from an event that supposedly took place in 1370.<sup>5</sup> A Brussels rabbi named Jonathas was taken by a desire to possess the sacred hosts. One day, he asked a Christian Jew, Jan van Leuven, if he could take care of that for him. Van Leuven broke into St Catherine's Chapel and stole the ciborium containing the hosts. Fourteen days after Jonathas received the hosts, he was murdered on his estate in Enghien. In her flight to Brussels, his widow took the hosts with her (now the first scene of the series). On Good Friday in the year 1370, the Brussels Jews decided to avenge Jonathas. To cool their anger they gathered in the synagogue on the Stuiverstraat and stabbed the hosts on the table with daggers. As if by miracle and to their great surprise, blood sprang out. In order to get rid of the evidence of their misdeeds, they asked a young woman named Catherine, for a fee, to take the ciborium to Cologne to some other Jews. But Catherine was frightened and gave the ciborium to the chaplain of Our Lady of the Chapel Church (Kappellekerk), which was followed by an investigation into the perpetrators. The Jews were arrested and locked up. The diocese of Cambrai decided to keep two of the hosts in the Chapel church, while the others were transferred to Saint Gudula's, the most important church of the city. The transfer took place by means of a solemn procession that would be staged every year to celebrate the Blessed Sacrament of Miracles.

The penultimate scene takes place about two centuries after the first developments. In 1579 during the period of the iconoclasm, the hosts were entrusted to a priest for safekeeping. After his death, his sister, Joanna Baerts, hid them in a beam and later returned them to the Archbishop of Mechelen, Jean Hauchin. The final scene of the whole



story can be seen as a kind of thanksgiving dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament. After all, various miracles were supposedly performed by the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>6</sup>

Thanks to the memoir book of one of the designers, Maximiliaan de Hase (1713–81), we have information about the origin of the series.<sup>7</sup> In 1769 he supplied two cartoons of the series for Jan-Frans van der Borch (the second and fifth tableaux).<sup>8</sup> The person who ordered them is not mentioned, but according to a document they were donated by Nicolaas Henri Luyckx.<sup>9</sup> In 1780, at the request of Baron van Lombeek, he started on the third piece. From the description it can be deduced that this is the first scene of the story.<sup>10</sup> A few months later, the same person ordered, via Jan-Frans van der Borch, the fourth tapestry on which the Jews are captured (the third tableau). Shortly after the delivery, the painter died. The final scene is dated 1784 and includes the signature of the painter, Jan de Landtsheer (1750–1828), in mirror image.<sup>11</sup> The *Procession* was possibly also provided by him. It has not been determined whether these canvases were for the same patron, Baron van Lombeek.

Older depictions of the legend formed a source of inspiration for the series of tapestries. The first of these was the very successful edition of the legend by Steven Ydens entitled *Historie van het H. Sacrament van Mirakelen*

(Story of the Holy Sacrament of Miracles) of 1605, which was reproduced numerous times up to 1670. Four of the subjects depicted in the tapestries are included in the twelve engravings. All subjects also formed part of the cycle of twenty paintings commissioned in 1719–20 that hung in the church.<sup>12</sup> The ensemble was commissioned by abbots of the Brabant monasteries to mark the 350th anniversary of the legend. In his publication to mark the occasion, De Cafmeyer included sixteen engravings after the paintings.<sup>13</sup> One of the paintings was donated by the abbot of Grimbergen and was painted by Jan van Orley, the famous pattern painter and uncle of De Hase (cat. 80–83).

The cartoons from fifty years later are in line with these compositions and are based upon similar compositional schemes. The effect is more theatrical, however, in that the designers also took into account the scale and the high location in which the tapestries were hanging in the church. The dynamic, moving poses in various creations and the contrasting colours are striking. The painting by Frans Vervloet (1795–1872) showing the baptism of King Leopold I's son in the cathedral in 1833, now in Beauvais,<sup>14</sup> shows the position of the tapestries high up in the central nave (fig. 1).



[FIG. 1] Frans Vervloet, *The Baptism of Prince Louis-Philippe de Belgique in 1833*, oil on panel, musée Départemental de l'Oise, Beauvais, inv. 90.32.



