

For Minister or for King: Two Seventeenth-Century Gobelins Tapestries after Charles Le Brun

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TWO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY Gobelins tapestries, given to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1953 and 1954 (Figures 1, 2), were not included in *European Post-Medieval Tapestries and Related Hangings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, the catalogue published in 1985, because, while on loan to another institution, they had been stolen. Recovered in London in 1994, they have now, happily, returned to the Museum.

Both tapestries are from well-known series designed by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690). They are uprights, *portières*, made to be hung in doorways; many tapestries of this type were used in seventeenth-century France. Philibert de l'Orme in his book *Architecture*, published in 1648, wrote that interior doors should be perfectly plain, “unies et sans ouvrage”; decorating them would be a waste of money, as any ornamentation would not be visible, “à cause de la tapisserie, qui est toujours devant une porte.”¹ Half a century later, on May 22, 1693, Daniel Cronström wrote from Paris to the Swedish architect Nicodemus Tessin, then rebuilding the royal palace in Stockholm, and described how *portières* were used at Versailles and the Trianon: “Dans les chambres que ne sont pas incrustées, il n’y a point de bas-reliefs sur les portes et sur les cheminées. Les tapisseries, qui sont d’estoffes, règnent par tous, mesmes sur les cheminées et portes, nonobstant les tableaux dessus les cheminées et portes.”² Though “tapisseries” here apparently means hangings of various materials, it is clear that there must have been many *portières* in these royal buildings and that they must have frequently needed to be replaced.

On January 7, 1695, Cronström wrote again about *portières*: “. . . il faut remarquer que les portières, selon la dernière mode, sont si hautes

qu’elles vont depuis la corniche du plancher jusqu’à terre et couvrent tout le dessus des portes quand elles sont tirées.” He had informed Tessin, on May 7, 1694, that it was a wonderful time to buy *portières* because funding for the French royal manufactories had been cut off and “Tous les tapissiers des Gobelins . . . demandent quasy l’aumône”;³ tapestries could now be obtained for half the usual cost. The Gobelins had, in fact, been shut down to save money for the king’s wars.⁴ Cronström particularly recommended armorial *portières*: “L’on a comencé beaucoup de ces portières pour le Roy aux Gobelins, qui sont demeurées sur les metiers à moitié faites, tous les travaux estant sursis, on les feroit aisement achever à bon compte; les dessins en sont charmants. Il seroit aisé d’y mettre les armes et les attributs du Roy, Nostre Maistre, en les achevant au lieu de celles du Roy de France.”⁵

The Gobelins records do indeed show many *portières* begun in 1693 and 1694, but not finished until 1699.⁶ As Cronström reported, they all include the arms of Louis XIV, though “charming” is probably not the adjective that would be chosen today for the designs.

The two *portières* in the Metropolitan Museum are of the type described by Cronström, with the arms and attributes of Louis XIV. Both have a large central cartouche with the insignia (France and Navarre) in ovals, encircled by the collars of the orders of Saint Michel and the Saint-Esprit. A small L and two sprays of laurel fill the space below the ovals. Powerful scrolling forms surround the arms and orders, and at the top of each tapestry is a closed royal crown of fleurs-de-lis. Here the resemblance of the two hangings ends and, as will be shown, each seems to carry a different message; confused in one case, but very clear in the other.

One tapestry (Figure 1) has been given the name of the *Renommées*; the figure on the right is indeed

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Figure 1. *Les Renommées*, French (Gobelins), 1693–1700, after Charles Le Brun (1619–1690). Wool and silk tapestry, 9 ft. 4 in. x 7 ft. 1 in. (284.7 x 216 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Lionel F. Straus, in memory of her husband, Lionel F. Straus, 1953, 53.57. See also Colorplate 2



Figure 2. *Le Char de Triomphe*, French (Gobelins), 1662–1724, after Charles Le Brun. Wool and silk tapestry, 11 ft. 2 in. x 8 ft. 10 in. (340.6 x 269.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Thomas Emery, 1954, 54.159. See also Colorplate 3



Figure 3. Charles Le Brun. Drawing for a *portière* with the arms of Nicolas Fouquet, 1659–61. Black and red chalk and ink, washed with gray, 17 x 8½ in. (43.2 x 21 cm). Saint Petersburg, The State Hermitage, 18959 (photo: courtesy Charissa Bremer-David)

