

# The Amours des Dieux: A Series of Beauvais Tapestries After Boucher

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IN SEPTEMBER 1737 it was decided that the king of France should purchase every year two sets of Beauvais tapestries for 10,000 *livres* each, “pour en faire des présens aux Ministres Etrangers.” None of the designs then available was considered suitable, and a series of the story of Jason and Medea “en six pièces de Vingt aunes de Cours” was ordered, each subject being described in some detail. The document authorizing this undertaking concludes:

Le S<sup>r</sup> Oudry étant chargé de fournir en trois ans des Tableaux pour Vingt huit aunes de cours, de Tapisseries, fourniroit les six Tableaux représentans les six Sujets qui viennent d'être décrits.

Et comme la Composition de ces Sujets est plus considérable et plus difficile, et coutera plus que celle des Tableaux d'animaux et autres Sujets moins relevés quoi qu'il étoit décidé qu'il fourniroit tous les trois ans, il seroit nécessaire que pour les Tapisseries qui seront commandées pour le Roy il ne fournit que six Tableaux en trois ans, suivant le dit Cours d'une Tenture de Vingt aunes.<sup>1</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Oudry, co-director of the Beauvais manufactory with Nicolas Besnier, clearly did not make the designs for the *Jason and Medea* series himself, since we know that the second subject, Jason subduing the two fire-breathing bulls that guarded the Golden Fleece, was painted by Michel-François Dandré-Bardon as a full-scale cartoon, 14 *pieds* wide and 10 high (11 *pieds* were 3 *aunes*). It was shown at the 1739 Salon; the long description in the catalogue follows almost exactly that stipulated in the original memorandum, concluding: “Ce Tableau peint par ordre du Roy, doit être executé à la Manufacture

Royale de Beauvais; les actions y sont à gauche pour venir à droite dans la Tapisserie.”<sup>2</sup> This was the first time Beauvais had been mentioned in a Salon catalogue, so the reversing of the design in the weaving process at that manufactory had to be pointed out. The notice was good publicity for what was basically a commercial establishment. Dandré-Bardon's painting was evidently not a success, as it was never woven, and a few years later Jean-François de Troy was commissioned to make paintings of the story of Jason for the Gobelins manufactory.

By October 1737 the name of François Boucher (1703–70) had been connected with the Beauvais project, for Louis Fagon, the head of the Conseil Royal des Finances and closely connected with the financial side of the manufactory, wrote to Oudry: “Je vous envoie Monsieur la décision de M. le Contrôleur général sur la fabrication de deux tentures pour le Roy. Vous pouvez vous arranger a ce sujet avec

1. Maurice Fenaille, *Etat général des tapisseries de la Manufacture des Gobelins* (Paris, 1903–23) IV, pp. 99, 100. The “tableaux d'animaux” were presumably the *Transformations d'Ovide*, which contain no human figures, and the *Verdures Fines* of various animals and birds by Oudry, first woven 1734–35. Oudry had received in 1733 a commission for three huge paintings of the Chasses Royales and an order to supervise their reproduction in tapestry at the Gobelins (Hal N. Opperman, “Oudry aux Gobelins,” *Revue de l'Art* 22 [1973] p. 57).

2. *Collection des livrets des anciennes expositions: Exposition de 1739* (Paris, 1869) pp. 15, 16. A signed drawing of Medea and Jason is in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy (Pierre Rosenberg, “Dandré-Bardon as a Draughtsman: A Group of Drawings at Stuttgart,” *Master Drawings* 12 [1974] p. 141, n. 5).

M. BOUCHER.”<sup>3</sup> In November the second subject for a series was chosen, presumably after Oudry had consulted Boucher:

Il paroît nécessaire de déterminer aussi dès à présent le sujet à représenter en l'autre Tenture; et pour établir entre elles la variété de gout et d'effet convenable, il semble que l'on pourroit choisir dans *l'Histoire de Psyché*, six Sujets des moins répétés et des plus susceptibles de richesse et d'agrément et des plus propres à faire valoir l'art du Tapisser.

Philibert Orry, the Directeur des Bâtiments, wrote “Bon” at the foot of this document.<sup>4</sup>

The decision that the king would regularly buy sets of Beauvais tapestry was a remarkable one, considering that he had the entire official production of the Gobelins at his disposition. But in the 1730s this manufactory was producing chiefly very large, very solemn, and definitely old-fashioned tapestries, such as the *Chambres du Vatican*, the *Mois de Lucas*, and the *Galerie de St. Cloud*. Sometimes the work there seems to have proceeded at a snail's pace; eight pieces of an *Ancien Testament* set were woven between 1715 and 1731, eight of a *Nouveau Testament* from 1720 to 1744.<sup>5</sup> Beauvais, which had to market its products, could not afford to keep its customers waiting in this way. It seems probable, however, that one reason the king bought from Beauvais was that Oudry could call upon Boucher to make designs for him. Boucher is mentioned as working for Versailles in 1735, the year he first exhibited at the Salon, so he was known at court, and the first tapestries of the *Fêtes Italiennes* series, made in 1736, had shown that he could design for weavers. He was probably still working on this series when he sent to the Salon of 1739 what was described as:

Un grand Tableau en largeur de 14. pieds sur 10. de haut, représentant Psyché conduite par Zephire dans le Palais de l'Amour, par M. Boucher, Professeur. Ce tableau doit être exécuté en Tapisserie pour le Roy, à la Manufacture de Beauvais.<sup>6</sup>

It hung next to Dandré-Bardon's *Jason and the Bulls*; perhaps the competition was fatal to the latter. The first tapestry after Boucher's painting was finished in 1741. Four other episodes from the story of Psyche were added to make the series; a complete set was woven in 1742. They were, as stipulated, unusual scenes (“des moins répétés”), not even including what

might be thought the indispensable one of Psyche discovering Cupid asleep.<sup>7</sup>

Boucher's next designs for Beauvais cost him fewer pains. In the Salon of 1742 he showed “huit Esquisses de différens sujets Chinois pour être exécutéz en Tapisseries à la Manufacture de Beauvais.” The records of the manufactory state that this series was “d'après Dumont sur les esquisses de Boucher.”<sup>8</sup> The “Dumont” who made the full-scale cartoons after Boucher's sketches is usually identified with Jean-Joseph Dumons (1687–1779), a designer of tapestries at Aubusson from 1731 to 1755. He was in charge of the art school at the Beauvais manufactory from August 1756 until his death. He was still making copies of the paintings for the *Tenture Chinoise* from 1772 to 1777,<sup>9</sup> presumably the three copies listed among the “Tableaux par Dumont / Sujets chinois” in an inven-

3. Alexandre Ananoff, *François Boucher* (Lausanne/Paris, 1976) I, p. 15, no. 89 of “Tableau chronologique.”

4. Fenaille, *Gobelins*, IV, p. 100.

5. Fenaille, *Gobelins*, III, pp. 89, 108. The king had bought Beauvais tapestries before but apparently on a less regular basis; Noël-Antoine de Mérou, director of the manufactory from 1722 to 1734, in a memorandum of 1731, spoke of “les trois tentures qui seront choisies pour le compte de Sa Majesté” (Jules Badin, *La Manufacture de tapisseries de Beauvais* [Paris, 1909] p. 23).