[07.2]



[07.3]





[D7.4]



[D7.5]

It is clear that De Hase was well acquainted with his uncle's work, as various figures in the *Triumph of Mars* (cat. 8i) – the horse on the left, the prisoner being carried along and the horseman with the raised sword at the back – were clearly inspired by it. Apparently, however, by the end of his life, he was also familiar with the latest trend, Neoclassicism, which was making ground from the 1770s onwards. The only expression of this style in South Netherlandish tapestry art is *The Wife of Jonathas Handing Over Hosts to the Jews*. The result was apparently not convincing, because for his next creation, *The Imprisonment of the Guilty in the Stone Gate*, he returned to the familiar Neo-Baroque idiom.<sup>15</sup>

Maximiliaan de Hase has received more attention in recent decades.<sup>16</sup> He was regularly mentioned in eighteenth-century travelogues or surveys. From his memorial book, we learn that he was a much sought after and well-paid painter. Many of his paintings still hang in churches in Brussels and the surrounding area.

Jan de Landtsheer is less well known. He was enrolled at the Academy in Brussels in 1779 and developed as a follower of the neoclassical painter Andries Cornelis Lens (1739–1821).<sup>17</sup>

Despite being produced by different hands, the series is quite homogeneous, not only because of the exquisite and refined colouring, with some bright red accents in the fabrics, but also because of the decors consisting of classical architecture.

After the closure of the Leyniers workshop in 1768, father and son Van der Borcht ran the last weaving workshop in Brussels.<sup>18</sup> They still had at least four looms. Jacob II attempted to increase interest in tapestries by submitting a proposal to establish a school for tapestry weavers in 1777. For four years, he would train four new candidate weavers on payment of a fee. His request was rejected by the Brussels authorities because, in their opinion, the decline would be inevitable due to the changes in taste, wealth and habits.<sup>19</sup> In 1788, he asked for support for a second time. When Jacob II died in 1794 without any descendants, the production of tapestries in the Southern Netherlands stopped.

The framed borders are very narrow with a simple, repeating motif.

[D7. 1]  
**THE WIFE OF JONATHAS HANDS OVER THE HOSTS TO THE JEWS IN BRUSSELS**

City mark of Brussels and IAC.V.D.BORGHT<sup>20</sup>  
 Design by Maximiliaan de Hase, 1781–84  
 406 × 359 cm

The Jews sit around a table covered with a damask tablecloth. In front of it are two women and a little boy, the son of Jonathas. The widow of Jonathas hands the ciborium with the hosts to another woman who will put them in a bag. This scene also takes place within classical architecture with a drape in the upper-right corner.

[D7. 2]  
**THE CUTTING OF THE HOSTS**

City mark of Brussels and F.V.D.BORGHT  
 Design by Maximiliaan de Hase, 1769–70  
 397 × 380 cm

Here, the Jews pierce the hosts with their daggers. Blood flows in abundance and several figures fall over backwards out of fright. The cruelty of the scene is evident from the faces and the postures. The scene takes place within an architectural setting with a large arch and dome and a drape at the top right.

[D7. 3]  
**THE IMPRISONMENT OF THE GUILTY IN THE STONE GATE**

City mark of Brussels and IAC.V.D.BORGHT  
 Design by Maximiliaan de Hase, 1781–84  
 403 × 364 cm

After an investigation, the guilty Jews are taken by night to the prison in the *Steenpoort* (Stone Gate), an old city gate of the first wall, where they will be locked up. The soldiers and prisoners are surrounded by spectators. The bodily postures are contorted. The city by night with its sparse lighting creates a specific atmosphere.

[D7. 4]  
**THE HOSTS ARE TRANSFERRED IN PROCESSION FROM THE OUR LADY OF THE CHAPEL CHURCH TO THE CHURCH OF SAINT GUDULA**

City mark of Brussels and IAC.V.D.BORGHT  
 Design attributed to Jan de Landtsheer, 1784–85  
 415 × 335 cm

The transfer to Saint Gudula's takes place in a procession in which the most important inhabitants of the city, nobility and citizens, are present. Under a red canopy, Monsignor Godfried de Vos, Abbot of Grimbergen, walks with a group of prelates. In the building in the background some people are leaning out of the window. This scene is probably the least "busy" composition of the series.