Fame, as she has wings and blows a trumpet.⁷ She holds it with her right hand, which also supports a long festoon of brightly colored leaves and flowers, including roses, tulips, and poppies. Fame rises from an acanthus-leaf cornucopia and her left arm passes behind her back so she can grasp the festoon as it falls down the side of the central cartouche. Her head is wreathed with laurel. The woman on the left is in classical armor with a small mask between her breasts; she wears a wreath on her head and with both hands holds a festoon like that of her companion. Two lively, winged, nearly nude children raise the crown between the women. On either side of the coats of arms and the collars of the orders are large bows. At the base of the design, behind the lower part of the central scrolling forms and the festoons, are two trophies of antique arms and spoils—spears, sword hilts, a striped flag, a ewer, a bowl (or drum), a string of pearls, and some drapery.

This central section is framed by an egg-and-dart molding; the corner spandrels have white grounds with sprays of multicolored classical foliage. The rectangular border that completes the design has branches of oak, laurel, and other leaves strung on a twisted stem; there are rosettes at the corners and in the center of each side. The guards are dark blue.

Five sets of the series to which this tapestry belongs are recorded as woven, four of twelve pieces and one of twenty-four; the first two contained gold thread. The sets whose descriptions in the manufactory records correspond exactly to the tapestry in the Metropolitan Museum are the third, woven between 1693 and 1699, the fourth (1699–1700), and the fifth (1723–27); all are recorded in very similar terms. The fourth set appears as: “Douze portières de tapisserie laine et soye, en basse lisse, fabrique de Paris, manufacture des Gobelins, dessein de Le Brun, représentant les armes de France et de Navarre, soustenues par une Renommée et une Flore, dans une bordure couleur de bronze, avec des oves et un feston des feuilles de laurier qui règne autour; contenant ensemble 24 aunes de cours, sur 2 a. ½ de hault.” In the 1789 inventory of the Garde-Meuble “portières des *Renommées*” are listed as at Versailles, Marly, and Choisy-le-Roi; some are described as “bonnes” or “belles,” but two were “mauvaises.”⁸

But can the woman on the left be Flora, who has no reason to wear armor? She can hardly be another representation of Fame, having no trumpet, and has more plausibly been identified as Victory.⁹ This lack of precision is totally unlike Le Brun; it clearly confused the compilers of the Gobelins records, who named the women in the first two sets “Flores” and those of all the others, as has been quoted, “une Renommée et une Flore.”

The explanation for this anomaly is to be found in the complicated history of the design. There is a drawing signed by Le Brun in the State Hermitage, Saint Petersburg (Figure 3);¹⁰ the framework of the composition and some major elements, such as the upper parts of the cornucopias and of the festoons, are the same as those of the tapestry. Many details are also identical, including the rosettes at the corners of the outer borders and the bows on either side of the coats of arms. The piles of trophies and weapons, including the ewer, are partially visible behind the animals at the base of the design. The two children holding the crown (in the drawing, an open coronet) are the same figures, though reversed, as in the tapestry, but slung across their