6. Ananoff, *Boucher*, I, p. 17, no. 120 of “Tableau chronologique.”

7. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 60. A complete set is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Kathryn B. Hiesinger, “The Sources of François Boucher's *Psyche* Tapestries,” *Bulletin*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 72 [1976] pp. 7–23). Further information about the subjects of the series is given in Geraldine C. Hussman, “Boucher's *Psyche* at the Basketmakers: A Closer Look,” *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 4 (1977) pp. 45–50.

8. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 61. Only six titles are listed, of which some have corresponding subjects among the Boucher sketches for the series in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon (Ananoff, *Boucher*, nos. 224–233). A Beauvais inventory of 1754 lists “six tableaux de *Dessins chinois*, dont un se partage en deux, peint par le sieur Aumont [sic] sur les esquisses du sieur Boucher et par lui retouché” (Roger-Armand Weigert, “La Manufacture royale de tapisseries de Beauvais en 1754,” *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français* [1933], p. 232, quoting a document in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Beauvais). Another document, in the Archives Nationales, however, reads in part: “Six tableaux dont un se partage en deux représentant des dessins de chinois peint par le S. Dumont sur les esquisses du S. Boucher et retouchés par Oudry” (Ananoff, *Boucher*, I, p. 68, no. 581 of “Tableau chronologique,” dated 1754).

9. Jean Coural, “La Manufacture royale de Beauvais,” *Mémoires Historiques de la France*, no. 6 (1977) p. 79. Possibly the many other chinoiserie designs in the style of Boucher woven at Aubusson were made by Dumons.

tory of cartoons at the manufactory in 1820.<sup>10</sup> As no other series at Beauvais is described as being produced by one artist after sketches by another, one must suppose that Boucher or his studio provided large paintings for all the others.<sup>11</sup> Six Chinese tapestries had been woven by 1746.

We learn from a letter of Oudry's dated August 12, 1747, that Boucher was then working on another series: "Le Sr Bouché me fais actuellement des tableaux pour une tenture qui represente les amours des dieux qui sera tres belle; illy a deja deux tableaux de fait."<sup>12</sup> In 1749 a tapestry of this series, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, was woven. A set of eight pieces was produced in 1750 and, though the ninth subject, *Vulcan and Venus*, was not made until 1752, some examples of it, like other tapestries of the series, are dated 1749, so that all the designs were presumably completed by 1750. The subjects are *Bacchus and Ariadne*, *The Rape of Proser-*

*pine*, *Neptune and Amymone*, *Jupiter and Antiope*, *Mars and Venus*, *Boreas and Orithyia*, *The Rape of Europa*, *Vulcan and Venus*, and *Apollo and Clytie*.<sup>13</sup> The usual number of pieces in a set was three, four, or six; there is no record of all nine subjects being included in a single set. The series was woven many times from 1749 to 1774.<sup>14</sup> Even as late as 1778, tapestries of the *Amours des Dieux* were allotted to the French ambassador in Venice,<sup>15</sup> and at the very end of the century the weavers were paid for "un morceau d'après Boucher représentant le dieu Neptune et 2 naïades," presumably a detail of *Neptune and Amymone*.<sup>16</sup>

Boucher's nine paintings are listed in a 1754 Beauvais inventory:

Six tableaux des *Amours des Dieux*, peint par ledit sieur Boucher . . . contenant vingt aunes de cours avec les bordures.

10. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 106. They were in strips (*bandes*) to be placed under the warps of the Beauvais looms.

11. Unless Boucher provided not small sketches but paintings three to four *pieds* high, "pour servir de modèles à faire les patrons d'une tenture de tapisseries," such as Oudry had contracted to furnish in 1726 (H. N. Opperman, "Observations on the Tapestry Designs of J.-B. Oudry for Beauvais [1726-1736]," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, Oberlin College, 26 [1969] pp. 49-71). These were enlarged by painters at the manufactory. The *Tenture Chinoise* would then be unusual only because Boucher's preliminary designs were small sketches and the enlargement was made by an outside artist. Certainly in 1748 Boucher received a royal commission to provide "Tableaux de chevallet" and "leur copies en grand retouchées de sa main" for tapestries, presumably to be woven at the Gobelins (Ananoff, *Boucher*, I, pp. 36, 37, nos. 320, 321 of "Tableau chronologique"). The tapestries were never made, but the double order is in accordance with the regulation for Gobelins designers promulgated by a letter from the Directeur des Bâtiments, then Le Normant de Tournhem, to the Premier Peintre du Roi, dated June 1, 1747 (Edith A. Standen, "Some Notes on the Cartoons Used at the Gobelins and Beauvais Manufactories in the Eighteenth Century," *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 4 [1977] p. 25). But Louis Petit de Bachaumont in his "Liste des meilleurs peintres, sculpteurs, graveurs et architectes des Académies Royales de Peinture, Sculpture et Architecture" (a manuscript dated 1750) wrote: "M. Boucher, élève de feu Le Moyne. . . Il a fait beaucoup de grands tableaux extrêmement riches, d'après lesquels on a exécuté d'excellentes tapisseries à Beauvais; ces tableaux ne sont pas extrêmement finis, ils sont faits presque au premier coup, mais cela suffit pour des tapisseries. Voyez-les chez M. Oudry" (P. L. [Paul Lacroix], "Jugements de Bachaumont sur les meilleurs artistes de son temps," *Revue Universelle des Arts* 5 [1857] pp. 419, 420). It is hard to believe that "grands tableaux" means full-scale cartoons for tapestry, unless they were so recently painted that they had not yet been sent to Beauvais.

But would Oudry have had room to display them in his apartment at the Louvre? Apparently he had, as the *Psyche* tapestries commissioned by the king of Sweden and woven in 1745 were "tendues et exposées chez Monsieur Oudry à Paris," according to a letter quoted by John Böttiger (*La Collection des tapisseries de l'état suédois*, IV, trans. by G. Lévy-Ullmann [Stockholm, 1898] p. 92 n. 2); these pieces are about 11 feet high. Oudry had been living in the Louvre since 1744. If what he was habitually able to show visitors had been easel pictures some 4 feet high, one would expect more of them to have been preserved—and would they have been called "grands tableaux"?

12. Böttiger, *Collection des tapisseries*, p. 96.

13. Ananoff, *Boucher*, nos. 344, *Ariane et Bacchus* (three tapestries listed); 345, *L'Enlèvement de Proserpine* (two tapestries listed, but actually the same piece); 346, *Neptune et Amymone* (two tapestries listed); 347, *Jupiter en Raisin* (no tapestries listed, but included in fig. 995, joined to *Ariane et Bacchus*); 348, *Mars et Vénus* (six tapestries listed, of which two are the same piece); 349, *L'Enlèvement d'Orythie* (five tapestries listed); 350, *L'Enlèvement d'Europe* (two tapestries listed); 351, *Vénus aux Forges de Vulcain* (eight tapestries listed); 352, *Apollon et Clitie* (two tapestries listed). All the paintings are described as "disparu," except for the *Enlèvement d'Europe* and *Vénus aux Forges de Vulcain*, for which paintings (1.605 × 1.935 m. and 0.46 × 0.72m.) in the Louvre are listed.