[D7. 5]

**PRESENTATION OF THE RELIQUARY  
TO ARCHBISHOP JEAN HAUCHIN, IN 1585**

City mark of Brussels and F.V.D.BORGHT  
Design by Maximiliaan de Hase, 1769–70  
420 × 380 cm

The scene takes place around a table covered with a red cloth. In the foreground, Jean van Cattenbroeck gives the reliquary to the Archbishop of Mechelen, Jean Hauchin, kneeling before him. In front on the left, Joanna is kneeling, while behind her, one can see the ladder that leads to the storage place in a beam where she hid the ciborium after the death of her brother, the priest. The company includes the cathedral's pastor chaplain, Jean Meulemeester, pastor Josse Hauwaerts and pastor chaplain Guillaume Meert.

Here too, a large cloth is draped against the wall at the back.

[D7. 6]

**THE SUPPLICATION BEFORE THE ALTAR**

City mark of Brussels and IAC.V.D.BORGHT  
Signed in the tiles on the left JAN DE LANDTSHEER 1784  
415 × 368 cm

The hosts were often invoked for help and numerous miracles were attributed to them. Before the richly decorated altar with the sacred hosts, a moving scene is taking place. Various figures are begging for salvation or healing. [IDM]

1. Until the analysis of M. de Hase's memorial book (see Brosens 2013), it was thought that the last four had been purchased by the chapter from the canons in 1785, see Lefèvre 1970, p. 140.
2. Brussels 2019, pp. 69–71.
3. Lefèvre 1970, pp. 141–142.
4. Brosens 2013, p. 86. There were also two tapestries in the chapel in the sixteenth century.
5. Gallemaerts 1975, pp. 155–160.
6. According to Lefèvre, a specific miracle is told here about a blind girl, see Lefèvre 1970, p. 140.
7. Brosens 2013, p. 84–85.
8. After weaving, he would retouch the canvases, possibly because the intention was to hang them in the church to replace the precious tapestries. There is no further trace of these canvases in the cathedral.
9. Lefèvre 1970, p. 141.
10. K. Brosens rightly observes that the earlier and constantly repeated interpretation that Catherine is in this scene receiving the hosts to bring to Cologne is incorrect, see Brosens 2013, p. 85.
11. The fact that it appears in mirror image indicates that the painter was not familiar with pattern painting, because then he would have known that the woven result is a mirror image of the cartoon.
12. Brosens 2013, p. 86. There are descriptions of the cycle and thirteen works are still in existence. For the anniversary in 1735, a cycle of six new paintings was ordered, but these were lost during the French Revolution.
13. De Cafmeyer 1720.
14. Beauvais, MUDO (musée départemental de l'Oise), inv. 90.32.
15. Brosens 2013, p. 87.
16. Coeckelbergh 1976; Scheelen 1986.
17. Huyghens 2000, pp. 247–248.
18. Brosens 2004, pp. 347–350.
19. Wauters 1878, pp. 377–380.
20. The IAC stands for Jacobus A Castro, the Italian translation of his surname. This term was also used by his great-grandfather and founder of the dynasty, see Gallemaerts 1975, p. 161.



[D7.6]



[D8]

## TOWARDS THE IDEAL



[D8]

Belgium, Brussels

Cartoon after a painting from 1897, woven from 1908 to 1920

Workshop: Signature FECIT FERNANDE DUBOIS 1908–20

for Fernande Dubois (1880–1949)

Design: Signature INVENIT CONSTANT MONTALD 1897

for Constant Montald (1862–1944)

Wool, silk and cotton; 350 × 770 cm; 5 warps per cm

Deposited by the Royal Palace, Brussels

Provenance: Donated in the name of the province of Brabant to the crown prince, subsequently King Leopold III, and Princess Astrid of Sweden on the occasion of their marriage in 1926; since 2021, on long-term loan to the Royal Museums of Art and History

The composition is made up of two planes. The rear plane depicts an idyllic landscape of woods and rocks. The action takes place in the foreground, situated on the banks of a river. On the left of the tapestry is a group of three figures: a man, a woman and an angel. They are dressed in lavish robes. The angel points with his right arm to the boat in the middle-right of the composition. The vessel is crewed by four standing angels with oars. The central figure is mooring a boat at the quay. The man and woman, identified by the inscription “Art” on the banderole as the personification of art, are invited to take their places on the boat that will carry them to the ideal.