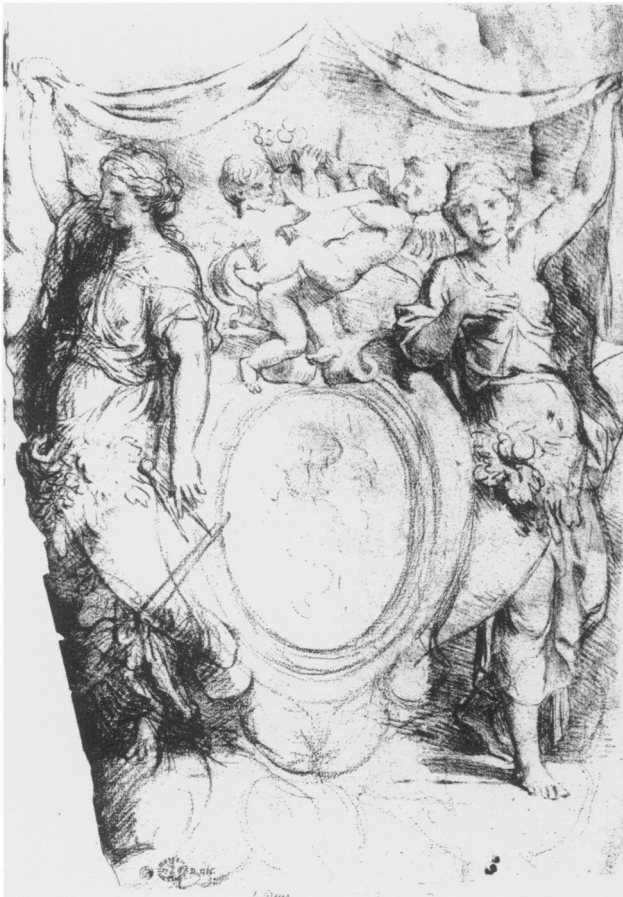


Figure 4. Charles Le Brun. Drawing for a *portière* with the arms of Nicolas Fouquet overlaid with those of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, 1655–62. Black chalk, 14 x 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (35.6 x 17.5 cm). Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, D. 1786 (photo: Ch. Choffet, Besançon)

arms is a band with the inscription *NON ASCENDE*.

These words and the climbing squirrel that replaces the royal arms show that the drawing was made for Nicolas Fouquet (1615–1680), Louis XIV's powerful minister, whose bold motto was *Quo non ascendet?* and whose arms were a rampant squirrel.¹¹ The women who raise the festoons are very different from their counterparts in the tapestry and, as one would expect in a Le Brun composition, are clearly identifiable by their emblems. The one who corresponds to Fame, on the left in the drawing, has no wings, holds a key, and has a dog at her feet; she is Fidelity or Loyalty.¹² The woman on the right side of the *Hermitage* drawing wears the lion skin of Hercules but no armor; she has the same small mask between her breasts that is worn by the so-called Flora in the tapestry. The lion below her shows she must represent Power, Valor, Strength,



Figure 5. Wool and silk tapestry with the arms of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, French (Gobelins), ca. 1662–83, after Charles Le Brun. 9 x 7 ft. (274.5 x 213.5 cm). Les Affaires Culturelles: Île de France, on loan to the Château of Vaux-le-Vicomte (photo: courtesy Charissa Bremer-David)

or Courage, the qualities of the king of beasts.

Any of these virtues could have been chosen by Fouquet for a tapestry. Fidelity is appropriate for a king's minister. In his château of Vaux-le-Vicomte, he had a *Salon d'Hercule* with a ceiling painting by Le Brun showing Hercules in a chariot with the squirrel and the motto.¹³ The Muses in the coving of the *Salon des Muses* celebrate the triumph of Fidelity, and in a corner motif, an eagle with a squirrel on its back holds a scroll with the motto in its beak.¹⁴ Even more outspoken would have been the ceiling of the *Grand Salon Ovale*, which was to depict the palace of the sun with Apollo representing Fouquet.¹⁵ This project reached only the *modello* stage, but Le Brun, never a man to let an opportunity escape him, had his design engraved and dedicated the print to the king; the only change necessary was to replace the squirrel with lilies.¹⁶

Fouquet set up a tapestry manufactory in Maincy solely to supply his château; it lasted from 1658 to 1662.¹⁷ The design of the Hermitage drawing was certainly intended to be woven there as a *portière* for the mansion.

What happened next is vividly illustrated in a Le Brun sketch in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon (Figure 4). The figure in the central oval has been described as Fouquet's squirrel overlaid with the armorial snake of his deadly enemy—and ultimately successful rival—Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683).¹⁸ The woman on the left holds a pair of compasses, a symbol of Economy,¹⁹ and the unicorn at her feet proclaims the innocence and probity of the bearer of the arms. When Colbert adapted the design for his own use (Figure 5), he replaced the unicorn with the dog of Fidelity and gave the woman a sword instead of compasses.²⁰ The figure on the other side has wings but no symbols, and at her feet is the cock of Vigilance.²¹ Colbert thus proclaimed his differences from his overambitious predecessor, condemned for speculation and pursuit of power. It was not as easy to adapt the design for the use of the king, so all the animals of the two drawings were left out and only one of the women was changed into a recognizable and appropriate personification, Fame.