14. Badin's summary (*Beauvais*, pp. 61, 62) gives 76 individual pieces, but his more detailed list totals 82. To these must be added at least some of the sets he records as made for the king between 1755 and 1774 (pp. 84, 85), not all of which can be identified with items in the general list. A maximum of 141 individual tapestries is a possible figure.

15. Coural, "Manufacture," p. 79, n. 49.

16. Recorded in extracts from the Beauvais manufactory records made by Jean Ajalbert. I am indebted to Pierre Verlet for the opportunity to study these extracts, which are preserved in the Louvre.

Une suite des *Amours des Dieux*, peint en trois autres tableaux, contenant, avec les bordures, dix aunes de cours et, en outre, un grand rapport fait pour la pièce de *Vénus et de Vulcain*.<sup>17</sup>

When an inventory of cartoons was made at the manufactory in 1820, there were nine of the *Amours des Dieux*, each in from three to six *bandes*, or strips, with “six morceaux incomplets.” They were presumably among the “tableaux coupés par bandes” that were ordered to be sold in 1829,<sup>18</sup> a period when little but upholstery was being made at Beauvais. They must then have been in poor condition, since each *bande* had been placed again and again under the warps of basse-lisse, or horizontal, looms and then rolled up in storage ever since they had been last used; for some, this had been fifty years or more.<sup>19</sup> Each *bande* was about 90 centimeters wide. There were other “Bouchers” listed in the inventory: twenty-nine which made up five pieces called the *Tenture Pastorale* (the series usually known as the *Noble Pastorale*, first woven in 1755), twenty-one of the five pieces of *Psyche*, seventeen of the *Fragments d’Opéra*, and thirty-six of the *Amours des Dieux*. Not in *bandes*, and so presumably one or two small paintings, were a “Marchand de poisson et fruitière.”<sup>20</sup> The *Fêtes Italiennes* cartoons, by then nearly a hundred years old, were not mentioned. It seems highly probable that some at least of the “tableaux coupés par bandes” were copies made at the manufactory after Boucher’s original paintings.<sup>21</sup>

There were 30 *aunes* of paintings for the nine tapestries of the *Amours des Dieux*, so that each could have been just under 3½ *aunes*, or about 13 feet wide, but the fact that the cartoons were cut into varying numbers of strips suggests that they were originally of different widths. Some subjects, in fact, are usually found as horizontal tapestries, others as uprights.

The first large set is listed as eight pieces made in 1750 for “Infant D. Philippe”;<sup>22</sup> he was the Bourbon ruler of Parma from 1748 to 1765, the Infante of Spain, Don Felipe, who married a daughter of Louis XV. He also acquired tapestry upholstery for a sofa and eight armchairs.<sup>23</sup> Four tapestries in the Quirinale Palace, Rome, must be from this set: *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Figure 1), *Jupiter and Antiope* (Figure 8), *Mars and Venus* (Figure 9), and *Boreas and Orithyia*.<sup>24</sup> They are inscribed “Besnier et Oudry a Beauvais”; Besnier and Oudry were co-directors of the manufactory from 1734 until 1753.

Another set that can be identified is that made for Frederick the Great in 1765; it is listed as “Arianne et Bacchus, Vulcain, Neptune, enlèvement d’Europe, la joueuse de castagnettes, Jupiter en raisin.”<sup>25</sup> The first four pieces, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, *Vulcan and Venus*, *Neptune and Amymone*, and *The Rape of Europa*, have been recently in the Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin, owned by Prince Heinrich of Prussia,<sup>26</sup> together with an *entrefenêtre* showing two girls on the right of the *Basketmaker*, a tapestry in the *Psyche* series. Frederick bought a complete set of this series in 1764.<sup>27</sup> All have borders with a Greek fret and the Prussian eagle in the center at the top. Another *entrefenêtre* with this border was in the liquidation sale of the Galerie van Diemen, at the Paul Graupe auction house, Berlin, May 3, 4, 1935, no. 704; it shows the figure of Jupiter disguised as a satyr from the tapestry of *Jupiter and Antiope*, presumably the “Jupiter en raisin” of Frederick’s set;<sup>28</sup> the “joueuse de castagnettes” may be the

17. Weigert, “Manufacture,” p. 233.

18. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 47 n. 1.

19. When the Députés au Conseil de Commerce inspected the works at Beauvais in 1732, they reported that “les anciens desseins appartenant à la Manufacture sont roulés dans différentes cases de tablettes, chacun sous son numéro,” whereas the “nouveaux dessins sont tendus tout du long de la galerie.” They also said that the series called the “dessein des Chinois” (the first Beauvais chinoiserie series), which is known to have been woven in the 1680s and so was at least fifty years old, was “si usé qu’on n’y distingue presque plus rien” (Badin, *Beauvais*, pp. 77, 78).

20. Ibid., p. 105.

21. Standen, “Some Notes,” pp. 25–28.

22. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 61.

23. Ibid., p. 68.

24. Heinrich Göbel, *Wandteppiche: II. Die romanischen Länder* (Leipzig, 1928) II, pls. 234, 236.

25. Ajalbert extracts, see note 16.

26. Paul Seidel, *Les Collections d’œuvres d’art françaises du XVIIIe siècle, appartenant à Sa Majesté l’Empereur d’Allemagne, Roi de Prusse*, French trans. by Paul Vitry and Jean J. Marquet de Vasselot (Berlin, 1900) p. 191, no. 224 (listed; said to have been received in 1766 and to be in the royal palace, Coblenz); Badin, *Beauvais*, pl. facing p. 68, *Rape of Europa*; Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten, *Charlottenburg Palace* (Berlin, 1973), p. 63.

27. Three pieces of this set are in Schloss Köpenick, East Berlin (Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin: *Geschichte, Wiederaufbau, Neuerwerbungen, 1867–1945, 1945–1962, 1963–1983* [Berlin, DDR: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 1983] pp. 126, 127, ill. pp. 176, 283).

28. This subject is listed in the manufactory records as “Jupiter en Raisin” and “Jupiter changé en Raisin” (Badin, *Beauvais*, pp. 61, 105). The records, being primarily pay sheets, presumably give the names by which the weavers called the pieces



bacchante with cymbals from the same tapestry, but it has not been identified.