The border of the tapestry is decorated with floral motifs.

### Commentary

*Towards the Ideal* is the masterpiece of Fernande Dubois, an artist who wielded needle and thread and wove only a few tapestries.

In December 1899 at the Salon of Religious Art in the Musée Moderne in Brussels, Fernande Dubois exhibited a small banner of the Blessed Sacrament. This was a silk embroidery, about which the catalogue explicitly stated that it was completely handmade.<sup>1</sup> It was at that exhibition that she was noticed by the Reverend Henry Moëller, one of the event organisers. He encouraged Dubois to take an interest in tapestry weaving in the hope that her

involvement would breathe new life into this technique which, in his opinion, had been completely lost. Fernande Dubois bought a loom with a high warp. Joseph Destrée, curator of the Royal Museums of the Cinquantenaire, commissioned a cartoon of the tapestry *St Anne, Mary and Jesus* (cat. 15), allowing Dubois to make a perfect replica of it in her Brussels workshop. It was Moëller and Destrée’s intention that, as a result of the technical perfection of the copy, Ms Dubois would be able to convince important artists to supply her with modern cartoons.<sup>2</sup> In March 1908, her tapestry was exhibited at the Cercle Artistique et Littéraire de Bruxelles where it received a very favourable appraisal from Sander Pierron. This art critic also expressed the wish that given her remarkable abilities, Fernande Dubois would be able to create a modern work.<sup>3</sup> The mission was successful because shortly afterwards the idealistic painter Constant Montald provided her with a cartoon. He made this after his painting *Towards the Ideal*, which dates from 1897.<sup>4</sup>

At the time when Montald supplied Dubois with a cartoon, the Belgian artist was enjoying fame. After training at the Academy of Ghent and the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, he won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1886, after which he lived in Italy until 1891. In 1896, he was appointed to the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels. From 1894, he took part in numerous exhibitions with compositions in which he tried to elevate art above reality, in order to express the idea. The cartoon he supplied to Dubois dates from the period in which his work was heavily influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites.

It would take Fernande Dubois twelve years, from 1908 to 1920, to weave this monumental work. It is said that her only assistance was from her sister Jeanne.<sup>5</sup> In May 1920, the tapestry was finished and it was exhibited for the first time in the studio of the painter Constant Montald, where it was admired by Queen Elisabeth.<sup>6</sup> During the summer, the general public could go and see it in the Gothic Hall in Brussels Town Hall.<sup>7</sup> In the winter of 1920–21, it was on view in New York in one of the salons of the American Art Gallery. The speeches by the Belgian ambassador and the American tapestry specialist George Leland Hunter praised the work, stressed the importance of Belgian tapestry weaving, and called for a genuine renaissance of the





[FIG. 1] The tapestry exhibited at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* held in Paris, 1925.

art. This would require the establishment of a weaving school in Brussels, which Dubois hoped to finance with the proceeds from the sale of her tapestry to an American collector.<sup>8</sup> However, a suitable collector was not found.

The tapestry was exhibited to the public again in 1925, on the occasion of the *Exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* held in Paris (fig. 1).<sup>9</sup> It was hung in a room in the Belgian pavilion designed by architect Victor Horta.

The entire room was decorated with work by Constant Montald. The painter had first presented his monumental work *La France et la Belgique élevant leurs enfants à la source du droit et de la justice* (France and Belgium Raise their Children at the Source of Law and Justice). After the exhibition, the work would remain in France because it had been donated to the French state in 1923.<sup>10</sup> The tapestry *Towards the Ideal* was chosen as a logical companion to the painting. For the outer walls, Montald designed stained-glass windows on the theme of Apollo and the Muses. During the exhibition in Paris, the tapestry was also offered for sale for the astronomical sum of 450,000 Belgian francs.<sup>11</sup> Although the work was able to count on favourable press reviews that praised in particular

the beauty of the colours and the technical finesse, the international jury was initially not convinced and only awarded the gold medal, because the composition was not considered modern. The modern character of the exhibited works was nevertheless a requirement under the rules of the exhibition. After arguments submitted by the Belgian Commissioner General, Count Adrien van der Burch, in which he stated that it was impossible for the weaver to perform a more modern composition with the same perfection in a limited timeframe, the higher jury ultimately awarded the prestigious *Grand Prix*, the highest award.<sup>12</sup>