A similar contrast between a tapestry design made for Fouquet and an altered form that rendered it suitable for the king is shown in two drawings by Le Brun now in the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm (Figures 6, 7).²² They are for the side borders of a *Histoire de Constantin*, of which five pieces were woven at Maincy. They included gold thread, making them extremely expensive.²³ The earlier drawing (Figure 6) shows two of the winged children who hold the crown in the tapestry in Figure 1, the second from the top corresponding to the boy on the right in the tapestry; in the drawing he raises a medallion with crossed F's, very like Louis's usual crossed L's. The child partially visible in the center of the drawing is like his counterpart on the left in the tapestry, but here he supports a trophy of arms. The boy at the base of the drawing holds a key and carries a medallion with Fouquet's squirrel, here correctly facing left. A dog's head below him resembles that of the dog in the Hermitage drawing (Figure 3).

A minimum of alterations was needed to make the second drawing (Figure 7) suitable for use at the Gobelins. A rayed sun is substituted for the crossed F's, flanked by a pair of scales and sur-



Figure 6. Charles Le Brun. Drawing for a tapestry border with the arms of Nicolas Fouquet. Red chalk, ink, and watercolor, 17 x 5½ in. (43.3 x 12.9 cm). Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, NM CC I:34 (photo: Nationalmuseum)



Figure 7. After Charles Le Brun. Drawing (tracing) with emblems of Louis XIV. Ink and watercolor, 20¾ x 4¾ in. (52.3 x 11.6 cm). Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, NM CC I:33 (photo: Nationalmuseum)

mounted by a royal crown and the king's motto, *Nec Pluribus Impar*, as in the *portière*, the *Char de Triomphe* (see Figure 2). Fleurs-de-lis replace the

squirrel, and the keys and dog's head of Fidelity have both gone.²⁴

Two pieces of this set were hung at Vaux-le-Vicomte and were valued at two thousand *livres* when Fouquet was disgraced and his property appropriated by the king.²⁵ The minister, in fact, is best remembered today for his spectacular fall and condign punishment. His motto expressed his belief that he was destined to become another Richelieu or Mazarin; Louis XIV thought otherwise. Mazarin died on March 9, 1661; the following day the king announced that he intended to rule alone, without a first minister. He paid a final visit to Vaux-le-Vicomte in August, where he would have seen the Hercules ceiling, the appropriation of a hero often identified with himself.²⁶ He would presumably have heard of the proposed decoration of the Grand Salon, showing the palace of his own particular deity, Apollo, and everywhere he would have seen the audacious motto. As Voltaire dryly remarked in his life of Louis XIV, "L'ambition de cette devise ne servit pas à apaiser le monarque."²⁷ Fouquet was arrested in September and spent the remainder of his life in prison.

Fouquet's possessions were confiscated, including everything at Maincy—looms, cartoons, and tapestries in progress. His men, great artists and humble weavers, went to work for the king. One of Fouquet's *portières* appears in the royal inventory as "fabrique de Mincy [*sic*], dessin de Le Brun, représentant des Vertus et des trophées, et au milieu un escureuil"; it has been identified as a *portière* listed in Fouquet's inventory, taken after his dismissal, among the furnishings "qui ont été mis à part pour le Roy." It was made part of a set of Gobelins *portières*, "où sont représentées les armes de France et de Navarre, soutenues par des Flores." Eight of the pieces had apparently been begun at Maincy, as new coats of arms and crowns were made for them at the Gobelins. The complete set of twelve pieces was given an inventory number and is considered the first set of the *Renommées* series. It contained gold thread. No pieces of this set have been identified, and it is possible that they did not resemble closely the later weavings.²⁸ The Virtues of the Maincy design were evidently not recognized or had been deprived of their attributes; in later weavings, one had been given the unmistakable emblems of Fame, but the other was apparently altered only enough to cancel its suitability for a minister rather than a king and to puzzle future describers.

No such problems arise with the second *portière* in

the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 2). Every element of the design, even those that it shares with the *Renommées*, has been made more prominent, more emphatic. The cartouche with the coats of arms is larger, more three-dimensional, and more brightly lit. Green sprays of laurel curve over the collar of Saint Michel and cast shadows on one side of the cartouche. The royal crown is more conspicuously placed higher in the design and is clearly silhouetted against the substantial shell form behind it.