The set of four pieces made for Prince Esterházy in 1752 was in Budapest, but was lost in World War II; it consisted of *Mars and Venus*, *Vulcan and Venus*, *The Rape of Europa*, and *Bacchus and Ariadne* (joined to *Jupiter and Antiope*). Each piece had the Esterházy arms in the upper border.<sup>29</sup> The prince bought upholstery for a sofa and twelve armchairs in 1753 and for eight more armchairs in 1759.<sup>30</sup>

Four pieces with the French royal arms, *Bacchus and Ariadne* joined to *Jupiter and Antiope*, *Mars and Venus*, *Boreas and Orithyia*, and *Vulcan and Venus*, were in the Alexis Polovtsoff sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, December 2–4, 1909, nos. 241–244; the first piece is now in the Kunstindustrimuseum, Copenhagen.<sup>31</sup> The four pieces may have been from the set of six delivered to the comte de Saint-Florentin by order of the king in 1766.<sup>32</sup>

The best-documented set is one of four pieces made for Baron Johann Hartvig Ernst Bernstorff, the Danish foreign minister. Oudry wrote to him, with his usual erratic spelling, on March 17, 1753, saying that he had “8 tableaux damusement champaitre tres agreable du S. boucher,” from which he could provide three pieces of the dimensions the baron needed:

pour la pieces de 20 pied. une dance de plusieurs figure un joueur de tambourin etc.

pour celle de 16 pied une musique de plusieurs figure et pour celle de 10 pied la collations toute cest pieces on de beau fond de paysages et d'architecture de bouché cest tous dire vous connoissé Ses talant et Ses graces.<sup>33</sup>

These are clearly three subjects from the *Fêtes Italiennes* series, *Danse*, *Musique*, and *Collation*.<sup>34</sup>

A year later the baron had changed his mind about the number of tapestries he needed and their dimensions, and another series had been selected. Louis-Antoine de Crozat, baron de Thiers, a wealthy collector who was acting as Bernstorff's agent in Paris, wrote to him on April 20, 1754:

Enfin le S<sup>r</sup> Oudry est revenu de Beauvais, après avoir remis sur le métier toute votre comition sur les dernières mesures. Voici cy desous les 4 sujets

Venus chez Vulcain  
Ariane et Bacus

l'enlèvement d'Europe  
Neptune et Amimonne.<sup>35</sup>

Like most of the orders filled by the Beauvais manufactory at the time, the commission included furniture upholstered in tapestry; this is now in the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>36</sup> The first two tapestries in the list are also in the Metropolitan Museum (Figures 2, 14), given from the collection of James Stillman in 1922.<sup>37</sup> They are identified by the yellow inscriptions on the dark blue lower guards:<sup>38</sup> “Oudry” on the left and “A.C.C. Beauvais” on the right. Oudry and André-

they were working on. Possibly Jupiter has been confused with Bacchus, who changed himself into a beautiful bunch of grapes to deceive Erigone; as *Jupiter and Antiope* was woven several times joined to *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the mistake is comprehensible. There is no story of Jupiter associated with grapes or turning himself into grapes.

29. Maurice Vaucaire, “Les Tapisseries de Beauvais sur les cartons de F. Boucher,” *Les Arts*, no. 7 (Aug. 1902) pp. 12, 13, 16–17; Emőke László and Corvina Kiadó, *Flemish and French Tapestries in Hungary*, trans. by Enikő Körtvélyessy, trans. rev. by S. M. Newton (Budapest, 1981) p. 33 (the authors say that the set was commissioned by Field Marshal Pál Esterházy and his wife, Princess Maria Visconti-Lunati, and taken to the Buda palace of Sándor Esterházy in 1882).

30. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 68.

31. Erik Zahle, “François Boucher's dobbelte billedvaevning,” *Det Danske Kunstindustrimuseum, Virksomhed, 1959–1964* (Copenhagen, 1964) pp. 58–69.

32. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 84. “M. de St-Florentin” is also listed (p. 62) as acquiring six more pieces, in 1767 and 1769. He was made Secrétaire d'Etat in 1749.

33. Ananoff, *Boucher*, I, p. 58, no. 521 of “Tableau chronologique,” quoting a manuscript in the archives of the Amalienborg Palace, Copenhagen.

34. The variations in the widths of the pieces show how adaptable the designs were (Edith A. Standen, “Fêtes Italiennes: Beauvais Tapestries After Boucher in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” *MMJ* 12/1977 [1978] p. 113).

35. Mario Krohn, *Frankrigs og Danmarks Kunstneriske Forbindelse i det 18. Aarhundrede* (Copenhagen, 1922) I, p. 75.

36. James Parker, “Eighteenth-Century France Recreated in the ‘Cold, Barbarous Country’: The Tapestry Room from the Bernstorff Palace, Copenhagen,” *Burlington Magazine* 115 (1973) pp. 367–373. The upholstery shows animal subjects after Oudry. A detailed account of the history of the palace after Bernstorff's death in 1772 is given in Bredo L. Grandjean, *En Bygningens Historie: Det Bernstorffske Palæ 1752–1952* (Copenhagen, 1952) pp. 12, 13, 16–18, 22, 26, 27.

37. J. B. [Joseph Breck], “An Anonymous Gift,” *MMAB* 17 (1922) pp. 51–54. *The Rape of Proserpine* said to have been with these two tapestries in the James A. Stillman collection is probably the *Boreas and Orithyia* with the French royal arms that was in the Stillman sale, Parke-Bernet, May 10–13, 1944, no. 667.

38. This term is used for the narrow band running along the outer edges of a tapestry (in French, *galon*), following Adolph S. Cavallo, *Tapestries of Europe and of Colonial Peru in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston, 1967) I, p. 39.



Charlemagne Charron became co-directors of the manufactory on February 1, 1754, but Oudry died on April 30, 1755. The only set of the *Amours des Dieux* woven in the year of their joint directorship, 1754, is the one that is listed as made for the baron de Thiers.<sup>39</sup> The other two tapestries of the set were also in America in 1919, when they were owned by P. W. French & Co., New York;<sup>40</sup> they are probably the two tapestries of these subjects that were lent by French & Co. to an exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, in 1929. The tapestries of the set were made without borders to be inserted into boiseries.

An account of each subject in the series and of the related paintings follows.

## BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

The god has evidently just arrived on Naxos with his train and is consoling the still-weeping Ariadne. In well-preserved examples of the tapestry, Theseus's departing ship can be seen in the distance on the right. The leopards were probably designed by Oudry; the

1. *Bacchus and Ariadne*, French (Beauvais), 1750. Wool and silk tapestry. Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale (photo: Alinari-Scala)

one on the right (Figure 2) strongly resembles a tiger on a tapestry with the Boufflers arms owned by the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 3).<sup>41</sup> This is signed by Oudry and dated 1733; he had not become director