The marriage of Crown Prince Leopold and Princess Astrid in 1926 was the ideal opportunity to give the tapestry a final destination. In October 1926, a committee was set up to organise a national subscription among the Belgian population in order to purchase *Towards the Ideal* as a gift from the people to the princely couple.<sup>13</sup> A similar idea to donate the tapestry to Queen Elisabeth by means of fundraising had already been put forward in 1922, without result.<sup>14</sup> In order to involve the population fully, the tapestry was presented in the showcase of the *Au Bon Marché* department store in Brussels in November

1926, the month in which the wedding took place.<sup>15</sup> On 15 January 1927, the work was officially handed over to the princely couple during a reception held by the various committees on behalf of the Province of Brabant.<sup>16</sup> It is not known where it hung in the successive residences of Leopold III.

Although it was the original idea, Fernande Dubois ultimately did not set up her own weaving school with the proceeds from the sale of the tapestry. From 1931, she became a teacher of tapestry weaving at the Academy of Fine and Decorative Arts in Tournai. From the 1930s onwards, she also carried out restoration work on the collection of European textiles at the request of the Royal Museums of Art and History.<sup>17</sup>

Although Fernande Dubois hardly ever wove tapestries herself, so far as is known, the collaboration with Constant Montald was not a one-off. In 1931 she had made the tapestry *On this Blessed Day* after a cartoon by Montald from 1928.<sup>18</sup> [WA]

1. Brussels 1899, p. 40, no. 242.

2. Moëller 1907, pp. 6–7. Moëller gave the tapestry of *St Anne, Mary and Jesus* the title *The Eucharist*.

3. Sander Pierron, "Au Cercle Artistique et Littéraire. Les derniers ouvrages de Paul Hermanus. Une tapisserie bruxelloise. Salonnet de pastels et dessins rehaussés", in *L'Indépendance belge*, 79/83, 23 March 1908, p. 4. The current whereabouts of the tapestry is unknown.

4. The painting is preserved in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. 10609.

5. "Un hommage aux fiancés princiers", in *L'Indépendance belge*, 96/280, 7 October 1926, p. 1.

6. "Echos. La Reine et les artistes", in *L'Indépendance belge*, 91/141, 20 May 1920, p. 2.

7. "Fernande Dubois", in *La Libre Belgique*, 37/166, 14 June 1920, p. 4.

8. "L'Art et la tapisserie belge aux États-Unis", in *La Libre Belgique*, 37/362, 28 December 1920, p. 2; "Tapisserie belge à New York", in *Le Soir*, 36/46, 15 February 1921, p. 3; "L'Art belge aux États-Unis", in *L'Indépendance Belge*, 92/70, 11 March 1920, p. 2.

9. Brussels 1925, p. 112, group II, class 13.

10. The tapestry hangs in the stairwell of the Law Faculty of the Sorbonne, Place du Panthéon 12 in Paris.

11. In 1925, the average annual salary of a Belgian state employee was 6250 Belgian francs.

12. Adriaenssens 1996–1997, vol. 1, pp. 110–112.

13. "Pour offrir un cadeau de nocces au prince Léopold", in *Vers L'Avenir*, 9/235, 6 October 1926, p. 2; "Le Mariage du Prince Léopold. La souscription nationale", in *L'Indépendance belge*, 96/286, 13 October 1926, p. 1; "Tapisserie Merveilleuse", in *Le Soir*, 40/290, 17 October 1926, p. 1.

14. "Pour un chef-d'œuvre belge", in *Journal de Bruxelles*, 102/66, 7 March 1922, p. 1; "Offrande à la Reine", in *La Libre Belgique*, 39/134, 14 May 1922, p. 1.

15. "La tapisserie 'Vers l'Idéal'", in *Le Soir*, 40/305, 1 November 1926, p. 1. "La tapisserie qui sera offerte au prince Léopold et la princesse Astrid est exposée au 'Bon Marché'", in *La Nation Belge*, 9/308, 3 November 1926, p. 3.

