

A Blessing of Unicorns

The Paris and Cloisters Tapestries

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
Summer 2020



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A Blessing of Unicorns

The Paris and Cloisters Tapestries

Barbara Drake Boehm



The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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—Barbara Drake Boehm

Director's Note

This *Bulletin* examines the fascinating stories behind the only known sets of unicorn tapestries in the world—one at The Met Cloisters and another at the Musée de Cluny, Paris. It was originally intended to accompany the exhibition *A Blessing of Unicorns*, which was to be staged at The Met Cloisters during renovations at the Musée de Cluny and was part of celebrations in observance of The Met's 150th anniversary, in 2020. What better way to fête The Met than to focus on these iconic ensembles, the best-known treasures of two sister institutions dedicated to the art of medieval Europe.

But 2020 had more in store for all of us than we could ever have guessed, and, sadly, the window of time during which the Cluny tapestries could be seen in New York coincided with the outbreak of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. It might be argued that there is something ironically “medieval” at work here. Few of us ever feared being humbled by plague, but our medieval forebears knew better than to indulge in such hubris. In the face of these unprecedented challenges and uncertainties, the unicorn tapestries themselves seem to counsel that there is still warmth and reassurance to be found in art and in the boundless beauty of nature. There is also violence, to be sure, but there is more than a hint of magic all around us, they proclaim, if we will but pause and look.

The study presented here by Barbara Drake Boehm, Paul and Jill Ruddock Senior Curator for The Met Cloisters, depends on a vast body of research, as the endnotes amply demonstrate. She was aided by Research Assistant Amelia Roché Hyde. For their exceptional cooperation and contributions to this project, I wish to recognize Séverine Lepape, Directrice, Musée National du Moyen Âge, Thermes de Cluny, and her immediate predecessor, Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, as well as Béatrice de Chancel-Bardelot, Conservateur Générale du Patrimoine. This *Bulletin* is made possible by an endowment established by Michel David-Weill, a great champion of The Met Cloisters whose own belief in the sustaining power of art underpins his generosity to this Museum. I also note the longstanding support of The Met's quarterly *Bulletin* program by the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, established by the cofounder of *Reader's Digest*.

Max Hollein

Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

James Thurber's illustrated short story "The Unicorn in the Garden" appeared in the pages of *The New Yorker* in 1939, just a year after the opening of the Cloisters (fig. 1). The date is surely no coincidence, seeing as The Met's famous suite of unicorn tapestries—a gift from the personal collection of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.—had recently gone on view and had quickly become some of the Museum's most celebrated and beloved works of art.

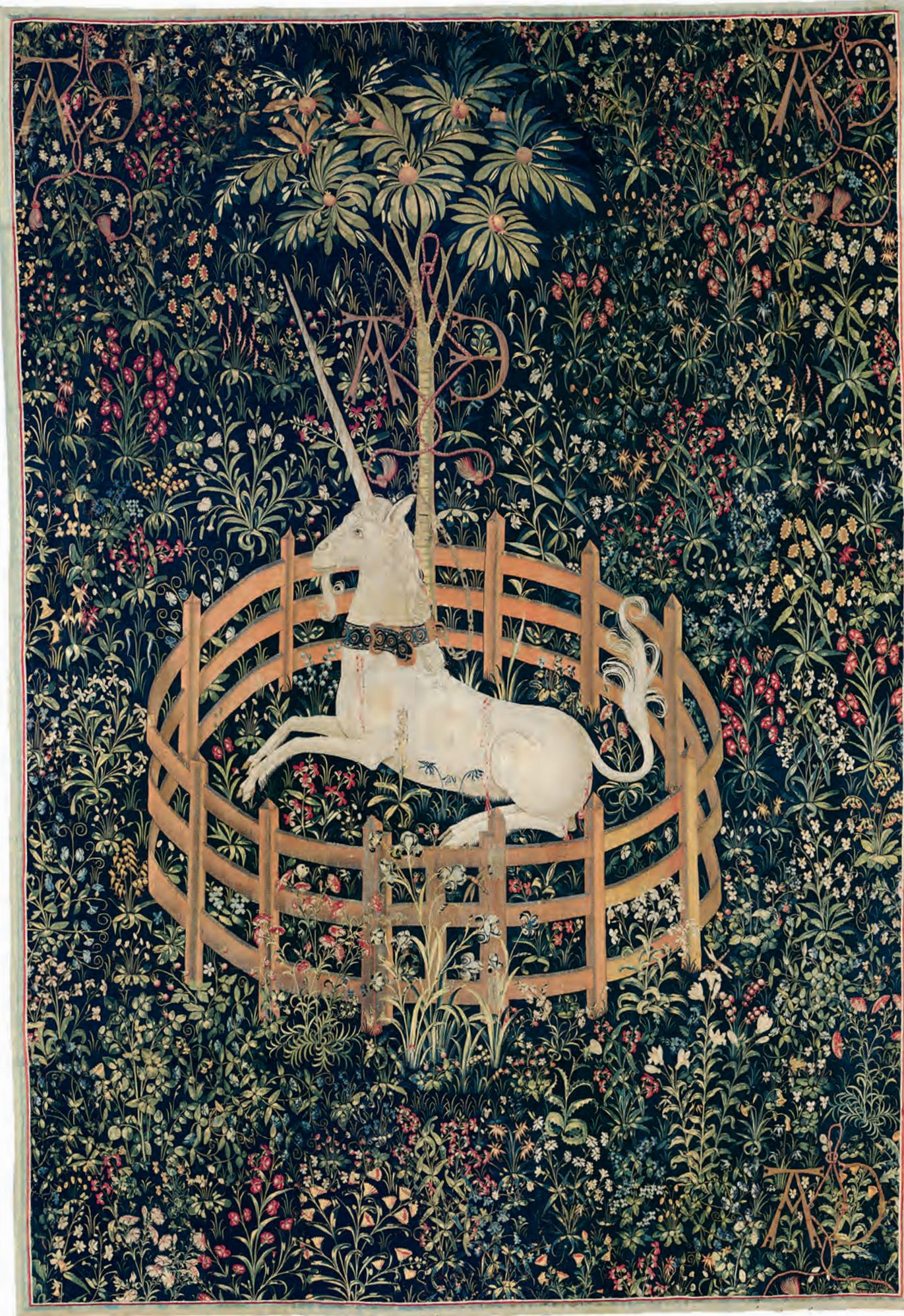
Thurber's whimsical drawing for his *New Yorker* story suggests how the sighting of an actual unicorn might provoke joy but also a certain befuddlement. Both feelings have beset many art historians who have pondered the Cloisters unicorn tapestries and a complementary ensemble now in the Musée de Cluny, Paris, which were made about the same time. Indeed, despite decades of research and investigation by some of the world's most distinguished scholars, a full understanding of the Cloisters and Cluny tapestry ensembles still proves as elusive as the magnificent creature they represent. To this day, it is not possible to say precisely when and where they were woven or exactly for whom they were first created. There are provocative clues to the name (or names) of the original owners, such as the knotted letters A and E woven into the Cloisters tapestries, but the mystery remains unsolved. It was not until 1921 that the Cluny ensemble was finally understood as a representation of the five senses. But how, then, could one explain the sixth hanging? Meanwhile, the encoded meaning of the inscription spelled out on the luxurious tent depicted in the largest of the Cluny works continues to be debated. At a distance of six centuries, these and other vexing questions are likely to persist.

Inspired by the "high heart" of feeling that Thurber ascribes to the sighting of a unicorn, this *Bulletin* looks afresh at the Cloisters unicorn tapestries and their sisters at the Musée de Cluny, exploring the beliefs that made the unicorn such a compelling subject; the place of tapestry in late medieval noble life and the incontrovertible evidence that other such sets once existed; the complex stories told in both the Cluny and Cloisters tapestries; and our present-day understanding of the artistic milieu in which these spectacular works of art were envisioned, woven, and coveted.



1. James Thurber (1894–1961). *The Unicorn in the Garden*, from *Fables for Our Time and Famous Poems Illustrated*, 1940

2. *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn Tapestries*. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 12 ft. 7/8 in. x 8 ft. 3 in. (368 x 251.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.6)





Seeing Is Believing

“The image of the unicorn is commonly painted by artists today, but I know nothing about it.”

—Conrad Gessner, *Historiae animalium*, 1551¹

It was the dawn of the sixteenth century, and there was every reason to believe in unicorns. Churchmen knew perfectly well that Hebrew scripture mentions single-horned beasts called the *re’em*, surely meaning unicorns. Doctors knew that the Greek physician and historian Ctesias had written about a one-horned beast, and philosophers knew that Aristotle and the Roman naturalist Pliny concurred. Literate Frenchmen could consult the new 1495 French-language edition of Julius Caesar’s *Gallic Wars*, published by Antoine Vérard,² which clearly indicated that, in Roman times, unicorns had lived deep in the Hercynian Forest of Germany:

There is an ox shaped like a stag, from the middle of whose forehead between the ears stands forth a single horn, taller and straighter than the horns we know. From its top branches spread out just like open hands. The main features of female and of male are the same, the same the shape and the size of the horns.³

Caesar could even be imagined riding a unicorn, bridle in hand (fig. 4).

The *Physiologus*—compiled and penned in Greek by a Christian, for a Christian audience, and then translated into Latin in the fifth century—specified that the unicorn

3. *The Hunters Enter the Woods*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 12 ft. 1 in. x 10 ft. 4 in. (368.3 x 315 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.1)

4. Jacob of Strasbourg (active 1494–1530), after Benedetto Bordone (ca. 1455/60–1530). *Trumpeters Leading Caesar on Horseback*, from *The Triumphs of Caesar*, 1504. Woodcut; sheet, 13 1/8 x 15 7/8 in. (33.1 x 40.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1927 (27.54.120)







has the beard and cloven hooves of a goat, and, furthermore, that it could only be tamed by a maiden.⁴ Although that text was officially condemned as heretical, other Christian authors said the same. Basil, bishop of Caesarea, in the fourth century, Timothy of Gaza in the sixth, and Isidore of Seville in the seventh all spoke of the unicorn. The Christian “Book of Beasts,” or Bestiary—which relied on the *Physiologus* but also drew upon Isidore and others—advanced a complicated metaphor in which Jesus is “the spiritual unicorn,” citing biblical passages to bolster the argument, including a particular translation from the Song of Songs (“My beloved is like the son of the unicorns”), a line from Psalm 91 (“But my horn shall be exalted like that of the unicorn”), and, from the New Testament, “[He] hath raised up an horn of salvation to us” (Luke 1:69).⁵

The belief that the unicorn was especially attracted to the lap of a maiden allowed the metaphor to be extended to the coming of Jesus via the womb of the Virgin Mary. There the metaphor became impossibly convoluted, given the extenuating fact that, according to legend, the maiden became actively complicit in the unicorn’s death at the hands of hunters, an inconceivable role for Jesus’ mother.⁶ Still, the text of the Bestiary, and with it the legend of the unicorn, was widely known and translated into many languages, including French but also Armenian, Coptic, Arabic, and Syriac:

The unicorn, which is also called *rhinoceros* in Greek, has this nature: it is a little beast, not unlike a young goat, and extraordinarily swift. It has a horn in the middle of its brow, and no hunter can catch it. But it can be caught in the following fashion: a girl who is a virgin is led to the place where it dwells, and is left there alone in the forest. As soon as the unicorn sees her, it leaps into her lap and embraces her, and goes to sleep there; then the hunters capture it and display it in the king’s palace.⁷

Noteworthy here is the mention that the hunters are working on behalf of the king. But does it imply that the beast itself is captured, unharmed, and shown at the palace, or that it is slain and its magical horn displayed? The text of the Bestiary then presents the metaphorical link to Jesus:

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the spiritual unicorn of whom it is said, “My beloved is like the son of the unicorns” [Song of Songs 2:9]; and in the psalm: “My horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of a unicorn” [92:10]; and Zacharias said: “He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us, in the house of His servant David” [Luke 1:69]. The single horn on the unicorn’s head signifies what He Himself said: “I and my Father are one” [John 10:30]; according to the Apostle, “The head of Christ is

5. *The Unicorn Purifies Water*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 12 ft. 1 in. x 12 ft. 5 in. (368.3 x 378.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.2)

God" [1 Corinthians 11:3]. He is called very swift, for neither principalities nor powers, nor thrones nor lordships could capture Him; the underworld could not hold Him, and not even the most cunning devil could understand Him. But by the will of the Father alone He descended into the Virgin's womb to save us. He is called an insignificant creature because He humbled Himself in the flesh: He Himself said: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart" [Matthew 11:29].