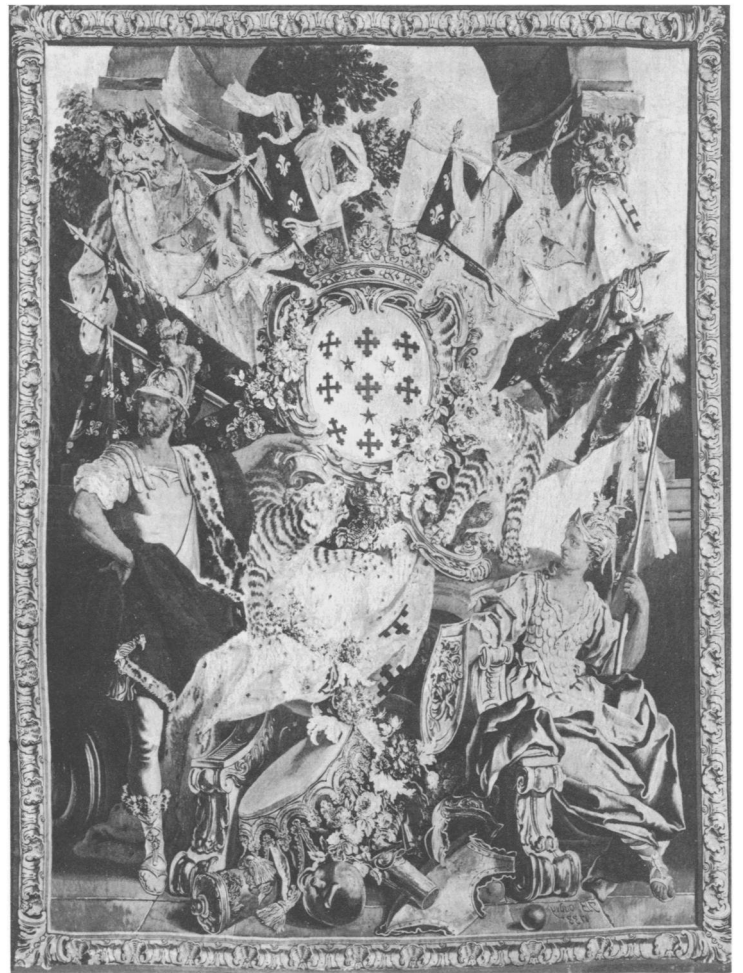
39. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 61. A *Rape of Proserpine* is erroneously listed instead of a *Rape of Europa*. Photographs of the tapestries while in the Bernstorff Palace confirm the identification (Parker, "Eighteenth-Century France," fig. 14).

40. Krohn, *Frankrigs og Danmarks Kunstneriske Forbindelse*, I, p. 77.

41. Oudry would probably have reversed the names of these animals (Opperman, "Oudry aux Gobelins," p. 60). The 1765 *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "léopard," says of the two species: "Les Naturalistes donnent le nom de *léopard* à celui qui a des taches rondes; mais il paroît que l'usage a prévalu au contraire, & qu'on le nomme vulgairement du nom de *tigre*." The attribution of the tigers in this tapestry to Oudry was made by Maurice Fenaille, *François Boucher* (Paris, 1925) p. 88. For a discussion of the felines that draw the chariot of Bacchus, see Warren Tresidder, "The Cheetahs in Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne,'" *Burlington Magazine* 123 (1981) pp. 481–485.



2. *Bacchus and Ariadne*, detail, French (Beauvais), 1754. Wool and silk tapestry, 12 ft. × 17 ft. 6 in. (3.66 × 5.33 m.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, From the Collection of James Stillman, Gift of Dr. Ernest G. Stillman, 22.16.2



3. *Arms of Joseph-Marie, Second Duc de Boufflers*, French (Beauvais), 1733. Wool and silk tapestry, 11 ft. × 8 ft. (3.35 × 2.44 m.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Cecil Mortimer Singer, 60.101

4. *Bacchus and Ariadne, Jupiter and Antiope*, French (Beauvais), 1753–69. Wool and silk tapestry. Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum (photo: French & Co.)



of the manufactory at this time, so the name must refer to him as the designer, not the supervisor of the weaving.<sup>42</sup> Also close to the leopard on the right is a painting by Oudry in the Staatliches Museum, Schwerin, which is based on a quick sketch made from life in the menagerie at Versailles that is owned by the same museum.<sup>43</sup>

*Bacchus and Ariadne* was woven at least seventeen times between 1749 and 1769. As has been noted, there are examples in Frederick the Great's set at Charlottenburg, the Quirinale Palace (Figure 1), and the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 2). There is one in a private collection in New York<sup>44</sup> and others in the Hillwood Museum (affiliated with the Marjorie Merriweather Post Foundation), Washington, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.<sup>45</sup> The subject is found combined with *Jupiter and Antiope* in the Esterházy set, in Copenhagen, in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres (with Charron's initials), in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California (Figure 4),<sup>46</sup> and in the Württembergisches Landesmuseum, Stuttgart.<sup>47</sup> Similar double subjects were in the Cibiel sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, June 30, 1919, no. 22 (with the royal arms, but the border corners are not the same as those of the piece with the same arms in Copenhagen), and a sale at Sotheby's, London, June 4, 1971, no. 10 (without borders).

In the 1820 inventory, the cartoon was listed as in six strips, the largest number for the series. No related paintings have been published, and Boucher is not known to have used the subject again.

## THE RAPE OF PROSERPINE

Though the subject was woven at least nine times between 1750 and 1770, the only example in a public collection is one with Charron's initials and no border in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres. Another is in a private collection in New York (Figure 5).<sup>48</sup> A slightly wider piece was owned by the Paris dealer B. Fabre in 1978.<sup>49</sup> Jacques Seligmann and Co. lent an example to the exhibition "Four Centuries of Tapestries" at the Toledo Museum of Art in 1929 (catalogue no. 38); it came from the Ignace Ephrussi collection and had Charron's initials.

The cartoon was in three strips in 1820. A small oval grisaille, signed and dated 1769, in the Musée

des Beaux-Arts, Quimper, has been thought to represent the same subject.<sup>50</sup> The naiad seen only to the waist in the painting, reclining on an urn from which water pours, is similar to the full-length figure in the tapestry, though in reverse and with more drapery.

## NEPTUNE AND AMYMONÉ

Amymone is shown being saved by Neptune from the unwelcome advances of two satyrs, rather than the single one usually depicted. The tapestry was woven at least ten times between 1750 and 1770. There is an example in the Charlottenburg set, and others are in the Staatliches Museum, Schwerin; the Hermitage, Leningrad; and the collection of the city of Paris.<sup>51</sup>

42. Another piece of the set with the Boufflers arms, now in a French private collection, has preserved its lower guard, which is inscribed "Besniers et Oudry a Beauvais," indicating that this piece was woven between 1734 and 1753, the period of the joint directorship.

43. Grand Palais, Paris, J.-B. Oudry, exh. cat. (1982) nos. 97 (drawing), 98 (painting).

44. Wildenstein and Co., New York, François Boucher, exh. cat. (1980) no. 16, fig. 15.

45. George Leland Hunter, "America's Beauvais-Boucher Tapestries," *International Studio* 85 (November 1926) ill. p. 28, as in the collection of Mrs. Edward F. Hutton (later Mrs. Merriweather Post); *Los Angeles County Museum, Bulletin of the Art Division* 6, no. 3, supp. (Summer 1954) p. 37, ill. (from the George Fisher sale, Sotheby's, July 24, 1939, no. 88).

46. Anne Marian Jones, *A Handbook of the Decorative Arts in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (n.p., 1965) p. 15, no. A-20, pl. 1 (from the C. Ledyard Blair collection).

47. Ruth Grönwoldt, "Wandbehang: 'Bacchus and Ariadne' und 'Huldigung der Ariadne,'" in "Berichte der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen: Württembergisches Landesmuseum," *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* 12 (1975) pp. 379–381, fig. 15. It was previously sold at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Nov. 11, 1972.

48. Wildenstein, *François Boucher*, no. 17, fig. 16.

49. From a sale at the Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, May 26, 1913, no. 6; the Paul Dutasta sale at the same auction house, June 3, 4, 1926, no. 194; the Charles d'Heucqueville sale, Galerie Jean Charpentier, Paris, Mar. 25, 1936, no. 181; and a sale at Palais Galliera, Paris, June 12, 1973, no. 144.