The triumphal chariot that has given its name to the series, the *Char de Triomphe*, is identified mainly by its two great golden wheels that seem to advance inexorably, like those of a colossal juggernaut, crushing a red-eyed snake writhing beneath them. A winged head in the lower center blows the trumpets of Fame, from which fall thin floral festoons. On each wheel is a trophy of arms, with a suit of classical armor in the foreground. Behind these are varied arrays of spears, swords, and other weapons, shields, trumpets, arrow-filled quivers, and striped flags. The cartouche with the coats of arms hangs from blue ribbons held by two winged nude children who sit comfortably on either side of an arch. Each holds a terrestrial globe. The arch is filled with the royal crown, a scroll inscribed NEC PLURIBVS IMPAR, a pair of scales, and the rayed face of the sun. Beneath it are two fruit-filled cornucopias with, under them, a blue drapery sprinkled with yellow fleurs-de-lis, caught up in large bows at each side. This falls behind the trophies of arms and is seen below them, where it terminates in a yellow fringe. The border of the whole design simulates a gilt frame, with small fleurs-de-lis and rosettes alternating in a guilloche pattern, and a larger fleur-de-lis at each corner.

Every important element in this design refers to Louis XIV. He is, of course, the sun. In his *Mémoires historiques*, he tells how he used this symbol in the carrousel of 1662, when he was dressed as Apollo.²⁹ His motto then was Ut Vidi, Vici, referring to the clouds, his enemies, dispersed by the sun. But he says that another, Nec Pluribus Impar, was suggested to him: "par où ils entendaient, ce qui flattait agréablement l'ambition d'un jeune roi, que, suffisant seul à tant de choses, je suffirais sans doute encore à gouverner d'autres empires, comme le soleil à éclairer d'autres mondes, s'ils étaient également exposés à ses rayons."³⁰ He adds: "Je sais qu'on a trouvé quelque obscurité dans ces paroles," but at the time, shortly after his marriage to Marie

Thérèse, the eldest child of Philip IV of Spain, in 1660, the conceit would clearly have suggested that the Sun of France, already illuminating one kingdom, was capable of giving light to another; between them, they would represent the world. The two globes carried by the children in the tapestry echo this idea.

A male heir to the Spanish crown was not born until 1663, so the possibility of a son of Louis XIV and Marie Thérèse inheriting both kingdoms, including the Spanish colonies in the New World, was for a time seriously considered.³¹ The scales in the tapestry, of course, represent Justice, a suitable virtue for a king, but the inscribed scroll twists closely around them, as if indicating the impartiality with which Louis would rule two hemispheres. The king's chariot, laden with the spoils of victory, rolls forward as its wheels crush his enemies. No personifications or supernatural assistants are needed. Even Fame has been reduced to an ornamental figurehead; this king has no need of an allegorical trumpet-blowing woman to proclaim him.

The dates of the first and second sets of the *Char de Triomphe* are not known. They contained gold thread, as did the fourth of 1691–92; no pieces of these sets have been identified.³² The third weaving (1690–91), fifth (1693–99), sixth (1693–99), seventh (1699–1720), and eighth (1720–26) had no gold and are described in very similar terms: “Six portières de tapisserie, laine et soye, en basse lisse, fabrique de Paris, manufacture des Gobelins, dessin de Le Brun, représentant les armes et la devise du Roy dans un cartouche porté sur un Char de triomphe environné de trophées, dans une bordure d'un guillochis qui enferme des fleurs de lis et des roses couleur du bronze; contenant ensemble 14 a. $\frac{1}{4}$ de cours, sur 3 aunes de hault.” The later weavings speak of “la devise de Louis XIV,” as it was not used by Louis XV. The eight sets comprised seventy-one pieces.³³

The *Char de Triomphe* was usually woven in sets of six pieces at the same time as six pieces of a third *portière* design called the *Portière de Mars*.³⁴ The upper part of the design of this series is basically similar to that of the *Char*, with the nude children, royal crown, head of the sun, the motto *Nec Pluribus Impar*, and the coats of arms and orders. At the base is a large globe and two seated figures; one is unmistakably Mars, but the woman on the other side, though called Minerva in all the early

records, does not have the chief attributes of this goddess. She sits on a pile of weapons, but has no helmet, and holds a caduceus and a pomegranate. She rests one arm on a cornucopia.³⁵