Finally, the text circles back to the animal's behavior: "The unicorn often fights elephants; it wounds them in the stomach and kills them."⁸

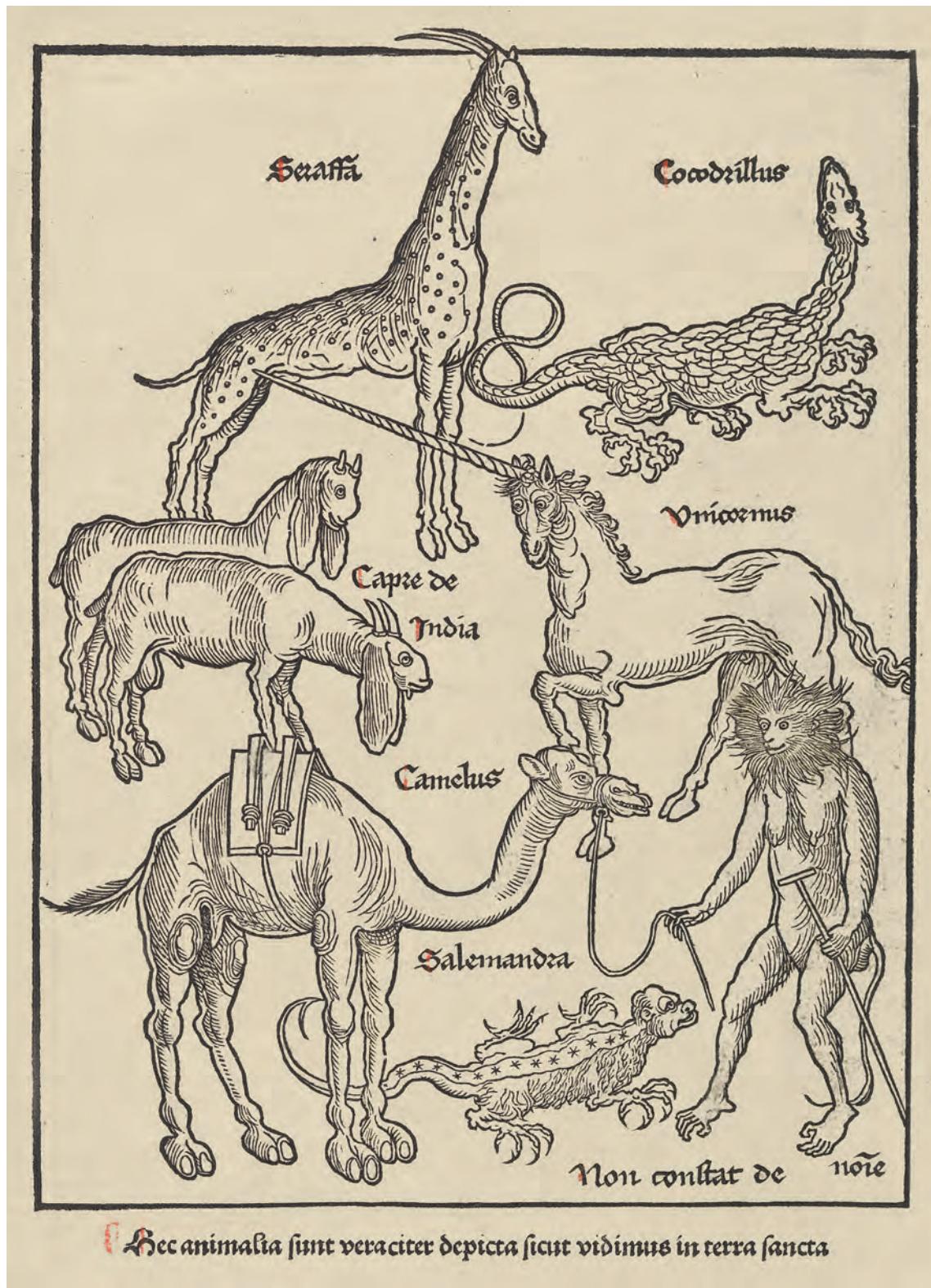
In a more practical than metaphorical vein, Hildegard of Bingen, the renowned twelfth-century nun and mystic, provided a recipe for unicorn liver mixed with egg yolk, a concoction that she believed could heal leprosy. In addition, she recommended shoes made of unicorn leather for the promotion of healthy feet.⁹ Centuries later, German pilgrims to the Holy Land claimed that they saw an animal "coarser than a camel" while traveling through a rough mountain range near Mount Sinai. Their guide positively identified it as a unicorn.¹⁰ What's more, the account of their voyage, first published in 1486, included a woodcut of the animals that the pilgrims and the artist traveling with them had seen (or believed they had seen) on their trip. There was the unicorn, alongside the camel—examples of which had already been brought back to Europe—the giraffe, and the crocodile (fig. 7).¹¹ A "best seller" of the day, the pilgrims' account was translated into German, French, Dutch, and Spanish, each edition proclaiming a sighting of the unicorn.¹²

Europeans clearly recognized that they lived in a world of wonders. Kings and queens maintained menageries at their royal residences, and travelers had found abundant physical evidence of unexpected species

6. *The Unicorn Crosses a Stream*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 12 ft. 1 in. x 14 ft. (368.3 x 426.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.3)







Hec animalia sunt veraciter depicta sicut vidimus in terra sancta

7. Erhard Reuwich (ca. 1455-ca. 1490). *Animals Seen by Pilgrims in the Holy Land*, from Bernhard von Breydenbach (1440?-1497?), *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Pilgrimage to the Holy Land). Published by Peter Schöffer the Elder (1425-1503). Germany, 1486. Woodcut, 12 5/8 x 9 1/8 x 1 3/8 in. (32 x 23 x 3.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.49.3)



8. Beaker. Niclass Kempff(?) (1623–1678), goldsmith, and Justus Glesker(?) (1610/1632–1678), ivory carver. Germany, ca. 1660. Narwhal ivory with silver-gilt mounts, H. 12 1/2 in. (31.8 cm). Private collection, New York



9. Covered cup. Mounts by Hieronymus Priester (active 1649–1697). Possibly Germany (Augsburg or Nuremberg), ca. 1670–74. Narwhal ivory, silver gilt, precious and semiprecious stones, 10 3/8 x 7 7/8 x 3 3/8 in. (27 x 20.1 x 8.5 cm). Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford; Gift in memory of Mae Cadwell Rovensky by exchange, The Anna Rosalie Mansfield Gift by exchange, Gift of Miss Mary C. Barton by exchange, The European Decorative Arts Purchase Fund, and The Douglas Tracy Smith and Dorothy Potter Smith Fund, 2012 (2012.4.1)

in faraway lands, from the crocodile, camel, and lion to the leopard, elephant, genet, and monkey.¹³ Why not the unicorn, then, so widely cited in secular and sacred literature alike? There was, moreover, tangible “evidence” of the unicorn. Beautiful spiraling horns associated with the beast had been kept in the treasury of Saint-Denis in Paris since the time of Abbot Suger (1081–1151), gifts from King David I of Scotland.¹⁴ The church of San Marco, Venice, boasted three horns, two of which bore Greek inscriptions; and one of the two was also inscribed in Arabic!¹⁵ In England, the royal treasury of Westminster Abbey was home to just one of the highly coveted unicorn horns; stolen in 1303 along with other precious items, the abbey’s horn was later found secreted under the bed of an errant member of the religious community.¹⁶

Such horns, recognized today as the tooth of the narwhal, were also incorporated into precious princely possessions. Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy (r. 1419–67), possessed a luxurious ceremonial sword with its pommel and hilt crafted from unicorn horn (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).¹⁷ More than sixty years later, in 1533, Benvenuto Cellini entered a competition for a gold mount to decorate a unicorn horn that Pope Clement VII gave to his niece Catherine de’ Medici in honor of her marriage to Henry II of France, son of King Francis I.¹⁸ A covered horn beaker from a private collection is especially evocative, presenting an almost hidden profile of the head of a unicorn just at the place where the owner’s hand would have grasped the vessel (fig. 8). A more elaborately carved cup in the Wadsworth Atheneum visually acknowledges a link between such horns and the sea by portraying the unicorn amid the waves and alongside marine creatures (fig. 9).

While unicorn horns in sacred and secular treasures were known only to select audiences, the bank of unicorn images widened considerably with the advent of printed books of hours, which were purchased and circulated well beyond aristocratic circles by prominent notaries, merchants, and even communities of nuns. The Paris book publisher Thielman Kerver made paired unicorns the focal element of his personal device, emblematic of his first independent place of business on the Pont Saint-Michel, then on the rue Saint-Jacques, the exact location designated in each case as “Under the sign of the Unicorn” (see illustration on inside front cover; see also fig. 11).¹⁹ His family motto even proclaimed him a “Greatly beloved son of unicorns.”²⁰ But it was in tapestry weaving that the unicorn would assume greatest prominence and undeniable presence.

Living in Luxury

“All those that want a better than average work have it done to order, and I therefore suggest to you, if you are not in too great a hurry, send me the measurements and the story or tale you want in it, and I’ll have it made by the best master that can be found.”

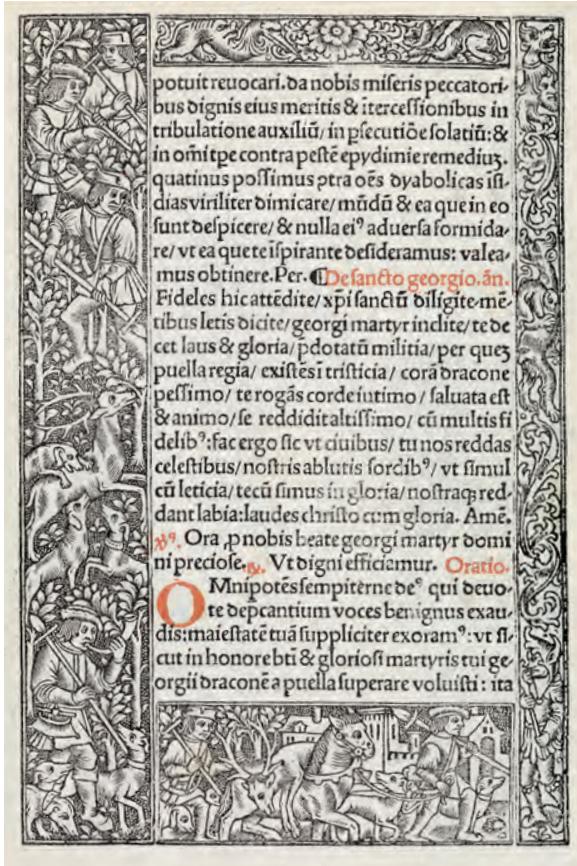
—Fruosino da Panzano, tapestry agent in Bruges for
Giovanni di Cosimo de’ Medici, 1448²¹

Of all princely possessions, tapestries best tell us today what it meant to live in luxury on the eve of the Renaissance. Gone, now, are most of the gold, silver, and gems, victims of changing taste, financial reversals, or the envy of others. Gone, too, are the gowns, ceremonial robes, and armor, which were typically outmoded and replaced within a generation, as well as the original princely residences and gardens, their medieval forms now unrecognizable under layers of subsequent renovations. Yet, surprisingly, tapestries survive—notwithstanding the devastating effects of war, fire, neglect, and shifting fashion—and thus bear witness to a world otherwise largely lost. Astounding works of art, they employ everyday sheepwool as both canvas and palette to “paint” pictures of noble life: of battles won and power proclaimed, a world of flowers and fantasy.

10. *The Unicorn Defends Himself*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn Tapestries*. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 12 ft. 1 in. x 13 ft. 2 in. (368.3 x 401.3 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.4)







Tapestry came to prominence as a coveted art form across Europe during the fourteenth century amid circumstances that are not fully explained.²² Our understanding depends on documentary evidence such as household accounts and inventories, which are sometimes imprecise in their descriptions or terminology. These records suggest that a princely owner at the beginning of the century would have possessed a few tapestries, perhaps embellished with the family's coat of arms, meant to furnish a bedroom or great room. The "tapis" (a word that can mean both tapestries and carpets) owned in 1298 by Marguerite d'Hainaut, countess of Artois, for example, were part of an ensemble for her bedchamber. The bedcover bore the arms of France, while the canopy (*ciel de lit*) featured the arms of England and "Allemagne," no doubt referring to the double-headed eagle of the Holy Roman Empire.²³ Such ensembles were fittingly referred to at the time as *chambres*. A coordinated ensemble for a bedchamber might comprise curtains, covers for the bed and ceiling, valances, hangings for the wall as well as for a bench, and multiple cushions. Along with tapestry weaving, embroideries and woven silks sometimes formed an integral part of the suite constituting a *chambre*.²⁴ A composite tapestry weaving in The Met collection with the arms of Beaufort, Turenne, and Comminges (46.175) must have been pieced together from such a *chambre*. With dizzying richness, it presents a variety of "noble" animals, each nestled within a castle keep and wearing a heraldic mantle. Angels protect and crown each one. Lions, stags, and an elephant keep company with unicorns.²⁵

11. Jean d'Ypres (?) (d. 1508). Book of Hours published by Thielman Kerver, France (Paris), 1504. Woodcut on paper, 6 5/8 x 4 in. (16.8 x 10.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rogers Fund, 1920 (20.53.3)

12. Leonardo Crespi (active 1424–59) and his family's atelier. Psalter and Book of Hours (Prayer Book of Alfonso V of Aragon). Spain (Valencia), 1436–43. Tempera and gold on parchment, 9 x 6 1/8 in. (22.5 x 15.5 cm). The British Library, London (Additional 28962 folio 14v)



13. *The Unicorn Surrenders to a Maiden*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 66 1/2 x 25 1/2 in. (168.9 x 64.8 cm) and 78 x 25 1/2 in. (198.1 x 64.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1938 (38.51.1, .2)





Medieval tapestries covered the walls of a room entirely, from floor to ceiling, and were suspended from hooks, with no gap between them. They were sometimes made to order, as is evident from specifications provided in 1311 by agents of Mahaut, countess of Artois, for tapestries of a size they had already spelled out.²⁶ They could be astoundingly large, measuring as much as 134 feet long and 15 feet tall.²⁷ Scholars have traditionally stressed the appeal of tapestry as a portable art form, but that does not mean they were not unwieldy. In 1402, Philip the Bold of Burgundy arranged for a weaver in Arras to divide one of his tapestries into three, as “it was too large and heavy . . . to hang and lift up and fold” and could only be displayed in especially large rooms.²⁸

Tapestries filled intimate interiors but also spaces intended to impress or intimidate, gracing banquet halls and battle sites alike. (In this regard, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that various trappings of the life of luxury sometimes overlapped. Pasquier Grenier, for example, a tapestry merchant to both the Burgundian court and the Sforzas in Milan, was also the principal wine importer for the city of Tournai.²⁹) Finished hangings softened the hard edges of a room, creating a warm surround: a stage set animated with the seeming presence of nature and colorful actors.³⁰ They were so much a part of the repertory of richness that they figure in literature of the period, such as René d’Anjou’s *Le Coeur d’amour épris*, in which the goddess Venus’s own banquet hall is decorated with “ten large silk tapestries fashioned in Arras, all worked in gold.”³¹

Contemporary documents sometimes provide tantalizing if summary descriptions of the subjects represented on now-lost tapestries. For instance, in 1311 Mahaut purchased an expensive “wool hanging,” described as being “worked with diverse figures,” in Arras for Enguerrand de Marigny, a favorite of the king.³² Two centuries later, the tapestries in Queen Anne of Brittany’s *chambres* depicted “wild beasts and exotic natives,”³³ while those in her daughter Claude’s rooms were embellished with bucolic scenes with small figures and inscriptions.³⁴

The stories told in tapestries were likewise variable. They could be playful or poetic, pious or political, philosophical or prurient. Tapestry hangings could also blur the lines between reality and fantasy as well as indoors and outdoors. The Hours of Alfonso V of Aragon (fig. 12) provides clear evidence of the effect. The king kneels in prayer in his private chamber, its gray stone walls blanketed with colorful tapestry hangings. They present a springtime idyll, with lovers in a grove of fruit

14. *The Hunters Return to the Castle*, from the *Hunt for the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, 1495–1505. Wool, silk and metal threads, 12 ft. 1 in. x 12 ft. 9 in. (368.3 x 388.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.5)





trees hunting falcons. At the same time, one glimpses through the room's Gothic window a verdant landscape and properties dotted with trees and castles. Where does nature begin and end? What is real and what is imagined? This was the life of luxury at the dawn of the sixteenth century, a world in which unicorns were perfectly at home.