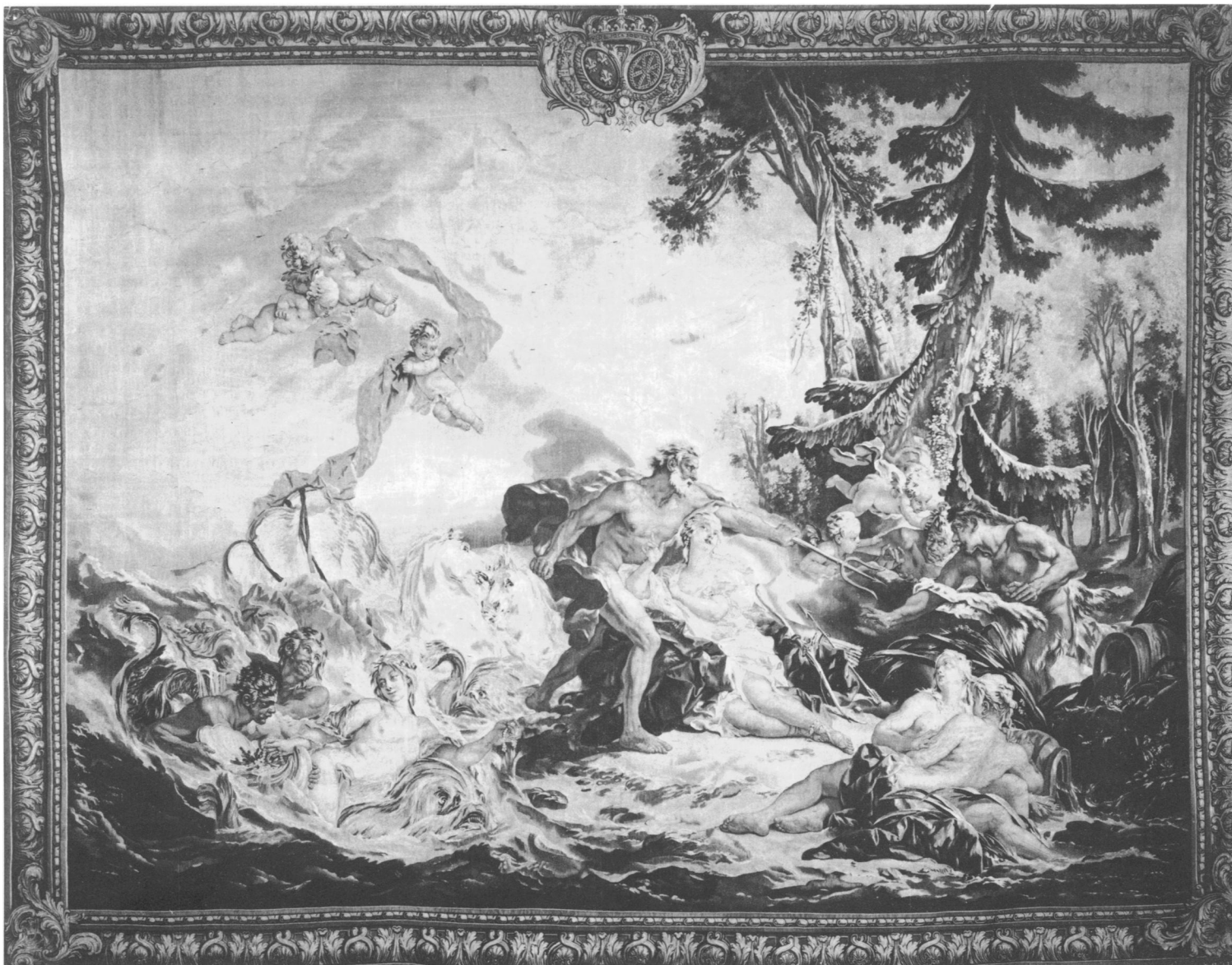
50. Ananoff, *Boucher*, no. 669. It has also been called *Jupiter et une nymphe* and the date read as 1760 (Pierre Quinon, *Musée des Beaux-Arts, Quimper* [n.p., 1976] p. 27).

51. Göbel, *Wandteppiche* II, II, pl. 240 (Schwerin); Nina Biryukova, "Decoration and Diplomacy: Eighteenth-Century French Tapestries," *Apollo* 101 (1975) p. 465, fig. 13 (Hermitage); Juliette Niclausse, *Tapisseries et tapis de la Ville de Paris* (Paris, 1948) no. 63.





5. *The Rape of Proserpine*, French (Beauvais), 1750–70. Wool and silk tapestry. New York, private collection



6. *Neptune and Amymone*, French (Beauvais), 1753–70. Wool and silk tapestry. American private collection

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Green lent an upright example to an exhibition of tapestries at the Museo Nacional de Arte Decorativo, Buenos Aires, in 1939 (catalogue no. 80); it had been in the Casimir Périer and comtesse de Béhague collections and has no border. A piece with the French royal arms was lent to the “Exposition François Boucher,” Hôtel Jean Charpentier, Paris, 1932 (no. 137); it is in an American private collection (Figure 6) and has Charron’s initials.<sup>52</sup> Another example with the royal arms was sold at the Palais Galliera, Paris, March 4, 1961, no. 134; it has the date 1749 on the guard. An upright piece with a nar-

row border was sold at the Galerie Georges Petit, April 21, 1921, no. 96, and a wide one was in the A. Clément-Bayard sale, Galerie Jean Charpentier, June 22, 1937, no. 22. The piece in the Bernstorff set is probably the example lent by French & Co. to the Wadsworth Atheneum exhibition in 1929.

The cartoon was in three strips in 1820. A painting of the satyrs, the flying cupid, and the two nymphs at the Abbaye de Chaâlès (Figure 7) may well be one of

52. It was sold at the Galerie Jean Charpentier, Apr. 6, 1960, no. 140, and at the Palais Galliera, Dec. 11, 1961, no. 184.

the strips. A related sketch, attributed to the school of Boucher, is reported as formerly in the Flandrin collection, Paris.<sup>53</sup>

Boucher repeated the subject for the Gobelins manufactory in one of the medallions in the series known as the *Tenture de Boucher*.<sup>54</sup> A slightly earlier moment in the story is depicted, as the satyr (there is only one) still holds Amydone, but Neptune is almost identical with the figure in the earlier tapestry. There are no Nereids. The painting for the medallion is dated 1764 and is at Versailles.