16. "Une réception au Palais Belle-Vue", in *Le Soir*, 41/16, 16 January 1927, p. 3; "Au Palais de Belle-Vue. Le duc et la duchesse de Brabant ont reçu samedi une délégation des Comités de la Souscription Nationale", in *La Nation Belge*, 10/16, 16 January 1927, p. 3.

17. Royal Museums of Art and History, Director's Archives (1935–1943), 612/54/20.

18. Collection of the town hall of Woluwe-Saint-Lambert.





[D9.1]

[D9]

## ANCIENT AND MODERN BELGIUM

Two tapestries

Belgium, Mechelen, workshop of Gaspard de Wit (1892–1971),  
c. 1936

Design by Floris Jaspers (1889–1965)

Wool and silk; 6 to 7 warps per cm

Provenance: The tapestries are owned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs – *Ancient Belgium* was given on deposit to the Design Museum in Ghent in 1983, followed by *Modern Belgium* in 1995; both were transferred to the Cinquantenaire Museum in 2018

### Commentary

The two tapestries were part of a series of five, all designed by Jaspers, which were exhibited together at the World's Fair in New York in 1939–40.

After the success of the international exhibition in Paris of 1937 (cat. 103), a similar formula was chosen two years later for the World's Fair in New York. On that occasion, too, the aim was also to present Belgium's art and crafts and industries as favourably as possible by commissioning selected artists. Henry van de Velde was also in charge of the artistic committee.<sup>1</sup>

The five monumental tapestries hung in the Belgian Pavilion's Hall of Honour. Besides the two woven by De Wit, two more were supplied by Braquenié (cat. 96–97), *The Founding of New York* and *The Work of the Missionaries in the United States*, plus one by Chadoir (cat. 104), *Relations Between Belgium and the United States Before and After World War*.<sup>2</sup> Like the designs shown in 1937, the compositions are flat and very busy. Alongside the monumental tapestries, smaller examples were also shown, including some woven in the workshop of Elisabeth De Saedeleer (cat. 102) to a design by Edgard Tytgat. Two of these creations had already shown in Paris.<sup>3</sup>

However, the momentum of a revival was lost as World War II began shortly afterwards. An additional factor was the choice by the major workshops to produce more commercial realisations, and these were not the new designs. For the participating workshops, such as the manufacture of Gaspard De Wit, the exhibitions were important as a

means of enhancing their public profile and as a result of the financial input provided by subsidies from the Belgian Government.<sup>4</sup> But alongside these designs by contemporary artists, the workshop continued to weave *tapisseries de style*, including copies of tapestries from the collection of the Royal Museums of Art and History.<sup>5</sup> The Chadoir workshop also continued to focus on this type of work.<sup>6</sup> For Van de Velde, the choice to make use of commercial and therefore conservative drawings was a great disappointment. The cost price of a tapestry was the main factor that stood in the way of a genuine revival.<sup>7</sup>

Floris Jaspers was therefore engaged by Van de Velde in both 1937 and 1939 to supply new designs for the tapestry workshops (cat. 103).<sup>8</sup> Jaspers received his training at the Royal Academy and the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp. With the art circle known as Selection, he belonged to the modernist avant-garde in Antwerp during the interwar period. From the 1920s onwards, figurative expressionism became the dominant movement in his oeuvre. Jaspers was extremely versatile.<sup>9</sup> In his monumental designs for tapestries, as in his other work, he returns to tradition by situating all parts of the composition in a single plane.<sup>10</sup> His designs were important for the revival of monumental art in Belgium.

[D9.1]

### ANCIENT BELGIUM

Signatures: DE WIT G. TEXIT  
and JESPERS PINXIT, bottom right  
490 × 582 cm

Inscription at bottom in Latin: HINC PATRUM PATRIAE PARVIVAE SPIRAT IMAGO ["Here the image is permeated by the vivid homeland of the ancestor"].

In the foreground are well-known figures from the Middle Ages in Flanders, including Jacob van Artevelde, Jan Breydel, and Pieter De Coninck, Philip the Good, a count of Flanders and a crusader. They are depicted against the silhouette of famous buildings such as the bellfries of Ghent, Bruges and Aalst. At the top of the image, we see a depiction of battle (the Battle of the Golden Spurs of 11 July 1302).