Counting Blessings

“Item viii pece of tapessarie of the historie of the unicorn . . .”

—household inventory of James V of Scotland, 1539³⁵

Today, the Musée de Cluny and the Cloisters possess the sole surviving ensembles of tapestries devoted to unicorns, making these celebrated works almost as rare as the elusive creature they depict. From the fifteenth through the seventeenth century, however, records indicate that unicorn tapestries graced a number of the finest chateaux and town houses of France. More than fifty appear in the combined inventories of nine French noblemen and -women between the years 1397 and 1680—Louis, duke of Orléans, Charles II de Bourbon, Louis of Luxembourg, Charlotte d'Albret, François de la Trémoille, the Le Viste family, Éléonore de Chabannes, Just-Louis de Touron, and François VI de La Rochefoucauld—as well as in the royal house of Scotland.

The earliest reference to a unicorn tapestry in a French princely collection appears in the 1397 accounts of Louis, duke of Orléans, the second son of King Charles V. In that year, Louis acquired a tapestry “with beasts and unicorns of Paris work” from Nicolas Bataille, considered the premier purveyor of tapestries to the princes of France.³⁶ A hanging preserved in the Minneapolis Institute of Art that depicts a unicorn, among other creatures, frolicking in a dense field of flowers—a pattern known as millefleurs—suggests the possible appearance of the duke’s tapestry.³⁷

The collection of Charles II de Bourbon (1433–1488), archbishop of Lyon and nephew of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, boasted a tapestry representing a lady in a garden enclosure, not unlike the fenced area of the Cloisters' famous *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden* (fig. 2). A drawing of the tapestry made for the antiquarian François Roger de Gaignières shows a lady cradling the unicorn in her lap as she touches its horn (fig. 16). Bands of cloth bear the words “Venena pello” (I banish poisons), alluding to the horn’s curative power, the reason for the lady’s tight grip of it. The archbishop’s family arms appear in each corner, and the emblem of the Bourbon family, a belt inscribed “Esperance” (Hope), is woven into the framing edges.³⁸ Images of a lady with a unicorn formed part of the standard medieval visual vocabulary, both worldly and sacred, and in images small and large, whether in ivory, enamel, or stone. The pairing even appears twice on the west facade of the archbishop’s own cathedral at Lyon, although they have little prominence. An image

15. *Touch*, from the *Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries*. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Wool and silk, 12 ft. 2 7/8 in. x 11 ft. 9 in. (373 x 358 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 10835)



16. François Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715). *A Tapestry Depicting a Lady and a Unicorn with the Device of Charles II, Duke of Bourbon (1434–1488)*. France, ca. 1680–90. Watercolor. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (Pc-18-fol)

of a lady and a unicorn with a mirror and one of the capture of a unicorn are on the fifth and sixth consoles from the left, respectively.³⁹

Unicorns were seen as fashionable, playful, and powerful creatures, qualities that prominent men aspired to possess themselves. For special occasions, noblemen even found childlike joy in donning unicorn costumes, as they apparently did for the May 1454 “Tournament of the Unicorn” at Cambrai planned by Louis of Luxembourg, count of Saint-Pol, which was to feature two teams of forty knights each. (In the end, it was a disastrous affair. Almost everyone, including Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, with whom Saint-Pol was periodically allied, declined the invitation.)⁴⁰ At the Battle



17. *The Unicorn Purifies Water*, from François Robertet (d. before 1530), *Recueil de dessins ou cartons, avec devises, destinés à servir de modèles pour tapisseries ou pour peintures sur verre (Collection of Designs or Cartoons, with Mottos, Destined to Serve as Models for Tapestries or for Painting on Glass)*. France, before 1530. Ink on parchment; sheet, 11 5/8 x 9 in. (29.5 x 23 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (ms. fr. 24461 folio 67r)

of Liège, in 1466, Louis carried a standard bearing a unicorn along with the motto “Mon Mieulx” (My Best).⁴¹ At his death, Louis’s household evidently contained no fewer than six tapestries depicting unicorns and featuring designs that seem to anticipate certain compositional aspects of The Met’s unicorn series.⁴² Listed first among them are four pieces with a unicorn in the middle, like the Cloisters tapestries, but in this case with the knotted letters EE.⁴³ Louis also owned a tapestry depicting a unicorn and other animals at a fountain, certainly the same subject as *The Unicorn Purifies Water* (fig. 5). A third extant description is less specific, mentioning only a tapestry with a unicorn and “knots” (*houppes*).

Like Louis of Luxembourg, Cesare Borgia—a powerful Italian politician thought to have been an inspiration for Machiavelli’s *The Prince*—sought to associate himself with the potency of the unicorn. He went so far as to dress as a unicorn for his wedding to Charlotte d’Albret, in 1498, while their guests paraded as other animals.⁴⁴ Sixteen years later, when Charlotte died at

the château de La Motte-Feuilly, the inventory of the estate’s contents included more than seventy “greenery” (*verdure*) tapestries as well as others with subjects more specifically described, including “another large piece of *haute lisso* [usually translated as “high warp”] tapestry, in the middle of which is mentioned the story of the fountain and the unicorn.”⁴⁵ As with the tapestries at Louis of Luxembourg’s residence and the series at the Cloisters, the theme was the unicorn purifying water. It appears yet again in a notebook of designs for tapestries or stained glass that belonged to François Robertet (d. before 1530), member of a highly successful bourgeois family who were prominent patrons of the arts (fig. 17).⁴⁶ These references suggest that the theme of the unicorn purifying water was as popular, and identifiable, as that of the lady taming the unicorn.

In 1553, the château de Thouars, north of Poitiers, contained “seventeen pieces of very old tapestries with figures, in parts of which there are certain unicorns.”⁴⁷ These weavings were displayed in several rooms of the château, which was the property of François II de la Trémoille and Anne de Laval, prominent members of the French nobility with long-standing political ties to the Crown (fig. 18). The hangings were found in their bedroom as well as “la grande garde robe” (a closet

of noble proportions) and other spaces. The ensemble was referred to collectively as “les Haulx Bonnetz,”⁴⁸ a reference to the “tall bonnets” worn by the figures, which distinguished them as peculiar and probably out of style, perhaps similar to the high hat worn by the lady in the archbishop of Lyon’s tapestry (see fig. 16).

Tantalizing references to tapestries that seem to match the style and imagery of the *Lady and the Unicorn* ensemble in the Musée du Cluny appear throughout the household records of several French aristocrats. Most noteworthy is the 1595 listing of the personal property of Eléonore de Chabannes at the château de Montaigu-le-Blin, fourteen miles north of Vichy, in the Auvergne. Eléonore’s possessions included thirteen tapestries with, exceptionally, red backgrounds, like the Cluny series. One of them, used to cover the chimney, bore a coat of arms with three crescents.⁴⁹ Five more represented, in addition to the arms with three crescents, “sibyls and unicorns.” A third ensemble of seven bore the same arms and also depicted “unicorns and beasts.”⁵⁰

Heraldic arms featuring three crescents are a prominent feature of each *Lady and the Unicorn* tapestry. Although nineteenth-century enthusiasts invented an elaborate legend to explain the crescents (see “Telling Tales” below), they have long been recognized as the arms of the Le Vistes.⁵¹ Resident in Lyon in the fourteenth century, the family came to prominence first as cloth merchants and then as lawyers and advisers to the kings of France. By the mid-fourteenth century Jean I Le Viste was the wealthiest man in Lyon,⁵² and by the fifteenth century the Le Viste family had a formidable presence in Paris as well, with a house on the rue du Four. Their wealth and prominence, along with favorable marriages, allowed them to acquire the trappings of nobility, such as the silks, silver, and manuscripts that lavishly decorated their Paris residence. They also took special pride in their family arms (fig. 19).⁵³ Jean II Le Viste bequeathed fabric embroidered with his arms in gold to make an altar frontal for the church of the Célestins in Lyon.⁵⁴ Jean IV’s copper tomb slab,

18. P. L. Jacob (Paul Lacroix, 1806–1884). *François II de la Trémouille*, from *Costumes Historiques de la France*. France, 1852



prominently placed before the altar in the Célestins church in Paris, bore his engraved image flanked by his arms and an identifying inscription giving his titles and the date June 1, 1500 (fig. 20). It is likely, in fact, that Jean IV Le Viste was the original owner of the Cluny *Lady and the Unicorn* tapestries, for in each work a lion, probably signifying the city of Lyon, holds a standard with the Le Viste family arms. The lion is also paired with a unicorn, whose swiftness (*vitesse*) may be a pun on the family name.⁵⁵ Eléonore de Chabannes was the great-niece of Jean IV Le Viste's daughter and heir, Claude le Viste. If Eléonore's unicorn tapestries are not the same as those now in the Musée de Cluny, then they certainly formed part of a coordinated ensemble.⁵⁶

The 1617 inventory of the furniture of Just-Louis de Tournon, Eléonore's brother-in-law,⁵⁷ describes a seven-piece ensemble, each with a unicorn in the middle, characterized as "very old" and located in a room known as "The Unicorn" in his château d'Arlenc, also in the Auvergne.⁵⁸ There is no clear chain of custody from the collection of Eléonore de Chabannes and Just-Louis de Tournon to the château de Boussac—in the Limousin region, deep in the French countryside—where the *Lady and the Unicorn* tapestries were found in the nineteenth century (fig. 22). But part of the inheritance of Claude Le Viste followed a different route, passing to Jeanne, daughter of Antoine Le Viste. By descent, those tapestries came into the possession of the Carbonnières family, proprietors of the château de Boussac. It was there that the tapestries came to the attention of French authorities. Their placement in the château is indicated in drawings by the architect Morin in 1842 (fig. 23a, b).⁵⁹

As for the tapestries in the Cloisters ensemble, we first encounter them in Paris, in the former Hôtel de Liancourt on the rue de Seine (fig. 26), where they appear in the 1680 inventory of the possessions of the recently deceased François VI de La Rochefoucauld: "hangings of tapestry of *haute lis* representing a hunt of the unicorn in seven

19. *Le Viste Coat of Arms*. France, before 1651. Ink on paper; sheet, 9 1/4 x 6 1/2 in. (23.5 x 16.5 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (ms. fr. 32750, fol. 660)

20. *Tomb of Jean IV Le Viste*, from the notebooks of François Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715). France, ca. 1680–90. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (Pe 11, fol. 87)



pieces containing twenty-two *aulnes* in length by four *aulnes* in height [about 85 ft. 9 in. by 15 ft. 7 in.], or thereabouts, appraised at the amount of 1,500 *livres*.⁶⁰ The tapestries may already have been at the Hôtel de Liancourt by 1674, when it belonged to the dukes of that name. An inventory conducted that year upon the death of Jeanne de Schomberg, wife of the duke of Liancourt, notes that a seven-piece tapestry representing a hunt was in the “antechamber” of François VI de La Rochefoucauld. He was living there with the Liancourt family, whose daughter had married his son and heir, but the inventory was of Liancourt property.⁶¹ While unicorns are not mentioned as the quarry of the hunt, the coincidence of the place, the number of tapestries, and the fact that they were found in the room of François VI raises the possibility that this is an earlier reference to the Cloisters *Hunt for the Unicorn* series.