As has been mentioned, Fouquet's men (except for La Fontaine), like his goods, were taken over by the king, though the more important of them had worked for him previously.³⁶ Le Brun was already well known at court. At age nineteen, he had made a drawing celebrating the birth of an heir to the throne in 1638 and Louis XIII later made him a “peintre de Sa Majesté.” In 1660, when Le Brun was working at Vaux-le-Vicomte, he painted the *Reines de Perse aux pieds d'Alexandre*, which the king came to see in his studio. He was, in fact, the “premier peintre,” though not officially confirmed as such until after the death of Poussin in 1664; he was ennobled and given a coat of arms of gold fleurs-de-lis and a gold sun, as if to proclaim his allegiance to the king.³⁷

It is thus not surprising that the tapestry of the *Char de Triomphe* shows how completely Le Brun understood what to design, not only for a king but for this particular king. Maurice Fenaille, however, in his authoritative history of the Gobelins manufactory, has stated that the designs for the *Char*, the *Mars*, the *Renommées*, and two other *portières* were all made for Fouquet between 1655 and 1660, with the cartoons prepared by Yvart le père.³⁸

No sources are given for these statements, which are very hard to accept for the *Char*. For the *Renommées*, the case is different. The original design, as indicated by the drawings in Saint Petersburg and Besançon (Figures 3, 4), celebrated an ambitious man, but one who knew he was a servant. The mass of symbols proclaiming suitable virtues, such as fidelity, secrecy, probity, and courage, could be, and were, altered or exchanged for others to serve the master, but not with the wholehearted, single-minded result shown in the *Char de Triomphe*. It might be asked why the *Renommées* continued to be woven when the *Char* was so much more comprehensible and appropriate; perhaps *portières* were so purely functional that they were never examined very closely. Saint-Simon objected violently when he saw on one of the *Histoire du Roi* tapestries that some people were shown wearing hats on an occasion when they had no right to do so, but he is unlikely to have noticed that Flora on a *portière* was wearing armor and carried no flowers.