[D9.2]

MODERN BELGIUM

Signatures: DE WIT G. TEXT  
and JESPERS PINXIT, bottom left  
490 × 582 cm

Bottom caption in Latin: REGIS AD EXEMPLAR ["At the Kings' Example"].

In the foreground, next to the representation of Justice with the scales, the four kings of the Belgians from the time of Belgium's creation in 1830 to the reign of King Leopold III, are each framed by an image contemporary to their reign. From left to right: King Leopold I (1831–65), King Albert I (1909–34), King Leopold III (1934–51), and King Leopold II (1865–1909). Behind them is an evocation of the country's prosperity, with all kinds of industries and industrial activities. [IDM]

1. Poulain 2006, pp. 246–249.
2. These three tapestries remained in the United States, see Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, p. 71.
3. Idem, p. 252; De Meûter 1993, p. 78, cat. 51–56.
4. Brosens & Maes De Wit 2019, p. 71.
5. Idem, pp. 72–73. Twenty-two copies of the tapestry *Sheepshearing* (cat. 6) were woven.
6. N. Poulain in Antwerp 1994, p. 109.
7. Idem, p. 73; Poulain in Antwerp 1994, p. 109, and Poulain 2006, p. 253.
8. In Bursens 1943, ill. 192, the attribution "Exhibition Paris 1937" appears under the photograph of *Old Belgium*, even though the tapestry was not displayed on that occasion. The author also erroneously sites the 1938 exhibition in New York, see idem, ill. 187–189.
9. He drew and painted on canvas, wood and behind glass. He made woodcuts, linocuts and etchings, see W. Caluwaert in Merksem 1981 (n.p.).
10. Bursens 1943, p. 13.



[D9.2]



# MARKS AND SIGNATURES OF MANUFACTURERS AND ARTISTS

## CITY MARKS

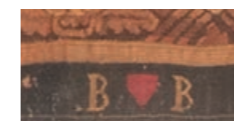
### BRUSSELS (selection)



[28]



[50]



[73]



[83]

### BRUGES



[59]

### DELFT



[45]

### OUDENAARDE



[36]

## PASTRANA



[47]

## CATALOGUE NO.

### CAT. 19



*Lenaart Knoest*

### CAT. 20



*Jan de Roy*

### CAT. 27



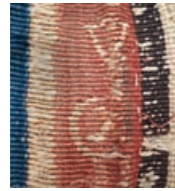
*Willem de Kempeneer*



*Bernard van Orley*



CAT. 28



*Christian de Visch*

CAT. 31



*Frans Schavaert*

CAT. 32



*Antoine Leyniers (?)*

CAT. 33



*City mark of Enghien (part)*

CAT. 36



*Arnold Cobbaut / Anton van Coppenolle*



*AC - Unknown monogram*

CAT. 37



*City mark of Oudenaarde and Pieter van Kerken (?)*

CAT. 39



*Cornelis Mattens*

CAT. 40, 41



*Maarten Reymbouts*

CAT. 45



*FRANCISCUS. SPIRINGIUS. FECIT ANNO 1602*



*François Spiering*

CAT. 47



*FRANCISCO TONS INVENT 1622*

CAT. 47 (continued)