By 1728, the tapestries had been moved to François VIII de la Rochefoucauld’s château at Verneuil in the Charente (fig. 27), a possession of his family dating back to the eleventh century.⁶² An inventory recorded seven tapestries with unicorns, with five in one bedroom and two “torn ‘in various places’” kept in “a large lower hall near the chapel, presently serving as a storage place for furniture.”⁶³ The poor condition of the five was specifically noted and likely accounts for the relatively low value they were assessed in the inventory.⁶⁴ Parts of the château were ransacked during the French Revolution—the duke himself was arrested in 1792 and stoned to death—but the “old tapestries” were spared since they did not have royal emblems and only told “stories,” and therefore did not, in the view of the revolutionary authorities, constitute pro-royalist propaganda.⁶⁵ Still, soon thereafter, residents of the village appropriated the tapestries to cover their potatoes in winter.⁶⁶ In 1856, the tapestries were returned to the château, where they remained until their sale by the

21. *Taste*, from the *Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries*. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Wool and silk, 12 ft. 4 1/2 in. x 15 ft. 3 1/2 in. (377 x 466 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 10831)



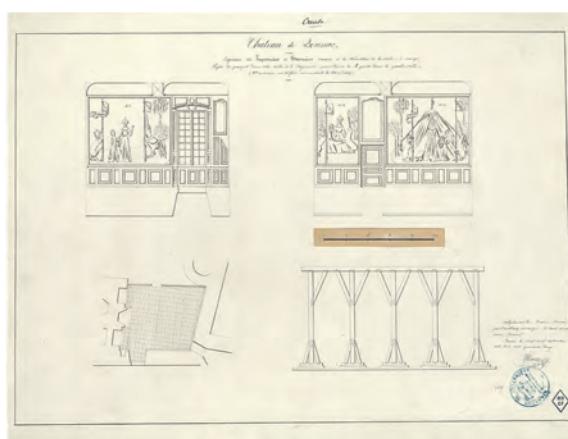
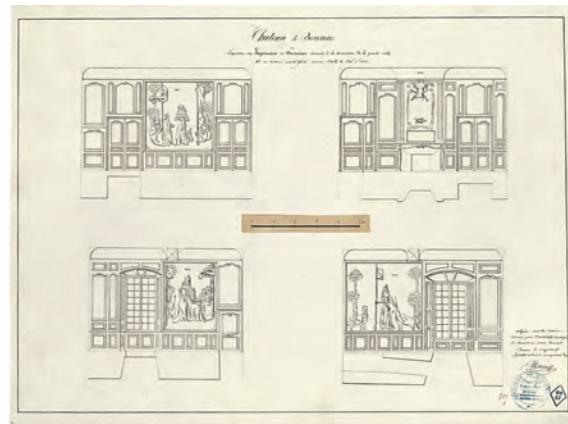




La Rochefoucauld heirs in the 1920s led to their purchase by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who generously donated them to the Cloisters in time for its opening, in 1938.

None of the French inventories except those of the La Rochefoucauld family specifically describes a *hunt* for a unicorn. The only other known reference to a unicorn hunt tapestry series appears in royal Scottish records. James IV (1473–1513) had already displayed affection for the unicorn, representing them on the gold coins he had minted at Edinburgh (fig. 29). The household accounts of his son, James V (1512–1542), his wife, Mary of Guise, and their descendants furthered the Scottish Crown's association with the mythical beast.⁶⁷ The earliest mention occurs in the first inventory of their belongings, conducted on March 25, 1539, the start of the medieval Scottish calendar year: “Item vi pece of the historie of the unicorn garnest with canves . . . Item viii pece of tapessarie of the historie of the unicorn.”⁶⁸ James V wed Mary of Guise in May 1538, just short of a year after the death of his first wife, Madeleine of Valois. Although it might seem logical to assume that the unicorn tapestries had been brought from France by Mary upon her arrival in Scotland, in June 1538, there is strong evidence that the tapestries actually belonged to James via his first wife.

The list of some fifteen tapestries is given alongside detailed descriptions of James's clothes, bedding, and jewels, while none of Mary's wardrobe items is listed. James may have purchased them himself in France from about 1536 to 1537, when he was negotiating his marriage to Madeleine, or he could have arranged to buy them through his agent in Flanders.⁶⁹ However, of the fifteen tapestries listed in the 1539 inventory, no unicorn tapestries are mentioned among the two purchased by James in Paris or the five bought in Flanders, nor are there any among the two examples given as wedding gifts by Francis I.⁷⁰ This would suggest that the unicorn tapestries were part of the trousseau brought from France by Madeleine of Valois—which, in addition to tapestries, included French wines, fabrics, and jewels—and folded into James V's household.⁷¹ Francis I then granted all Madeleine's “moveable goods” to Mary of Guise upon her marriage to James.⁷²



22. Château de Boussac, Limousin, France

23a, b. Morin (1811–1886). Drawings of the *Lady and the Unicorn* Tapestries in the château de Boussac. France, 1842. Ink on paper. Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris (0082/023)



24. *Smell*, from the *Lady and the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Wool and silk, 12 ft. $\frac{7}{8}$ in. \times 10 ft. $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. (368 \times 322 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 10832)





26. Israël Silvestre (1621–1691). *Hôtel de Liancourt*, Paris. Israël Henriet (1590?–1661), editor. France, 17th century. Engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (VA-269 [K]-FOL; H 049583)

27. Château de Verteuil, Charente, France



The Scottish royal unicorn tapestries next appear in an inventory dated September 1561 as part of the “moveables” of Mary of Guise, who had died the previous year: “In Striveling [Stirling Castle; fig. 28]. 26 Item ane tapestrie of the historie of the hunting of the great unicorn contening four peces / 27 Item, a tapestrie of ane uther hunting of the little unicorn contening sevin peces.”⁷³ The moveables, it seems, were those items selected by Mary, Queen of Scots, from the belongings of her mother, Mary of Guise, to decorate her own household. The same tapestries are recorded in 1578 as among the possessions of James VI (son of Mary, Queen of Scots), who was born in Edinburgh Castle in 1566, where tapestries from his mother’s collection decorated his nursery.⁷⁴ James, who became king at the age of thirteen months, officially reached maturity in 1578. The inventory of his household goods in that year, presumably related to the end of his minority, lists “Four pece of the huntis of the unicorn.”⁷⁵ Notably, the second unicorn tapestry set, recorded in earlier inventories, is not listed, but its fate might be hinted at by other items listed in the 1578 inventory, specifically, several pieces of James’s bedclothes described as being “maid of ane auld pece of tapestrie.”⁷⁶

The unicorn hunt tapestries in the Scottish royal collections were inherited, one could assume, by one of James’s two children who reached adulthood: either Charles I, king of England, Ireland, and Scotland until his execution in 1649,⁷⁷ or his sister Elizabeth Stuart, “the Winter Queen,” who was briefly queen of Bohemia. But there are no known subsequent references to the unicorn hunt tapestries in Scotland. Like so many others, they disappeared without trace.

Opposite:

25. *Hunting*, from the *Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries*. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Wool and silk, 12 ft. 1 1/4 in. x 9 ft. 6 1/4 in. (369 x 290 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 10833)

Telling Tales

“As large as a large horse, with a horn in her brow . . .”

—*Le Chevalier du Papegau*⁷⁸

Beginning in the twelfth century, the unicorn assumed increasing prominence in French literature of romance. Thibaut IV, count of Champagne and Brie (1201–1253), one of the most celebrated poets of medieval France,⁷⁹ dreamily envisaged



himself in the role of a unicorn smitten by a maiden, for according to long-held belief (see “Seeing Is Believing” above), only a maiden could capture and tame the beast: “I am like the unicorn / astonished as he gazes, / beholding the virgin. / He is so rejoiced by his chagrin / he falls in a faint in her lap.” As gentle as that image is, what immediately follows is not: “. . . then they [hunters] kill him, in treachery.” In the poet’s metaphor, the violence, surprisingly, serves the higher cause of love: “Now Love and my lady / have killed me just that way: / they have my heart, I cannot get it back.”⁸⁰

Numerous besotted lovers cast themselves literally and figuratively in the role of unicorns (see the discussion on Cesare Borgia above, for example). Powerful testimony can be found in the writing of Richard de Fournival (1201–1260?), a contemporary of Thibaut’s, who was a native of Amiens and a man of remarkably varied talents. A licensed surgeon, he was also a learned bibliophile and, perhaps most surprisingly, a deacon and chancellor of Amiens Cathedral.⁸¹ Richard recrafted the medieval Bestiary, with its wide-ranging legends and complicated religious metaphors, as a *Bestiary of Love* (fig. 30). In this telling, the unicorn is a wild and dangerous beast: “For such is its nature that no beast is so cruel to capture. It has a horn in the middle of its forehead which can penetrate all armor, so that no one dares to attack or ambush it.” Yet the author nonetheless frames the hunt of the unicorn as a cruel undertaking and the hunters as cowards. He clearly empathized with the animal, writing tenderly of the alluring perfume of the maiden that draws him in:

I was captured also by smell, like the Unicorn which falls asleep at the sweet smell of maidenhood . . . no one dares to attack or ambush it except a young virgin. For when the unicorn senses a virgin by her smell, it kneels in front of her and gently humbles itself as if to be of service. Consequently, the clever hunters who know its nature place a maiden in its path, and it falls asleep in her lap. And then, when it is asleep the hunters, who have not the courage to pursue it while awake, come out and kill it.

28. Stirling Castle,
Scotland

29. Unicorn of James IV.
Scottish, 1488–1513. Gold,
Diam. 1 1/8 in. (2.7 cm).
The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, New York; Gift of
Assunta Sommella Peluso,
Ada Peluso, and Romano I.
Peluso, in memory of Ignazio
Peluso, 2002 (2002.399.1)

Like Thibaut, Richard de Fournival then likens the hunt and killing of the unicorn to being utterly overcome by Love: "That is just how Love avenged itself on me. . . . I thought I had never seen a woman that I would want for my own, a woman I would love as passionately as I had been told one loved. Then Love, who is a clever hunter, put a maiden in my path and I fell asleep at her sweetness and I died the sort of death that is appropriate to Love."⁸² In these texts and in beguiling images from the same era—notably French Gothic ivory carvings, including a coffret in The Met collection (fig. 31)—Love itself is the hunter, and the maiden appears seemingly blameless in the unicorn's almost tender death.

Other medieval legends whisper in fairy-tale tones of dwarfs being nourished by unicorn milk and giants by unicorn meat. Even the story of King Arthur intersects with the legend of the unicorn. In *Le Chevalier du Papegau*, Arthur, while wandering on a foreign shore, encounters a dwarf and his young son, both of whom had been nursed by a unicorn in the woods. This legend describes the female unicorn as being "as large as a large horse, with a horn in her brow as sharp as any razor in the world and with fourteen great udders."⁸³ In stark contrast, a burlesque epic by the Italian poet Luigi Pulci (1432–1484) tells of the giants Morgante and Margutte roasting and eating a unicorn they have trapped and killed.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, no such revealing text is woven into either the Cluny or Cloisters tapestries to guide our understanding of them.⁸⁵ Over the course of more than a century since their discovery, scholarly and popular opinion about their meaning has been varied, lively, even impassioned.

30. Richard de Fournival (1201–1260?). *The Capture of the Unicorn*, from the *Bestiary of Love*. France, ca. 1300. Tempera and gold parchment, 10 x 6 3/4 in. (25.5 x 17 cm). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (ms. fr. 25566 fol. 88v)

31. Coffret with scenes from romances. France (Paris), ca. 1310–30. Elephant ivory, 4 3/8 x 10 x 6 1/4 in. (10.9 x 25.3 x 15.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 and The Cloisters Collection, 1988 (17.190.173a, b; 1988.16)

Cracking the Code of the Cluny Tapestries

". . . vestiges of former splendor"

—George Sand⁸⁶

The images on the Cluny tapestries seem remarkably tame compared to the texts from French medieval literature and, as we shall see, to the Cloisters hangings as well. The first recorded discussion of the unicorn ensemble now preserved in the Musée de







Cluny, Paris, dates from 1814, when a local historian describing the château de Boussac mentioned “old Turkish tapestries” belonging to “the unfortunate Zizim.” This was echoed in a second reference, from 1841, to “Prince Zizine at Bourganeuf where he was imprisoned.”⁸⁷ The thread was then picked up by the celebrated French Romantic author George Sand (Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin, 1804–1876). Inspired by having seen the tapestries during her frequent holidays in the Limousin, she wove their story into several of her publications. In the novel *Jeanne*, for example, published in 1844, she describes the tapestries as “the most beautiful decoration of the salon” in the château de Boussac and identifies the costumes, some of which her son Maurice drew and published in 1847, as dating to the fifteenth century. She goes on to laud the hangings as “masterpieces” and “vestiges of former splendor,” drawing an amusingly sharp contrast to the “nasty little chairs in Empire style” she saw in the same room.⁸⁸

Sand then recounts the prevailing legend of the tapestries to which the 1814 reference alludes, a story as romantic as any nineteenth-century novel. In that telling, the tapestries were placed in the castle keep at Bourganeuf, in the Creuse (part of the Limousin region), between 1483 and 1488, when an ousted Ottoman prince known by the improbable name Zizim (or Cem) was indeed held captive there as a political pawn by the Knights of Saint John (fig. 33).⁸⁹ While local legend held that Zizim brought the tapestries with him from the Near East, Sand was convinced that they had kindly been ordered by Pierre d’Aubusson for Zizim’s use.

To nineteenth-century eyes, and perhaps to our own, the connection of the Cluny tapestries to an exotic tale of a Turkish prince imprisoned in France centuries ago seemed quite compelling. After all, each of the tapestries features banners with crescent moons, seen on countless flags across the Muslim world. The largest of the tapestries depicts an elaborate tent, surely an evocation of the prince’s luxurious quarters in happier days. And shouldn’t the curious coiffures of the ladies, with their hair trained to stick straight up from their foreheads, be seen as a peculiar taste of the “Orient”?