NOTES

1. *Architecteure de Philibert de l'Orme*, facsimile, ed. Pierre Mardaga (Brussels, 1981), bk. 8, chap. 13, "Des portes du dedans des logis," pp. 248–49.
2. *Les Relations artistiques entre la France et la Suède, 1693–1718: Nicodème Tessin le jeune et Daniel Cronström, Correspondance (extraits)*, ed. R.-A. Weigert and C. Hernmarck (Stockholm, 1964), p. 23.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 51.
4. On April 10, 1694, "M. le Surintendant [Colbert de Villacerf] a congédié, par ordre du Roy, tous les ouvriers absolument" (Maurice Fenaille, *État général des Tapisseries de la Manufacture des Gobelins*, vol. 2 [Paris, 1903], p. 4, n. 1).
5. *Les Relations*, p. 66. The 1789 inventory of Versailles lists a very large number of *portières* (Daniel Meyer, "Les tapisseries des appartements royaux à Versailles et la Révolution," in *De Versailles à Paris: Le destin des collections royales*, ed. Jacques Charles [Paris, 1989], p. 134). Béatrix Saule, *Versailles triomphant: Une journée de Louis XIV* (Paris, 1996), fig. 211, illustrates a doorway in the palace of Versailles today with a tapestry *portière* hung over it.
6. Fenaille, *État général*, pp. 4, 11, 12, 18, 19.
7. Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Milan, 1992; reprint of 1603 and 1976 editions), p. 126. Fame is said to have "due grand' ali" and "nella destra mano terrà una tromba, così la describe Virgilio."
8. Fenaille, *État général*, pp. 1–8. Records of 1704 and 1789 give the name of the series as *Portières des Renommées*. Some examples were sold after the Revolution "à charge de faire disparaître les signes de féodalité," i.e., the coats of arms and crowns (Meyer, "Les tapisseries des appartements royaux," p. 134, 136, n. 66).
9. Jennifer Montagu, "The Tapestries of Maincy and the Origins of the Gobelins," *Apollo* 77 (September 1962), p. 531.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 357, identified as related to the tapestry; *Zeichnungen aus der Ermitage zu Leningrad: Werke des XV. bis XIX. Jahrhunderts*, exh. cat., National-Galerie, Berlin (Dresden, 1975), no. 76, with earlier bibliography; Charissa Bremer-David, *French Tapestries and Textiles in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Los Angeles, 1997), p. 5, fig. 1.3. The drawing is squared up for enlargement.
11. "D'azur, à un écureuil rampant de gueules" (Joannis Guigard, *Nouvel Armorial du Bibliophile* [Paris, 1890], vol. 2, p. 223. The squirrel should face left, as in Figure 4, and would have been reversed when woven on a horizontal loom. "Fouquet" is a word for a squirrel in Anjou, the ancestral home of the Fouquets (Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, *Vaux-le-Vicomte* [Paris, 1997], p. 23). The supporters of the arms are lions.
12. Ripa, *Iconologia*, pp. 128, 129, Fidelity: "la chiava e inditio di secretezza." A statue of Fidelity with a key and a dog is on the facade of Fouquet's château, Vaux-le-Vicomte (Pérouse de Montclos, *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, p. 172). An engraved portrait of Jean-Baptiste Colbert by Robert Nanteuil, 1668, shows a medallion with a bust of Colbert held by women after Le Brun designs representing Piety and Loyalty; the latter holds a key and has a dog at her feet (*Creating French Culture: Treasures from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, exh. cat. [New Haven and London, 1995], no. 116).
13. Jean Cordey, *Vaux-le-Vicomte* (Paris, 1924), p. 65, pl. facing p. 72; Jennifer Montagu, "The Early Ceiling Decorations of Charles Le Brun," *Burlington Magazine* 105 (1963), p. 402. Hercules represents Fouquet in other decorations of the château (Pérouse de Montclos, *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, p. 117).
14. Montagu, "Early Ceiling Decorations," p. 403; *idem*, "Tapestries of Maincy," p. 532.
15. Pérouse de Montclos, *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, pp. 135–38. "His emblem, the squirrel, was a new star which formed the central culmination."
16. Montagu, "Early Ceiling Decorations," pp. 405–6.
17. Cordey, *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, pp. 89–104; *idem*, "La manufacture des tapisseries de Maincy," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art français*, 1922, pp. 38–52; Heinrich Göbel, *Wandteppiche: II. Die romanischen Länder* (Leipzig, 1928), vol. 2, pp. 110–12; Montagu "Tapestries of Maincy," pp. 530–35; Fenaille, *État général*, pp. 1–40, lists *portières*, *soubassements*, *verdures*, *Histoire de Constantin*, *Histoire de Méléagre*, *Histoire de Moïse*, and *Les Muses* as having been woven at Maincy; though the manufactory had about twelve looms and employed about fifty weavers (Göbel, *Wandteppiche II*, vol. 1, p. 11), its short life suggests that few pieces and probably no entire sets were completed.
18. Montagu, "Tapestries of Maincy," p. 530. Colbert's arms were "D'or à la couleuvre d'azur ondoyante en pal." The *couleuvre* (in Latin *colubarta*) is a play on the name Colbert (*Colbert, 1619–1683*, exh. cat., Hôtel de la Monnaie [Paris, 1983], p. 76, no. 81).
19. Ripa, *Iconologia*, pp. 336, 337. Parsimonia: "le compasso significa l'ordine, a misura in tutte le cose."
20. In some examples of this tapestry she holds a key instead of a sword (Bremer-David, *French Tapestries*, fig. 1.5). Colbert's snake should face left, as shown in the decorated binding of his books (*Colbert, 1619–1683*, p. 9, ill.).
21. Bremer-David, *French Tapestries*, p. 5, fig. 1.4. To the examples listed (p. 9, nn. 5, 6) can be added two formerly in the Ffoulke collection, sold at Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, March 7, 1958, nos. 376, 377; these may be pieces recorded in later sales. A variant with "Libertas" on the central shield must be from one of the sets mentioned by Tessin (*Les Relations*, p. 66) that "cent particuliers" bought; they had their own arms placed on the half-finished Gobelins *portières*. A *Libertas* example, sold at Christie's, London, April 2, 1998, no. 206, has a label on the back identifying the arms as those of Bardot di Bardi, comte Magaloti (1610–1705).
22. Montagu, "Tapestries of Maincy," p. 535. Both drawings are illustrated.
23. The five pieces were given to Peter Potemkin in 1668 (*ibid.*, p. 532).
24. The drawing is a tracing of the earlier design. The new arms, crowns, and suns of the *Constantin* tapestries are noted in the manufactory records (*ibid.*, p. 535).
25. Fenaille, *État général*, p. 27.
26. Several instances of this identification are known (Jean-Pierre Néraudau, *L'Olympe du Roi Soleil: Mythologie et idéologie royale au Grand Siècle* [Paris, 1986], pp. 7, 67, 112, 148). Le Brun's 1677 drawing of the deeds of Hercules for the ceiling of the Grande Galerie at Versailles, however, was discarded in favor of representations of the king himself as a conqueror (*ibid.*, pp. 100, 111).
27. Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ed. Abbé Chesne de Cizeville (Paris, 1847), p. 318.
28. Fenaille, *État général*, pp. 2–4. A tapestry that shows one figure wearing the lion skin of the Hermitage drawing, though not on her head, with the rest of the design corresponding to the Metropolitan Museum panel, was sold at the American Art Association, Anderson Galleries, New York, November 1, 1935 (from