*Frans Tons*

CAT. 49



*Frans Van Maelsack*

CAT. 50



*Conrad van der Bruggen*

CAT. 52



*Hendrik van der Cammen*

CAT. 55



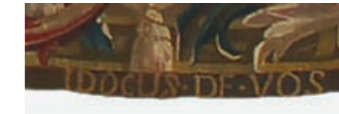
*Hendrik Reydams the Elder*

CAT. 62



*Gerard Peemans*

CAT. 67



*Judocus de Vos*

CAT. 68



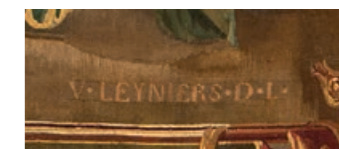
*Jean-François van den Hecke*

CAT. 73



*Hendrik Reydams the Younger*

CAT. 79



*Urbanus and Daniel IV Leyniers*

CAT. 80



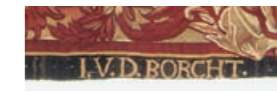
*Urbanus Leyniers*

CAT. 82



*Jean-Baptist Vermillion*

CAT. 83



*Jasper van der Borch*



CAT. 89



Jean Le Febvre

CAT. 90



André-Charlemagne Charron

CAT. 92



Etienne Lanier

CAT. 95



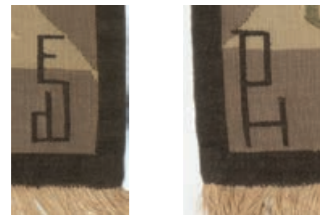
Filippo Cettomai

CAT. 98



"Ingelmunster" at the bottom left

CAT. 102



Elisabeth de Saedeleer Paul Haesaerts

CAT. 107



Van Vlasselaer

D2



Jacques I Geubels

D3



Jan Le Clerc

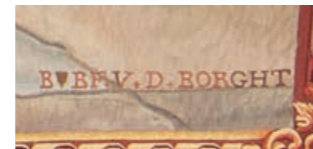
Daniel II Eggermans

D5



Guillaume Werniers

D7



Jan-Frans van der Borgh



Jacob II van der Borgh



Jan de Landtsheer

D8



FECIT FERNANDE DUBOIS 1908-20  
INVENT CONSTANT MONTALD 1897

D9



DE WIT G. TEXT. and  
JESPERS PINXIT. (bottom right)

D10



DE WIT G. TEXT. and  
JESPERS PINXIT. (bottom left)

DUBRUNFAUT



[108]

[109]



[110]

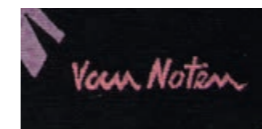
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VAN NOTEN



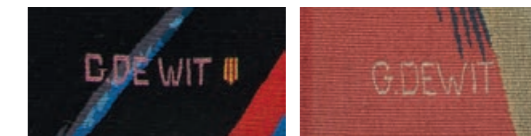
[104]

[105]



[106]

G.DE WIT



[106]

[107]



[108]

[109]



[112]

CHAUDOIR



[104]

[105]



## CONCORDANCE

INV. No. / CAT. No.	INV. No. / CAT. No.	INV. No. / CAT. No.	INV. No. / CAT. No.
120 ..... 58	3153 ..... II.2	8584 ..... 27.1	V 2922 ..... 38
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## ABBREVIATIONS

AT: Artes Textiles  
 BMRAH: Bulletin des Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (Brussels)  
 GBK: Gentse Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis  
 RBAHA: Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art  
 HGOKO: Handelingen van de Geschied- en oudheidkundige Kring van Oudenaarde

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## THE CINQUANTENAIRE TAPESTRIES

THE COLLECTION OF THE  
ROYAL MUSEUMS OF ART AND HISTORY

### Publication

Snoeck Publishers, Ghent: Philip Van Bost, Gunther De Wit  
Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels: Bruno Verbergt,  
Alexandra De Poorter

### Authors

Guy Delmarcel, Ingrid De Meûter, Werner Adriaenssens

### Photography

*Department of Photography Royal Museums of Art and History:*

Greet van Deuren with the assistance of Iona Thys,  
Raoul Pessemier and Marc-Henri Williot Parmentier,  
and other institutions recorded in the photographic  
acknowledgements

*Technical assistance:* Suzy Van der Haegen, Ria Cooreman,  
Alain Carton, Gaëtan Georges, Benoit Meunier,  
Jan Van Rompaey  
*Help in the museum archives of the RMAH:* Sylvie Paesen,  
Denis Perin

### Coordinator

Gunther De Wit

### Publications Service RMAH

Alexandra De Poorter

### Translation into English

Oneliner – www.Oneliner.be

### Copy-editing

Duncan Brown

### Proofreading

Guy Delmarcel, Duncan Brown

### Graphic Design

Jurgen Persijn (N.N.)

Printed in Europe

Legal deposit: D/2023/0012/9  
ISBN: 9789461617729

Cover image: *The Story of Jacob* (cat. 27)

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© Royal Museums of Art and History, Brussels, 2023

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