In fact, all those elements reflect aristocratic French concepts of luxury at the dawn of the sixteenth century. In each tapestry of the Cluny series, a lady, often accompanied by an elegant young attendant, is depicted in costly silk velvets. Some simulate the sheen of dark blue velvet; others depict the pomegranate pattern that was the height of Italian fashion. Ermine fur, which remains a distinctive mark of royal or princely attire today, lines the lady’s gown in *Touch* (fig. 15). Jeweled bracelets, belts, and necklaces of types that rarely survive also abound. A profusion of pearls—actual rarities from the Orient—further enriches hemlines, bodices, and hair ornaments. Gold buttons run the length of even the

32. *Sight*, from the *Lady and the Unicorn* Tapestries. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Wool and silk, 10 ft. 2 1/2 in. x 10 ft. 10 in. (312 x 330 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 10836)

serving maiden's sleeve in *Smell* and help define the beguiling line from waist to hip (fig. 24). Even the playful plume of her coiffure, known as an *aigrette* (egret), is altogether French. It appears in numerous French printed books at the end of the fifteenth century and in a tapestry representing Penelope, the faithful wife of Odysseus, at her loom (fig. 35).

The precious vessels depicted throughout the Cluny ensemble likewise represent the kinds of luxury items illustrated in French printed books on the eve of the sixteenth century, from a golden cup and gem-studded hand mirror (fig. 34) to a jewel box with sturdy metal fittings, a type that sometimes survives today.⁹⁰ In *Hearing* (fig. 25), the lady plays a costly portable organ set with jewels and topped by the diminutive figures of a unicorn and lion. Such organs, lost to us today, were prized princely possessions.⁹¹

But what of the seemingly exotic tent? Just as today, tents were essential equipment in medieval military campaigns and stood as iconic emblems of them. Tents could serve a gentler purpose too, however, and in that context they are often referred to as "pavilions." Spending time outdoors in a pavilion afforded the chance to be closer to nature, especially in springtime, when, as the French troubadour Chrétien de Troyes described it, "trees are in flower, the woods are in leaf, the fields green; where the birds sing sweetly in the morning, and everything is enflamed with joy."⁹² Often made of silk or velvet with gold trimmings and ivory finials, such tents afforded a measure of privacy and intimacy, licit or otherwise, to their noble denizens.

Even the fauna seen in the Cluny series, which might seem to conjure up Zizim's faraway realm, belonged firmly to the world of medieval French princes. Lions were the pride of private menageries, while other species were part of an "exotic pets" craze among the European elite, including the parrot; the curious but not overly mischievous monkeys, one with a collar and chain and another with a harness around his belly; and a cheetah, trained to chase down deer at the hunt, which also wears a collar.⁹³ Perhaps most surprising, given the confusion that long surrounded the ensemble's meaning and ownership, is the fact that the crescent motifs on the banners belong to the standard vocabulary of French heraldry and, in this case, clearly denote the Le Viste family of Lyon (see "Counting Blessings" above).

It was not until 1921, in fact, that the Cluny tapestries came to be convincingly identified as portrayals of the senses. Looking at the hangings carefully, we can now readily perceive the evocation of touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. One lady touches the unicorn's horn; another takes a treat, perhaps something like a Jordan almond, from a golden dish; the third draws forth a sweet-smelling rose from a basket as a monkey sniffs another. In the fourth tapestry in the ensemble, the lady plays the organ, while in the fifth she holds up a mirror to the unicorn's gaze. Inventory references confirm that tapestries representing the senses were part of the repertory in aristocratic households.⁹⁴

How, then, does the sixth tapestry fit this theme? Today it is common parlance to speak of a "sixth sense" when a person claims to have an inexplicable, instinctive notion about something. That notion actually dates to the medieval world, when it was discussed by theologians and doctors of medicine in terms far more sophisticated than the "gut feeling" of present-day conversation. In France, the metaphor was developed in



33. Guillaume Caoursin (ca. 1430–1501). *Prince Zizim* [center] and *Pierre d'Aubusson, Grand Master of the Knights of St. John* [right], During the Prince's Stay on the Island of Rhodes, from Caoursin's *History of Rhodes*, 1496. Printed by Johann Reger (active 1486–99). Woodcut on paper, 8 3/8 x 5 1/8 in. (21.4 x 13 cm). Boston Public Library (Q.403.97 FOLIO)

the writings of Jean Gerson (1363–1429), the esteemed and widely read chancellor of the University of Paris, who spoke of “six senses, five external and one within, which is the heart, which we are obliged to govern like six schoolchildren.”⁹⁵ The same understanding was reiterated in the *Doctrinal aux simples gens* (*Book of Doctrine for Ordinary Folks*), a broadly disseminated text preserved in thirty-five manuscripts and fifteen print editions, including one printed in Lyon in 1486.⁹⁶ The five senses must be brought into line by the sixth, the author of the text instructs: they must be tamed. That concept is perhaps visually reinforced by the fact that both the lion and the unicorn, when partnered as bearers of the heraldic devices, have indeed been tamed.

The identification of the sixth sense as the heart seems to align well with the inscription on the pavilion that reads as either “A Mon Seul Désir” or “Mon Seul Désir” (fig. 38). The latter seems more likely to me, with the initial A somehow relating to the I that appears at the far right of the banner, for if the A is paired with “Mon Seul Désir,” what could be the purpose of the final I? The inscription also finds an echo in the poetry of a fifteenth-century love song penned by Charles d’Orléans (1394–1465), in which “My mistress, my only desire” repeats in two stanzas. The first reads: “Of loyal heart, content with joy / My mistress, my only desire, / More than any other, I wish to serve you / No matter where I am.”⁹⁷

Hunting for Meaning in the Cloisters Tapestries

“Hunters live in this world more joyfully than any other men.”

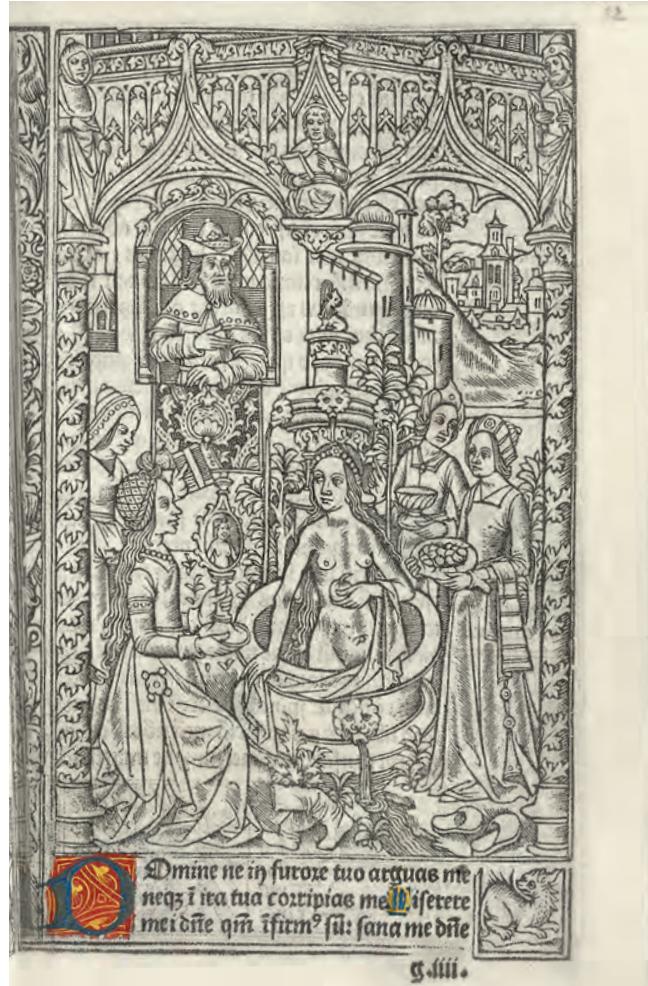
—Gaston III, count of Foix, *Livre de la chasse*⁹⁸

While early misinterpretations of the Cluny tapestries saw links to the Islamic world where none existed, the Cloisters *Hunt for the Unicorn* tapestries have, to my mind, fallen victim to a tendency to perceive Christianity in every stitch. This was brought home to me one day in the galleries when I heard a lecturer point out that there are twelve hunters in one scene, representing the twelve Apostles, who hunt the unicorn, a symbol of Christ. Such an absurd elaboration of the metaphor drawn in medieval bestiaries, linking the maiden to the Virgin Mary and the unicorn to Christ, is inconceivable. Similarly, the appearance of rosary beads, or a scabbard inscribed “Ave Maria,” are most likely incidental emblems that were pervasive within the majority-Christian society in which the tapestries were created, not signs of

any deeper symbolism. Even the wreath encircling the dead unicorn's neck, widely interpreted as an evocation of Jesus' crown of thorns, seems more likely to reflect an honor accorded a worthy prey by the hunters.

To discern the intent and meaning behind the *Hunt for the Unicorn* ensemble, it is first necessary to distinguish the hangings from one another. Each of them, with the exception of the fragmentary *The Unicorn Surrenders to a Maiden* (fig. 13), bears the initials A and E knotted together, an irrefutable sign that they were all made for the same, still unidentified, owner or owners. That said, there are clear iconographic and stylistic distinctions among them. *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden* and *The Hunters Enter the Woods* conform to the millefleurs type described above, in which figures move through a dense curtain of flowers. In both works, trees provide anchors for these otherwise seemingly weightless carpets. (The designers of the Cluny series, in contrast, relied on floating "islands" of blue to anchor the scenes in space.) *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden* is iconic, an image complete unto itself, and nothing about its design suggests that it is part of a narrative. Compositionally, it most closely resembles the unicorn tapestry from the collection of the archbishop of Lyon (see fig. 16). Former Cloisters curator Margaret B. Freeman's suggestion that *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden* is a stand-alone hanging intended for a bed or, perhaps, a chimney seems entirely reasonable.⁹⁹ The aptly named *The Hunters Enter the Woods*, on the other hand, insists on movement. A group of hunters pushes through the forest, accompanied by their hunting dogs: three greyhounds for sighting and chasing prey (identified by their pointed ears and snouts) and two floppy-eared lymers, responsible for picking up the prey's scent and thus beginning the hunt.¹⁰⁰ All head intently to the right, as a youth, high in a tree, calls out that he has spotted the prey. Only by association with the other AE tapestries can we infer that the prey is a unicorn.

Looking to the remaining large tapestries, there is a clear difference of style. Each of the other hangings sets the hunt for the unicorn in a compelling landscape. In place of a carpet of flowers, there now appears a verdant countryside, with castle towers set against a sky of blue, a bubbling fountain in one, and in three a running stream at the lower edge. The cast of hunters, their costumes, and their equipment change from one hanging to the next, just as the lady in the Cluny ensemble changes



34. Bathsheba at Her Bath, from a Book of Hours printed by Philippe Pigouchet (active 1488–1518) and published by Simon Vostre (active 1486–1518). France (Paris), 1497. Woodcut on paper, H. 7 in. (17.7 cm). Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (Incun. 1497.C28 BX2080)



35. *Penelope at Her Loom*, from the series *The Stories of Virtuous Women*. French or Franco-Flemish, ca. 1480-83. Wool, 59 x 39 3/8 in. (150 x 100 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Maria Antoinette Evans Fund (26.54)

from tapestry to tapestry. No single character can be followed through the story. Still, the logical inference to draw, given the hangings' common interlaced initials and shared history, is that *The Hunters Enter the Woods* is the first chapter in the presentation of a single hunt.

Three of the chapters in the story that unfolds can be explained by comparison with traditional representations of the hunt, which was depicted in many media, such as a precious enameled hunting horn (fig. 36). In *The Unicorn Crosses a Stream* (fig. 6), the titular beast behaves like a stag, splashing through shallow waters in a futile effort to throw the dogs off the scent. The same imagery can be seen in another tapestry in The Met collection, from a series known as *The Hunt of the Frail Stag*, in which the hunt becomes an allegory of the passage through life (fig. 37). Inevitably, a full-fledged assault on the unicorn follows. Two of the pursuers in the tapestry are large-scale counterparts of figures in the marginal illustration of a stag hunt in Thielman Kerver's Book of Hours (fig. 11), but in the tapestry version the evident ferocity of the unicorn dominates the scene. In both the *Hunt for the Unicorn* series and the Book of Hours,

the great beasts—in a rather dramatic departure from the standard practices of the hunt—are brought back to the castle intact rather than being partially butchered in the woods so that the dogs can be awarded their share immediately.

The two remaining hangings in the Cloisters ensemble have no parallel in representations of stag hunts. Each of these emphasizes, instead, a distinguishing quality of the unicorn. In *The Unicorn Purifies Water* (fig. 5), arguably the most lyrical of the group, the unicorn, legs folded beneath him, bends his head to dip his horn into a stream as hunters gaze on, stupefied. Animals, some of them quite fierce, have gathered peaceably round. They wait with open mouths and bated breath, reflecting the legend that the unicorn's horn will, for a time, make the water safe to drink. This scene was well known, as it is described in the household inventories of a number of French aristocrats (see “Counting Blessings”).

In *The Unicorn Surrenders to a Maiden* (fig. 13), two adjoining fragments from a single tapestry, the lady and her maid have become, either wittingly or unwittingly, accomplices of the hunter. The unicorn has been pacified; as the handmaid looks on, only the right hand of the lady is visible, encircling the unicorn's neck.¹⁰¹ This scene would seem unnecessary in the unfolding visual story of the pursuit of the unicorn as a



stag hunt, since the poor creature has already been seriously wounded in *The Unicorn Defends Himself* and is mortally wounded in the upper-left corner of *The Hunters Return to the Castle*.¹⁰² Like *The Unicorn Purifies Water*, it is a scene that distinguishes this pursuit from a simple deer hunt.