7. François Boucher(?), *Satyrs and Nymphs*. Oil on canvas. Abbaye de Chaâlîs, Musée Jacquemart-André (photo: Bernard, Chantilly)



## JUPITER AND ANTIOPE

The subject of the tapestry is apparently Jupiter disguised as a satyr approaching Antiope, but, as has been noted, it is usually listed in the manufactory records as "Jupiter en raisin"; perhaps the weavers thought of it as "Jupiter among the grapes." It is said to have been woven seven times between 1750 and 1771, but at least one instance is known (in the Esterházy set) in which it is present, combined with *Bacchus and Ariadne*, but is not included among the titles of the set. Among the identified pieces of Frederick the Great's set, it is represented, as has been said, only by an *entrefenêtre* of the satyr and, possibly, another of the bacchante with cymbals. Besides the tapestries, already listed, in which *Jupiter and Antiope* is combined with *Bacchus and Ariadne*, there are single pieces in the Quirinale Palace (Figure 8), the Hillwood Museum, with no border, and the Gulbenkian Collection, Lisbon, with the French royal arms.<sup>55</sup> An example from the G. F. Baker collection that was in the William Goodby Loew sale, Parke-Bernet, New York, January 5, 6, 1951, no. 414, was sold again at Sotheby's, London, January 25, 1957, no. 44.<sup>56</sup>

The cartoon was listed as in four strips in the 1820 inventory, where it was called "Jupiter changé en raisin." Boucher is not known to have painted the subject again.

## MARS AND VENUS

The subject of the love affair between Mars and Venus was woven at least thirteen times between 1750 and 1772. It is found in the Esterházy, Polovtsoff, and Quirinale Palace sets (Figure 9), as well as in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, and the

53. Ananoff, *Boucher*, no. 346/2.

54. Edith A. Standen, "The Tapestry Room from Croome Court: The Croome Court Tapestries," in *Decorative Art from the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1964) p. 45, fig. 22.

55. George Leland Hunter, *The Practical Book of Tapestries* (Philadelphia/London, 1925) pl. xi, a (Hillwood Museum, as in the collection of Mrs. Hutton); Glória Nunes Riso Guerreiro, "Some European Tapestries in the Calouste Gulbenkian Collection in Lisbon," *Connoisseur* 173 (1970) p. 232.

56. New York Antique and Art Dealers Association, *Art Treasures Exhibition* (New York: Parke-Bernet Galleries, 1955) no. 119, ill. (exhibited by Frank Partridge, Inc.).





8. *Jupiter and Antiope*, French (Beauvais), 1750. Wool and silk tapestry. Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale  
(photo: Alinari-Scala)



9. *Mars and Venus*, French (Beauvais), 1750. Wool and silk tapestry. Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale (photo: Alinari-Scala)



10. Boucher(?), *Mars and Venus*. Oil on canvas. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum (photo: Fitzwilliam Museum)



11. *Boreas and Orithyia*, French (Beauvais), 1750. Wool and silk tapestry. Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale (photo: Alinari-Scala)

Mobilier National (Gobelins Museum), Paris.<sup>57</sup> An example with the French royal arms was in the Société Seligmann sale, Galerie Georges Petit, March 9–12, 1914, no. 348;<sup>58</sup> one with a narrow border was in the A. Clément-Bayard sale, Galerie Jean Charpentier, June 22, 1937, no. 21; and one with no border was owned by Dario Boccara in 1971.<sup>59</sup> A very faded example was sold at Christie's, New York, April 21, 1979, no. 179, and November 12, 1981, no. 232.

The cartoon was in three strips in 1820. A sketch in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Figure 10),<sup>60</sup> has been thought to be a preliminary study for the tapestry. It shows marked differences from the finished composition, particularly in the upper part where an extremely elongated nude stands beside the support for the large vase. There is no water in the foreground, so the gesture of the woman who stoops to wash a piece of drapery makes no sense. In 1734 Boucher had used the same idea, a warrior leaning against his ladylove with a large looking glass held by a cupid beside them, in his painting of Rinaldo and Armida in the Louvre.<sup>61</sup> The large vase above Mars in the tapestry, with the drapery and three branches behind it, is the subject of a small painting in a private collection.<sup>62</sup>

## BOREAS AND ORITHYIA

Orithyia was carried away by Boreas, the north wind, when she was gathering flowers on a mountain with her sister Procris. The subject is sometimes confused with the rape of Proserpine, but Boreas is always shown winged, whereas Pluto usually rides in a chariot. Boucher's design was woven at least seven times between 1750 and 1767. There is an example in the Polovtsoff set and others in the Quirinale Palace (Figure 11) and the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Chartres; the last has Charron's initials. A small panel containing only Boreas, Orithyia, and the cupid beneath them is in the château of Compiègne;<sup>63</sup> this could be one of the "4 petites pièces des Amours des Dieux" delivered by the manufactory to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1774.<sup>64</sup> An example with the French royal arms and Charron's initials was in the Mme C. Le-long sale, Galerie Georges Petit, April 27–May 1, 1903, no. 489, and the James A. Stillman sale, Parke-Bernet, May 10–13, 1944, no. 677. Another with the same

initials, but without arms, was sold at the Palais Galliera, March 4, 1961, no. 133.

In the year 9 of the Republic, an exhibition was held in the Louvre, to which the Beauvais manufactory sent "deux tableaux de cinq pieds de hauteur sur 5 de largeur représentant l'enlèvement d'Orithye par Borée, modèle de Boucher, peint par Duchemin de Beauvais, jeune homme de 26 à 27 ans."<sup>65</sup>

The cartoon was in four strips in 1820. Boucher painted the subject again for the Hôtel de Marcilly in 1769; the painting is now in the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.<sup>66</sup> It is not close in design to the tapestry.

## THE RAPE OF EUROPA

The subject of Europa's abduction by Jupiter in the guise of a white bull was woven at least thirteen times between 1750 and 1772. There are examples in the Charlottenburg and Esterházy sets and in the Los Angeles County Museum (Figure 12).<sup>67</sup> One, signed by Besnier and Oudry, that was in the sale "Kunstwerk aus den Beständen Leningrader Museen und Schlösser," Rudolph Lepke, Berlin, November 6, 7, 1928, no. 221, was in the Pierre C. Cartier collection, Geneva, in 1964.<sup>68</sup> A nearly square example was in the Mme Dubernet Douine sale, Galerie Jean Charpentier, April 11, 12, 1946, no. 154; an upright version was sold at the Palais Galliera, April 3, 1968, no.

57. Marthe Crick-Kuntziger, *Catalogue des tapisseries* (Brussels: Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, 1966) no. 111; Juliette Niclausse, *Le Musée des Gobelins 1939* (Paris, 1939) no. 48.

58. Göbel, *Wandteppiche* II, II, pl. 235.

59. Dario Boccara, *Les Belles Heures de la tapisserie* (Zug, 1971) p. 201.

60. *National Art-Collections Fund: Annual Report 1980* (London, 1981) p. 54, no. 2835, ill.

61. Ananoff, *Boucher*, no. 108.

62. Galerie Cailleux, Paris, *Eloge de l'ovale: Peintures et pastels du XVIIIe siècle français*, exh. cat. (1975) no. 5. The composition is reversed from that of the similar portion of the tapestry.

63. Vaucaire, "Tapisseries de Beauvais," p. 15.

64. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 85.

65. Ajalbert extracts, see note 16.

66. Ananoff, *Boucher*, no. 677.

67. Madeleine Jarry, *World Tapestry* (New York, 1969) pp. 244, 245 (Charlottenburg); "Tapestry, 'The Rape of Europa,'" *Los Angeles County Museum, Bulletin of the Art Division* 4, nos. 2–3 (Summer 1952) pp. 14, 15.