- the Mrs. Charles A. Wimpfheimer collection), no. 137. It is described in the sale catalogue as "enriched with silver thread."
29. Robert W. Berger, *A Royal Passion: Louis XIV as Patron of Architecture* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 14–15. The king had already appeared as Apollo in court ballets in 1653 and 1654 (Marie-Françoise Christont, *Le Ballet de Cour au XVII siècle* [Geneva, 1987], pp. 44, 49).
 30. Quoted in Néraudau, *L'Olympe du Roi Soleil*, pp. 30–31. A contemporary translation, "Il n'est pas inégal à des tâches plus nombreuses," is given. In the *Triomphe de Constantin* tapestry, the emperor's banner is inscribed VENI, VIDI, VICI instead of the correct IN HOC SIGNO VINCES; it has been suggested that this was an error on Le Brun's part, but could it not have been a deliberate reference to the king's motto in the carrousel?
 31. Kevin Orlin Johnson, "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées: The Iconography of the First Versailles of Louis XIV," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, ser. 6, 97 (1981), pp. 36–37; Fabian Stein, *Charles Le Brun: La Tenture de l'Histoire du Roy* (Worms, 1985), pp. 32, 33.
 32. Fenaille, *État général*, pp. 16–22.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–22. The author states that the original employment is known for sixty-six pieces. Four of the examples with gold thread were burned to recover the metal in June 1797 (Meyer, "Tapisseries des appartements royaux," p. 136).
 34. Fenaille, *État général*, pp. 9–15.
 35. Her attributes have been called those of Concord and Public Felicity, identifying her as Mars's opposite, Peace (Montagu, "Tapestries of Maincy," p. 532). The pomegranate, a symbol of different peoples united under French rule, is said to represent Tranquility (Néraudau, *L'Olympe du Roi Soleil*, p. 111). A drawing of the complete design is in the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, and one for the female figure is in the Louvre (Charles Le Brun, 1619–1690: *Peintre et dessinateur*, exh. cat., Versailles [Paris, 1963], nos. 98, 99, entries by Jennifer Montagu). The style and technique of these drawings are said to indicate that they were made before 1663, supporting the theory that the *Portière de Mars* and the *Char de Triomphe* were designed to be woven at Maincy, perhaps intended as presents for the king. The drawing for *Mars* includes the sun, the two shields, and the order of the Saint-Esprit, not conferred upon Fouquet (Bremer-David, *French Tapestries*, p. 6, fig. 1.8). On the other hand, a flying figure of Fame in the drawing and the uncertain identity of the female figure suggest a design made for the minister. Perhaps the drawing shows a halfway stage, a not-yet-completed adaptation of an earlier version to make it suitable for the king.
 36. Pérouse de Montclos, *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, p. 36.
 37. *Charles Le Brun, 1619–1690*, biography (by Jacques Thuillier), pp. XXXXII, LIII–LVII.
 38. Fenaille, *État général*, p. 1. The author states (p. 10) that the second series of the *Portière de Mars* was probably begun at Maincy. The two other series were the *Licorne* and the *Lion*. A cartoon for the *Licorne* with Colbert's arms was at the Gobelins in 1690 (*ibid.*, p. 23) and is now in the Louvre (Bremer-David, *French Tapestries*, p. 7, fig. 1.7). It has a central cartouche with two winged boys holding a coronet above it, but is not otherwise closely related to any of the known *portières* or to the Besançon drawing (Figure 4). Fenaille states (p. 1) that the design for the *Lion* "ne fut pas exécuté en tapisserie, mais fut utilisé plus tard pour une copie de la portière des *Renommées*." The reference may be to the animal at the base of the version of the *Renommées* woven for Colbert (Figure 5). The Hermitage drawing (Figure 3) also includes a lion.