In *The Hunters Return to the Castle* (fig. 14), a hunter holds the unicorn's magical horn firmly in his grasp as the lord and lady emerge from the castle to celebrate the success of the outing. Like the finale of a grand opera, all the characters crowd onto the stage. It has been a noisy, violent, bloody, and—notably—a conventionally “manly” pursuit of prey, quite distinct from the tame, peaceful realm of ladies presented in the *Lady and the Unicorn* ensemble. The owners of the castle gain possession of that most sought-after prize in the medieval realm: a unicorn horn, capable of detecting poison, reversing its effect, and purifying water.

In conceiving both the Cluny and Cloisters series—one as a celebration of the senses and the other as a hunt—it appears that the respective designers worked without relying on a single, complete iconographic program. Instead, the stories were woven together by drawing on, and then creatively embellishing, imagery traditionally associated with the unicorn, resulting in unique ensembles that are at once less tidy in their meaning but also more inventive than we might expect.

36. Léonard Limosin (ca. 1505–1575/1577). *Horn of Saint Hubert*. France (Limoges), 1538. Silver, grisaille and polychrome enamel over horn, 9 ½ x 15 x 9 ¾ in. (24.1 x 38.1 x 24.4 cm). The Wyvern Collection, United Kingdom (no. 1383)

Picturing Unicorns

“... the sweetly docile expression of the Cluny unicorn is subtly different from that of the wild-eyed, still not completely tamed unicorn in the Cloisters’ tapestry.”

—Margaret B. Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*¹⁰³

The Musée de Cluny’s *Lady and the Unicorn* and the Cloisters’ *Hunt for the Unicorn* ensembles embrace us in their magic, whisking us away to a world at once familiar and strange. How did the artists responsible for these tapestries conceive such wonders? Although the two ensembles initially appear to be unique, comparisons between them and to other tapestries, early printed books, and even stained glass reveal specific clues to their production. We know, for example, that the artists involved in making both series used and reused the same design, or cartoon (*petit patron*)—which rarely survive in their original form—at different scales and to obviously clever effects. The beast in *The Unicorn Surrenders to a Maiden* is essentially the same creature who regards himself in the mirror of *Sight*, both no doubt derived from the same cartoon.¹⁰⁴ Five different cartoons of rabbits are likewise repeated in the Cluny series, appearing almost to hop from tapestry to tapestry, just as they do in nature. Dogs in the Cloisters series do the same, linking the different stages of the hunt. Judging from his curling ears and raised snout, the dog whose uplifted head peeks out from the trees by the fountain in *The Unicorn Purifies Water* is based on the same cartoon as the white dog being freed from his leash in *The Unicorn Crosses a Stream* (figs. 5, 6).

Many of the images in the Cluny and Cloisters tapestries find echoes in miniature in early French printed books. The charming ape eating a berry in *Taste* (fig. 21)

37. *Old Age Drives the Stag Out of a Lake and the Hounds Heat, Grief, Cold, Anxiety, Age, and Heaviness Pursue Him, from the series The Hunt of the Frail Stag*. France or Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500–1525. Wool warp, wool and silk wefts, embroidered with wool, 8 ft. 6 in. x 11 ft. 5 in. (259.1 x 348 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Bequest of Mary Stillman Harkness, 1950 (50.145.5)







appears in a woodcut of the Garden of Eden in a Bible published in Paris by Antoine Vérard (fig. 39). More significant in terms of size, the maid in the tapestry *Mon Seul Désir* (fig. 38) finds a sister image in the emblem of the book dealer Jean Richard of Rouen (see illustration on inside back cover).¹⁰⁵ The hunter poised to stab the unicorn in the neck in *The Unicorn Crosses a Stream* appears in reverse in the Book of Hours printed by Philippe Pigouchet for Simon Vostre, where he plays an equally malevolent role, stoking the fire in the martyrdom of Saint John.¹⁰⁶ The more reluctant hunters in the tapestry, at upper left, are likewise mirrored in the Pigouchet volume (for another illustration from that volume, see fig. 34).

The designs in these books have long been linked to an artist or atelier associated with the painter known for his work on the exquisite *Très Petites Heures of Anne of Brittany* (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, NAL 3120).¹⁰⁷ That artist, who was in royal service, stands at the crossroads of a group of interrelated designs for manuscripts, printed books, tapestries, and stained glass that appeared from the mid-fifteenth to early sixteenth century. He has been identified by some scholars with Jean d'Ypres (d. 1508),¹⁰⁸ documented as a painter in Paris in 1504, who, as was common in that era, came from a family of professional artists. His grandfather André d'Ypres was a painter and illuminator; his father, Colin d'Amiens, likewise a painter and illuminator, was resident in Paris. From the 1460s to the 1480s, Colin is known to have supplied a variety of designs, from precious goldsmith's work to painted banners for the king's trumpets. Jean was the eldest of Colin's three sons—his brother Louis was also active as a painter—and indeed the large body of work now linked to Jean specifically may well represent a vibrant family enterprise in which designs were held in common and passed down.¹⁰⁹ The participation of several members of Jean d'Ypres's family over a period of years

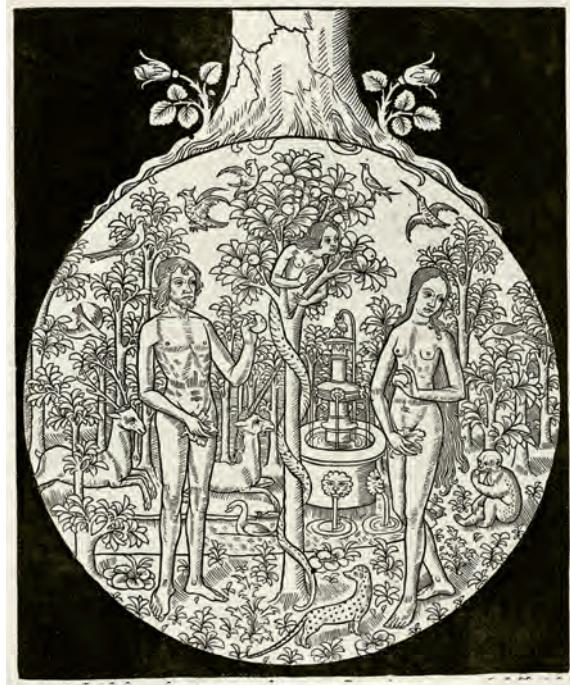
38. *Mon Seul Désir*, from the *Lady and the Unicorn Tapestries*. Cartoons made in Paris; woven in Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Wool and silk, 12 ft. 4 1/2 in. x 15 ft. 6 1/4 in. (377 x 473 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 10834)

could possibly account for distinctions in style and handling between *The Hunters Enter the Woods* and *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden* as well as the other images of the hunt in the Cloisters ensemble. Differences in the elaboration of the mise-en-scène could also be explained by an evolution in aesthetic or financial considerations on the part of the patron, the artist, or both.

A further explanation for such variations could be accounted for by the individual artists who wove them and, in bringing the cartoons to life, shaped the designs to their own purposes. Alas, who these artists were and where they worked is not known. The number of cities that boasted cadres of weavers, guilds, and/or merchants by the late fifteenth century is almost dizzying. Clustered in the highly urban mercantile centers of northern Europe, with ready access to domestic and English wool, tapestry makers—who were sometimes also merchants of tapestries and other household goods—were active in Antwerp, Arras, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Lille, Louvain, Paris, Saint-Omer, Thérouanne, Tournai, and Valenciennes.¹¹⁰ In the case of the Cluny and Cloisters unicorn tapestries, the weavers, whose names remain lost to us, created works of art that are dependent on, and yet distinct from, the designs from which they worked.

In the Cluny tapestries, the distinct identity but shared gentility of each lady is apparent not only in her stance, attire, and the trappings of luxury that surround her, but also in the delicacy of the weaving of her face. There the weavers masterfully turned gravity itself to advantage, bringing weft yarns to a common meeting point on the loom without overlapping them, knowing that when the tapestry would be hung on the wall, the weight would cause a tiny opening to appear, serving to suggest the edge of a nose or the curve of a cheek.

The weavers of the Cloisters tapestries deftly employed the same standard technique, artfully placing slits to define the neck of the unicorn, the faces of the nobles, even the dogs' snouts. But the weavers eschewed this subtle refinement in other figures, most effectively to underscore the aggressiveness of the active hunters.¹¹¹ The colors of their faces are hard; their lines are sharp. The weavers' crucial role, and the extent of their ability to interpret the cartoon, becomes clear if we compare the hunter



39. Jean d'Ypres (?). *Adam and Eve in the Garden*, from an early printed Bible published by Antoine Vérard (1485–1512). France (Paris), ca. 1501. Woodcut on paper, 13 1/8 x 9 1/2 x 2 1/4 in. (33.2 x 23.9 x 5.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1924 (24.16.1)



40. Jean d'Ypres (?). *The Carrying of the Cross*, from the Chapel of the Abbots of Cluny, Paris, France, first quarter of 16th century. Pot-metal glass, 16 1/8 x 5 1/8 in. (41 x 13 cm). Musée de Cluny, Paris (Cl. 22391)

at lower right in *The Unicorn Crosses a Stream* (fig. 6) to the soldier leading Jesus to his Crucifixion from a stained-glass window in the Chapel of the Abbots of Cluny (fig. 40),¹¹² both of which derive from the same cartoon. The soldier in stained glass is intended to be loathsome—after all, he has put a rope around Jesus' neck—and yet he is portrayed as handsome, with beautiful blond curls and well-proportioned features. In the deft hands of the weavers, by contrast, the hunter is clearly portrayed as a “roughneck,” enamored of violence. His nose is misshapen, his

chin is long, and his mouth is set in a frown, with a mole at his chin line. The impact of these subtleties is certainly deliberate, part of an attempt to create a rough-hewn world inhabited almost exclusively by men. The *Hunt* is bloody, and we sense it is also loud: water splashes; teeth gnash; animals cry out.

That same technical subtlety lends translucence to the veil that seems to blow in on a gentle breeze in *Taste* or to the basin in *The Unicorn Purifies Water*, in which a pheasant's reflection quietly gazes back at him as he sips from the fountain.¹¹³ The dogs, too, lap at water in *The Unicorn Crosses a Stream*, creating ripples that represent the fastidious work of skilled weavers. In the Cloisters tapestries, especially, the artists who wove them fashioned a seamless world in which animals, both common and exotic, real and fantastic, appear to move through the woods and are not merely static representations against a millefleurs wallpaper. Their expert artistry lends sophistication to the Cluny and Cloisters weavings, capturing something ineffable and seldom rivaled in other tapestries—a display of magic that is enough to make us all believe in unicorns.

Notes

- 1 Conrad Ges[us]ner et al., *Historiae animalium . . .*, vol. 1 (Tigri [Zürich]: Apvd Christ. Froschoverm, 1551), p. 781.
- 2 Roy Osborne, *Renaissance Colour Symbolism* (Morristown, N.C.: Lulu Press, 2019), p. 381 n. 106.
- 3 *De Bello Gallico* 6, 26. This translation is from Caesar, *The Gallic War*, Loeb Classical Library 72 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1917), pp. 350–53.
- 4 Richard de Fournival, *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love and Response*, edited and translated by Jeanette Beer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. x.
- 5 Song of Songs 2:9, translation given in Richard Barber, trans., *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764* (1992; Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 1999), p. 37. In the Douay-Rheims Version, which is closest to the medieval European Bible, the passage is rendered as “My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart.” Psalm 91:11 and Luke 1:69 (DRV). In the Protestant International Standard Version, the text is in Psalm 92:10, where the translation is “You’ve grown my strength like the horn of a wild ox.” On the medieval bestiary, see Willene B. Clark and Meradith T. McMunn, *Birds and Beasts of the Middle Ages: The Bestiary and Its Legacy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989); and Elizabeth Morrison et al., *Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2019).
- 6 Morrison et al., *Book of Beasts*, esp. pp. 4–5.
- 7 Barber, trans., *Bestiary . . . Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764*, p. 36.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 36–37.
- 9 Priscilla Throop, ed. and trans., *Hildegard von Bingen's Physica: The Complete English Translation of Her Classic Work on Health and Healing* (Rochester, Vt.: Healing Arts Press, 1998), pp. 210–11.
- 10 See Bernard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam/Eine Pilgerreise ins Heilige Land: Frühneuhochdeutscher Text und Übersetzung*, edited by Isolde Mozer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), p. 551.
- 11 Sultan Qaitbay presented a giraffe and other animals to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1487. See Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, “Lorenzo the Magnificent and the Giraffe as a Symbol of Power,” *Artibus et Historiae* [8], no. 16 (1987), pp. 91–99. But European rulers also had a tradition of importing these exotic animals. Edgar of Scotland gifted a camel to Muirchertach, king of Ireland, in 1105. See Richard Oram, *Domination and Lordship: Scotland 1070–1230*, The New Edinburgh History of Scotland 3 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 52. Recorded in the Annals of Inisfallen, the text is cited by John Stuart, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Spalding Club, 1867), p. xii: “In this year a camel, which is an animal of wonderful size, was presented by the King of Alban to Mucertac O'Brien.” More broadly, see Gustave Loisel, *Histoire des ménageries de l'antiquité à nos jours*, vol. 1, *Antiquité, Moyen Âge, Renaissance* (Paris: Octave Doin et Fils; Henri Laurens, 1912).
- 12 See Elizabeth Ross, *Picturing Experience in the Early Printed Book: Breydenbach's Peregrinatio from Venice to Jerusalem* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014).
- 13 See Martin Carver and Jan Klápková, eds., *The Archaeology of Medieval Europe*, vol. 2: *Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, [2012]), p. 95.
- 14 Only one horn appears in the 1634 inventory. A legend that the horn was a gift to Charlemagne from Harun al-Rashid is not earlier than the seventeenth century. For the gift from David I, see Léopold Delisle's edition of *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. 12, new ed. (Paris: Victor Palme, 1877), p. 105 (in paragraph C). For the subsequent legend, see Blaise de Montesquiou-Fezensac and Danielle Gaborit-Chopin, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, 3 vols. (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1973–77), vol. 1, no. 165; vol. 3, pp. 89–90. The horn has been in the Musée de Cluny since 1919.
- 15 Odell Shepard, *The Lore of the Unicorn* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1930), p. 107. An inventory dated September 5, 1325 includes a “cornum unum de unicornio ornatum de argento” that was kept in the crypt of San Marco and used at the altar on feast days; see also Rodolfo Gallo, *Il Tesoro di S. Marco e la sua storia* (Venice: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1967), p. 277.
- 16 Cited in Shepard, *Lore of the Unicorn*, pp. 108–9. On the horn in the crypt of Westminster Abbey recorded in 1303, see A. B. G., “Unicorn Emblem and Horn,” *Notes and Queries*, ser. 8, 11 (May 29, 1897), p. 422; Francis Palgrave, *The Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer, Together with Other Documents Illustrating the History of That Repository*, vol. 1 (London: The Commissioners of the Public Records of the Kingdom, 1836), pp. 285–86. Palgrave's account names Willem de Paleys as the culprit under whose bed the unicorn horn was found. Paleys was also the alleged orchestrator of the 1303 robbery.
- 17 Rudolf Distelberger, Manfred Leithe-Jasper, and Dinah Livingstone, *The Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna: The Imperial and Ecclesiastical Treasury*, rev. ed. (1997; Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), p. 6.
- 18 See Marina Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), pp. 67–68, fig. 11.18, for the Antoine Caron drawing of the gift exchange.
- 19 See Elizabeth Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System, 1498–1526* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 65–68; and Thierry Claerr, “Imprimerie et réussite sociale à Paris . . . Thielman Kerver . . .” (Mémoire d'étude, rapport d'étape de la recherche pour le Diplôme de conservateur de Bibliothèque, Université Paris IV–Sorbonne, 2000), annex 3, (“Marques typographiques . . .”), pp. x–xiii. Claerr chronicles Kerver's several moves and places of business.
- 20 See Denise P. Gallo, “The Kerver Missale Romanum,” in *Library of Congress*; <https://www.loc.gov/collections/moldenhauer-archives/articles-and-essays/guide-to-archives/missale-romanum/>: “Dilectus quemadmodum filius unicornium” (based on Psalm 28/29:6). For an example of the image and motto, see *Propositions, dictz et sentences contenans les graces, fructz, proffitz, vtilitez & louanges du tressacre & digne sacrement de Lautel*, published by Jacques Kerver, 1564, Boston Public Library, G.407.10.
- 21 Thomas P. Campbell et al., *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), p. 46, citing Creighton Gilbert, ed., *Italian Art, 1400–1500: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 110.
- 22 The celebrated Bayeux Tapestry of the eleventh century is in fact an embroidery, not a tapestry.
- 23 Jules-Marie Richard, *Mahaut, Comtesse d'Artois et de Bourgogne, 1302–1329* (Paris: H. Champion, 1887), p. 161. The author is careful in determining when “tapis” might mean simply embroidery, *ibid.*, pp. 206, 212.
- 24 See Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), pp. 91–92.
- 25 See *ibid.*, pp. 84–93, no. 1. For other fragments of this textile, see Elizabeth Cleland and Lorraine Karafel, *Tapestries from the Burrell Collection*, Glasgow Museums (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2017), pp. 230–36, no. 52. For the textile's provenance at Château de Saint-Agil, see a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France catalogue (EST RESERVE VE-26 (K)).
- 26 Richard, *Mahaut*, pp. 214–15.
- 27 Campbell et al., *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, p. 30, where the dimensions are given in meters.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 33. The same was true of three merchants in Arras: Jean Cosset, Jean Walois, and Guillaume au Vaissel. See Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, p. 66.
- 30 See Laura Weigert, “Chambres d'amour: Tapestries of Love and the Texturing of Space,” *Oxford Art Journal* 31, no. 3 (2008), pp. 319–36.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 328.
- 32 The price was 19 livres 3 sous. See Richard, *Mahaut*, p. 214.
- 33 Eugène Müntz, *Histoire générale de la tapisserie*, vol. 1, *Histoire de la tapisserie en Italie, . . . et en Turquie* (Paris: Société Anonyme de Publications Périodiques, 1878–84), p. 67: “En la chambre de la Reyne y avoit une tapisserie de bestes et oiseaux estranges avec personnages d'estranges pays.”
- 34 *Ibid.*: “. . . d'une Bergerie ou estoient escriveaux, et estoient tous petits personnages.”
- 35 [Thomas Thomson, comp.], *A Collection of Inventories and other Records of the Royal Wardrobe and Jewelhouse; and of the Artillery and Munition in Some of the Royal Castles, M.CCC.LXXXVIII.–M.DC.VI.* (Edinburgh, 1815), p. 51.
- 36 See Müntz, *Histoire générale de la tapisserie*, vol. 1, p. 14, without footnote: “à bestes et à licornes de l'ouvrage de Paris.”
- 37 The date given on the Minneapolis Institute of Art website, ca. 1530–45, seems late for the millefleurs format, which was already prevalent in the fourteenth century. The biblical interpretation suggested on the website and in Morrison et al., *Book of Beasts*, pp. 206–7, no. 56, seems to me unlikely. See Morrison and the Minneapolis Institute of Art catalogue (34.4).
- 38 See the Bibliothèque Nationale de France catalogue (RESERVE Pc-18-Fol, Pièce de tapisserie sur laquelle est représentée une dame en hennin assise dans un parterre); and Henri Bouchot, *Inventaire des dessins exécutés pour Roger de Gaignières et conservés aux départements des estampes et des manuscrits*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris: Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1891), vol. 1, p. 181, no. 1733. Charles de Bourbon's unicorn tapestry is distinct stylistically from his Adoration of the Magi, ca. 1476–88, published in Campbell et al., *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, pp. 79–82, no. 6.
- 39 See Nicolas Reveyron, “A Little-Known Work from the Fourteenth Century: The Façade of the Cathedral of Lyon,” in *Arts of the Medieval Cathedrals: Studies on Architecture, Stained Glass and Sculpture in Honor of Anne Prache*, edited by Kathleen Nolan and Dany Sandron (Abingdon, U.K., and New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), pp. 213–33.
- 40 See L[ia] B. Ross, *Revisiting Decadence: A Behavioral Interpretation of Fifteenth-Century Historical Narrative* (Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 72–73; [Amable-Guillaume-Prosper Brugière] Barante, *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois*, vol. 6 (Brussels: J. P. Meline, Librairie-Éditeur, 1836), p. 99.
- 41 See R. Chalon, ed., *Les mémoires de Messire Jean, Seigneur de Haynin et de Louveignies, Chevalier, 1465–1477*, 2 vols. (Mons: Em. Hoyois, 1842), vol. 1, p. 68.
- 42 Louis of Luxembourg was a notorious schemer. In 1475, King Louis XI had him arrested, imprisoned in the Bastille, and, ultimately, executed for treason. The inventory references were known to Margaret B. Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1976), pp. 155, 171, but she does not emphasize the large number. See Jules Gauthier, “Inventaire du mobilier du connétable de

Saint-Paul en 1476," *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*, 1885, pp. 48, 52: "287. Quatre pièces de tapisserie on haulte lice, bleus et gris, semés de houppe et EE et une licorne au milieu, chascun contenant XXVI aulnes ou environ à l'aulne quarree, prisé ensemble XXXVI l. . . . 348. Sept pièces de tapisserie, les VI ystoriez de personnes, chiens, oiseaux et aultres devises, armoyez, et du temps de feu Monsieur le conte de Liney, et l'autre est d'autre fachon, où il y a une fontaine, une lycone et aultres bestes, contenant ensemble II^c LX aulnes ou environ, LXV l. . . . 357. Ung grant viez tappis velu, figuré de houppe et de une licorne. XXXVI s."

43 Logically, tapestries made for Louis should contain the letter(s) L, not E. Could it be that the knotted ropes crossing over the uprights of the letters caused them to be misread as E's when the descriptions were written, or is there some unknown reason for the choice of the letter E? No close family member had the initial E. But letters can be vexing clues. Philip the Good of Burgundy used two E's tied together, for reasons unknown. See Francis Salet, "Emblématique et histoire de l'art," *Revue de l'art* 87 (1990), pp. 13–28, esp. pp. 24–25; and Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, pp. 155–74.

44 Elizabeth Hilton Bernis, "At the Court of the Prince: The Patronage and Art Historical Legacy of Cesare Borgia, 1492–1503" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, Gainesville, 2015), pp. 74–75, seems to cite the same event referring to the wedding of Lucrezia Borgia. See Christopher Hibbert, *The Borgias and Their Enemies, 1431–1519* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009), p. 119; and Sarah Bradford, *Lucrezia Borgia* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 73.

45 Edmond Bonnaffé, *Inventaire de la duchesse de Valentinois, Charlotte d'Albret* (Paris: A. Quantin, Imprimeur-Éditeur, 1878), p. 85: "417.—Une autre grant piece de tappicerie de haulte lisse, au milieu de laquelle est faictes mención de listoie de la fontaine & de la licorne." Remarked by Müntz, *Histoire générale de la tapisserie*, vol. 1, p. 58. The château is set in a wood some 40 miles south of Bourges.

46 François' administrative posts included serving as secretary to Louis XII. See C. A. Mayer and D. Bentley-Cranch, "François Robertet: French Sixteenth-Century Civil Servant, Poet, and Artist," *Renaissance Studies* 11, no. 3 (September 1997), pp. 208–22, esp. pp. 210–14.

47 L[ouis-Auguste] Bosseboeuf, "La manufacture de tapisseries de Tours," *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique de Touraine* 43 (1904), p. 194: "Dix-sept pièces de fort anciennes tapisseries à personnages en partie desquelles y a certaines licornes." François' grandfather Louis II de la Trémoille married Charlotte d'Albret's daughter Luisa de Borgia in 1517, his second marriage. They had no children, but it is possible that tapestries from Charlotte's collection passed to her daughter and thence to the Trémoille family after the marriage in 1517.

48 In the 1574 inventory, these appear to have survived in part, listed as "Deux pièces des graux-Bonnetz dont trois doublées de toile et une fort rompue." See *ibid*. The tapestries with unicorns do not seem to be in the inventory of the château taken in 1672, following the death of Marie de la Tour. See Hugues Imbert, "Histoire de Thouars," *Mémoires de la Société de Statistique, Sciences et Arts du Département des Deux-Sèvres*, ser. 2, 10 (1870), "Mobilier du château," pp. 275–82.

49 Pierre Verlet and Francis Salet, *La Dame à la licorne* (Paris: Les Éditions Braun et Cie, 1960), p. 43.

50 Cited in Geneviève Souchal, "Messeigneurs les Vistes et la 'Dame à la Licorne,'" *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 141, no. 2 (1983), p. 247: "Une pieche de tapisserie a fond rouge pour mettre sur ung manteau de cheminée, esquelles y a des armoiries a troys croissans. Cinq pieces de tapisseries a fond rouge ou sont figurez des sibilles et licornes avecq des armoiries a troys croissans, de la haulteur de troys aulnes ung tiers. Plus une autlre tendeeur de tapisserie a fonds rouge ou sont representees des licornes et bestions avecq des armes ou sont figurez des croissans, consistant en sept pieches contenant de haulteur troys aulnes ung quart et de tour vingt-six aulnes, prisé la somme de cinquante escus."

51 The arms, "de gueules à la bande d'azur, chargée de trois croissants montants d'argent," were identified by G. Callier, "Chronique. Vente des tapisseries de Boussac," *Bulletin monumental* 48 (1882), pp. 567–68. The Le Viste identification was echoed by Edmond Du Sommerard in 1883; see Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, rev. ed. (1978; Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1989), p. 67.

52 Souchal, "'Messeigneurs les Vistes' et la 'Dame à la Licorne,'" p. 217.

53 See René Fedou, *Les hommes de loi lyonnais à la fin du Moyen Âge: Étude sur les origines de la classe de Robe* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1964), pp. 314, 317, 320.

54 Souchal, "'Messeigneurs les Vistes' et la 'Dame à la Licorne,'" p. 222.

55 See Élisabeth [Taburet-]Delahaye, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2007), p. 71.

56 See the summary in *ibid*, p. 90.

57 See the genealogy in Erlande-Brandenburg, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, p. 66; and [Taburet-]Delahaye, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, p. 89.

58 Prosper Falgaïrolle, "La succession de la maison de Tournon au commencement du XVIIe siècle," *Revue . . . du Vivarais illustrée* 10, nos. 2, 4 (1902), pp. 90–100, 182–200.

59 They were described there in 1853 by Henri Auca-pitaine, "Note . . . sur les tapisseries du château de Boussac (Creuse)," *Revue archéologique* 10, pt. 1 (September 1853), pp. 175–76.

60 "1 tenture de tapisserie d'haute lisse représentant une chasse de licorne en 7 pièces contenant 22 aunes de cours sur 4 aunes de haut et environ [estimée à] 1500 [ft]." Nicolas Courtin, *L'art d'habiter à Paris au XVIIe siècle: L'ameublement des hôtels particuliers* (Dijon: Éditions Faton, 2011), p. 431. An aulne is slightly more than a modern meter; 22 by 4 aulnes would be approximately 85 ft. 9 in. by 15 ft. 7 in. See Pierre Portet, *La mesure de Paris: Les anciennes mesures du Centre Historique de la France d'après les tables de conversion*, edited by Pierre Charbonnier (Paris: Éditions du CTHS, 2012).

61 Courtin, *L'art d'habiter à Paris au XVIIe siècle*, p. 421: "1 vieille tenture de tapisserie des Flandres représentant une chasse contenant 7 pièces faisant 21 aunes de cours sur 3 aunes de haut [estimée à] 280 [ft]."

62 See P[aul] de Fleury, *Inventaire des meubles existant dans les châteaux de la Rochefoucauld, de Verteuil et de la Terre à la mort de François VIII de La Rochefoucauld* (1728), publié d'après l'original des archives de la Charente (Angoulême: Imprimerie G. Chasseignac, 1886), pp. 56, 93: "437. Ladite chambre tendue d'une tapisserie de haute-lisse, en cinq pièces, presque mi-usée, appellée de la Licorne, estimée 150 livres" and "671. Plus deux pièces de tapisserie à la licorne, trouées en divers endroits, estimée 45 livres."

63 Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, p. 220.

64 See *ibid*.

65 See Jean-Bernard de Vaivre, "Autour de la Dame à la licorne et d'autres tentures, II: Notes de méthodologie et études comparatives," *Monuments et mémoires de la Fondation Eugène Piot* 94 (2015), p. 114 nn. 42, 43.

66 Émile Biais, "Les Tapisseries de 'La Licorne' du Château de Verteuil," *Bulletin du Comité des Sociétés des Beaux-Arts* 29 (1905), p. 675 n. 2.

67 For the patronage of James V, see Andrea Thomas, *Princely Majestic: The Court of James V of Scotland, 1528–1542* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005).

68 [Thomson, comp.], *A Collection of Inventories . . . of the Royal Wardrobe*, pp. 50, 51.

69 George Steel of Houston became Master of the King's Tapestries and in February 1537 was sent to Flanders from Paris in haste to find a "certane tapistre." See Sally Rush, "French Fashion in Sixteenth-Century Scotland: The 1539 Inventory of James V's Wardrobe," *Furniture History* 42 (2006), p. 13.

70 *Ibid*, pp. 13–14.

71 Andrea Thomas, "Renaissance Culture at the Court of James V, 1528–1542" (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1997), p. 85.

72 *Ibid*. Madeleine's grandmother was Anne of Brittany, whom some scholars have attempted to connect to the Cloisters unicorn tapestries.

73 [Thomson, comp.], *A Collection of Inventories . . . of the Royal Wardrobe*, p. 126.

74 Amy L. Juhala, "The Household and Court of King James VI of Scotland, 1567–1603" (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 2000), p. 20.

75 [Thomson, comp.], *A Collection of Inventories . . . of the Royal Wardrobe*, p. 212.

76 *Ibid*, p. 208.

77 No tapestries with unicorns appear in the inventories of Charles I, neither the one of 1638–40, nor the sale inventory of 1649. See Oliver Millar, "Abraham van der Doort's Catalogue of the Collections of Charles I," *The Volume of the Walpole Society* 37 (1958–60), pp. [ii]–[xxv], 1–256; and Oliver Millar, "The Inventories and Valuations of the King's Goods, 1649–1651," *The Volume of the Walpole Society* 43 (1970–72), pp. iii–xxviii, 1–458. I am not aware of inventories of the possessions of Elizabeth of Bohemia.

78 Shepard, *Lore of the Unicorn*, p. 85.

79 On Thibaut, see Yvonne Bellenger et al., *Thibaut de Champagne: Prince et poète au XIIIe siècle* (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1987).

80 Frederick Goldin, ed. and trans., *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères: An Anthology and a History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973), p. 467, ll. 1–9.

81 See R[ichard] H. Rouse, "Manuscripts belonging to Richard de Fournival," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 3 (1973), pp. 253–69, pls. 19–24. See also William M. McLeod, "The Consuls d'amours of Richard de Fournival," *Studies in Philology* 32, no. 1 (January 1935), pp. 1–21.

82 Richard de Fournival, *Master Richard's Bestiary of Love and Response*, p. 15. See also Jeanette Beer, *Beasts of Love: Richard de Fournival's "Bestiaire d'amour" and a Woman's Response* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 61. Beer says the lion for Richard is a warning for man not to lose his mind to love of a woman.

83 See Shepard, *Lore of the Unicorn*, p. 85; and Thomas E. Vesce, "The Return of the Chevalier du Papegau," *Romance Notes* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1977), pp. 320–27.

84 Luigi Pulci, *Morgante: The Epic Adventures of Orlando and His Giant Friend Morgante* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 379–80, canto XVIII, 189–96. Margutte complains that Morgante has eaten more than his share: "The unicorn you ate, and gave me bones; and now you've drunk two barrels all at once," *ibid*, p. 394, canto XIX, 63.

85 It has been suggested that the Cloisters tapestries originally had inscriptions at the top. See Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, p. 313. The sky of each hanging has been extensively repaired, except for the fragment of *The Unicorn in the Lady's Lap*.

86 George Sand, *Jeanne* (1844; Paris: Calmann Lévy, Éditeur, 1881), chap. 10, p. 131; translation by the author.

87 See [Taburet-]Delahaye, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, p. 7, with earlier literature.

88 The discussion is in Sand, *Jeanne*, chap. 10, p. 131; translation by the author.

89 See H. J. A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), esp. pp. 128–29, in which it is said that Prince Zizim “caused amorous turmoil among the daughters of the châteaux he passed on the way.” The prince’s own account mentions golden vessels filled with sparkling wine, in an era before champagne.

90 In the Musée de Cluny, for example (Cl. 20368).

91 See the tapestry *Lady at the Organ* in the treasury of Angers Cathedral in Weigert, “Chambres d’amour,” p. 332, fig. 12.

92 See Marc Russon and Hervé Martin, *Vivre sous la tente au Moyen Âge: (Ve–XVe siècle)* (Rennes: Éditions Ouest-France, 2010), p. 79, citing Chrétien de Troyes’ *Contre du Graal* in old French (translation by the author): “Ce fu au tans qu’auvre florissent, foillent bochaische, pré verdissent et cil oisel an lor latin docemant chantent au matin et tote riens de joie enflame . . .” The Cluny tapestries are discussed in *ibid.*, pp. 85–86.

93 The chronicler William of Malmesbury described the zoo kept by Henry I of England (r. 1100–1135), with its lions, leopards, lynxes, camels, and porcupines. See *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi: Gesta Regum Anglorum, atque Historia Novella*, edited by Thomas Duffus Hardy, 2 vols. (London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1840), vol. 2, p. 638. When the young prince Wenceslas visited Paris with his father, Emperor Charles IV, in 1378, he was most eager to see the lions in the royal menagerie. See R[oland] Delachenal, ed., *Chronique des règnes de Jean II. et de Charles V.*, vol. 2, 1364–1380, *Les grandes chroniques de France* 375 (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1916), p. 261. See also Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), esp. pp. 48–50, for animal collars.

94 Sophie Schneebalg-Perelman, “*La Dame à la licorne*; a été tissée à Bruxelles,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser. 6, 70 (November 1967), pp. 260–64; followed by Jan Karel Steppe and Guy Delmarcel, “Les tapisseries du cardinal Erard de la Marck, prince-évêque de Liège,” *Revue de l’art*, no. 25 (1974), pp. 43–44. Alain Erlande-Brandenburg also noted this series in the possession of Erard de la Marck, prince-bishop of Liège (1506–1538) and bishop of Chartres, purchased at his death by Mencía de Mendoza. See his “*La tenture de la Dame à la Licorne*,” *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1977, pp. 165–79. Erard de la Marck’s will mentions tapestries created in Tourmai and in Enghien (Edingen), which was a center for tapestries by 1457. The Enghien hangings with birds and other animals were left to his nephews. See Guillaume Hennen, “*Le testament d’Erard de la Marck, prince-évêque de Liège, cardinal, archevêque de Valence, 18 janvier 1535*,” *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d’Histoire* 107 (1942), pp. 309, 313, for Tourmai and Enghien, respectively. If these family heirlooms also featured heraldic designs, for which the town tapestry weavers were known, they were not mentioned. On Enghien tapestries, see Guy Delmarcel, *Flemish Tapestry from the 15th to the 18th Century* (Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo Publishers, 1999), pp. 168–76.

95 From “*Dialogue of the Heart and Five Senses*” translation by the author. See Jean Gerson, *Œuvres complètes*, edited by P. Glorieux et al., 10 vols. (Paris: Desclée & Cie, 1960–73), vol. 7, pt. 2, p. 826; and Jean-Patrice Boudet, “*La Dame à la licorne et ses sources médiévales d’inspiration*,” *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1999, pp. 61–78. On Gerson, see Daniel Robbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

96 Boudet, “*La Dame à la licorne et ses sources médiévales d’inspiration*,” p. 70. Boudet dismisses any direct influence on the tapestry program of Symphorien Champier, as suggested by Jean-Pierre Jourdan in 1996. Champier translated the commentary of the Florentine philosopher priest Marsilio Ficino on Plato’s Symposium into French in 1503. *Livre de vraye amour* proposes that Beauty can be attained by means of the five senses and an understanding of the mind.

97 Translated in William M. Reddy, “*The Rule of Love: The History of Western Romantic Love in Comparative Perspective*,” in *New Dangerous Liaisons: Discourses on Europe and Love in the Twentieth Century*, by Luisa Passerini et al. (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 41. The French text appears in [Taburet-]Delahaye, *The Lady and the Unicorn*, p. 20: “*De leal cuer, content de joye, / Ma maistresse, mon seul desir, / Plus qu’onques vous vuel servir, / En quelque place que je soye.*” Reddy credits J.-P. Boudet for mentioning it and additionally cites Boudet’s “*Jean Gerson et la Dame à la licorne*,” in *Religion et société urbaine au Moyen Âge: Études offertes à Jean-Louis Biget*, edited by Patrick Boucheron and Jacques Chiffolleau (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2000), pp. 551–63, quote on p. 561.

98 Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages: Evidence from the BnF MS fr. 616 of the Livre de chasse by Gaston Fébus* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 191.

99 Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, pp. 173–74. Thomas P. Campbell concurs with Freeman on this point; see Campbell et al., *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, p. 78.

100 On medieval hunting dogs, see Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages*. For other fifteenth-century tapestries depicting hunts, lymers, and greyhounds, see Jane Carroll, “*Die Jagd nach der Treue*,” or *When Desire Met Devotion*, in *Our Dogs, Our Selves: Dogs in Medieval and Early Modern Art, Literature, and Society*, edited by Laura D. Gelfand (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 218–40.

101 See Kathrin Colburn, “*Three Fragments of the Mystic Capture of the Unicorn Tapestry*,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 45 (2010), pp. 97–106.

102 Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, p. 316, considering the scene superfluous, posited that it did not belong to the original ensemble.

103 Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, p. 205.

104 The full-scale ink-on-paper designs for the Tournai *Guere de Troie* tapestries of about 1465 are preserved in the Louvre. See François Avril and Nicole Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440–1520*, exh. cat. (Paris: Flammarion; Bibliothèque Nationale, 1993), pp. 64–66, no. 26.

105 The image is bound at the back of a treatise for priests. See Nicolas Petit in Élisabeth Taburet-Delahaye et al., *France 1500: Entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, exh. cat. (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2010), p. 249, no. 119.

106 Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, p. 198, compares the figure in the print to the hunter standing behind the unicorn, but he assumes a different pose.

107 For the first discussions, see Nicole Reynaud, “*Un peintre français cartonnier de tapisseries au XVe siècle: Henri de Vulcop*,” *Revue de l’art*, no. 22 (1973), pp. 6–21; and Geneviève Souchal, “*Un grand peintre français de la fin du XVe siècle: Le maître de la Chasse à la Licorne*,” *Revue de l’art*, no. 22 (1973), pp. 22–49.

108 On Jean d’Ypres, see Isabelle Delaunay, “*Quelques dates importantes dans la carrière du Maître des Très Petites Heures d’Anne de Bretagne*,” in *Le manuscrit enluminé: Études réunies en hommage à Patricia Stirnemann*, edited by Claudia Rabel (Paris: Le Léopard d’Or, 2014), pp. 147–65; and Caroline Vrand, “*Jean d’Ypres, peintre et dessinateur*,” in *Mystérieux coffrets: Estampes au temps de La Dame à la licorne*, by Séverine Lepape et al., exh. cat. (Paris: LienArt, 2019), pp. 26–43.

109 See the summaries in Avril and Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440–1520*, pp. 58–59, 265. By way of comparison, the example of the tapestry merchant Pasquier Grenier, who bequeathed his stock of tapestry cartoons to his sons and widow, may be cited. See Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, p. 67. Women’s names as weavers and merchants appear in a number of documents. See, for example, Richard, *Mahaut*, pp. 214–15, for Aghee de Londres, “tapisseresse,” mentioned in 1321, and Ysabiaus Caurée, in 1322, in the accounts of Mahaut d’Artois.

110 See the discussion in Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries*, pp. 57–73, on the vexing terminology used in medieval documents. In addition, weavers sometimes worked on site for patrons in Italy.

111 Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, p. 206, concluded that the artist was therefore different.

112 Cl.22391. See Michel Hérol in Taburet-Delahaye et al., *France 1500*, p. 246, no. 117.

113 The tapestry of Narcissus in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, takes simulated reflection as its theme, with the pheasant joining in. See the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston catalogue (68.114).