68. Hôtel de Ville, Beauvais, *Trois Siècles de tapisseries de Beauvais*, exh. cat. (1964) no. 28.



136, and a borderless one at the same auction house, November 24, 1976, no. 135. The piece from the Bernstorff set was probably the one lent by French & Co. to the Wadsworth Atheneum exhibition in 1929.

The cartoon was in five strips in 1820. The subject was painted several times by Boucher. An early version, known only from a print, is not related to the tapestry. A grisaille sketch in the Musée de Picardie, Amiens, is a preliminary study for a painting in the Wallace Collection, London; a print after it was advertised in 1748. The figure of Europa and the relationship of the nymphs, the bull, the flying cupids, the eagle, and the landscape are much as in the tap-

estry, although it is a Nereid and not a river-god who holds the urn from which water pours. The painting that is most closely related to the tapestry was bought by the king in 1747 and is now in the Louvre (Figure 13);<sup>69</sup> only the section with a sea-god and Nereids and some of the flying cupids is markedly different.

The design of the seated girl seen from the side on the right of the tapestry was used for a painting of bacchantes made for Mme de Pompadour's château of Bellevue in 1745. She appears again, holding an urn instead of a basket of flowers, in the *Renaud Endormi* panel of the *Fragments d'Opéra* tapestry series, first woven in 1752.<sup>70</sup> The cupid turning a somer-

12. *The Rape of Europa*, French (Beauvais), 1750–72. Wool and silk tapestry. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of J. Paul Getty (photo: Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

69. Ananoff, *Boucher*, nos. 11 (print), 103 (Amiens sketch), 104 (Wallace), 350 (Louvre).

70. Ibid., nos. 288 (*Bacchantes* painting), 384 (*Renaud* tapestry).





13. Boucher, *The Rape of Europa*. Oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: Archives Photographiques)

sault next to the eagle was used in a *Birth of Venus* painting of 1743, and the Nereid who looks away from Europa in the tapestry is also seen in the overdoor of *Arion Porté sur un Dauphin* of 1749.<sup>71</sup>

## VULCAN AND VENUS

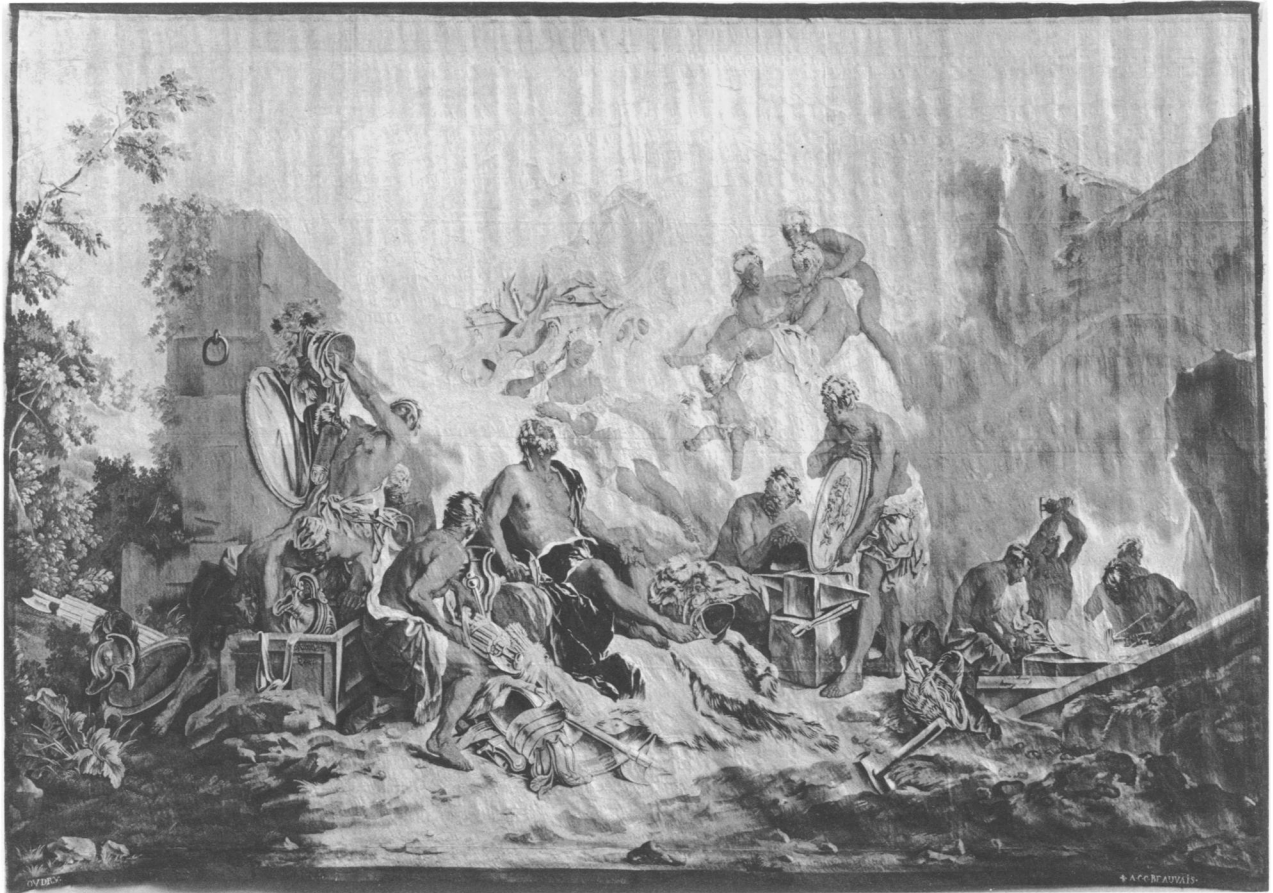
Venus has returned to Vulcan's workshop to collect the arms he has had made for Aeneas, her son by Anchises. The subject was woven at least sixteen times between 1752 and 1772. There are examples in the Charlottenburg, Esterházy, Bernstorff (Figure 14), and Polovtsoff sets; the last two have Boucher's name and are dated 1749. An example from the set ordered by the king in 1771 for Abbé Terray, the Contrôleur Général, with his arms, was sold at the Palais Galliera,

June 19, 1970, no. 106, and a borderless piece was sold at the Hôtel Drouot, December 17, 1943, no. 50.

The 1754 Beauvais inventory mentions, as already quoted, "un grand rapport" for *Vulcan and Venus*. This is presumably an added section sometimes found between Vulcan and the man holding the bundle of rods; it includes two swans harnessed to Venus's chariot, two more putti, and two more men. It is found on tapestries in the Mobilier National and the Los Angeles County Museum (Figure 15); both have Boucher's name and are dated 1749.<sup>72</sup> Another piece with the addition was in the Louis Guiraud sale, Palais Galliera, December 10, 1971, no. 126. A small panel showing only the four men at the forge was in the D. . . sale, Galerie Georges Petit, December 13, 1929, no. 96, and was sold again at the Hôtel Drouot, December 7, 8, 1931, no. 276. It is probably one of the

71. Ibid., nos. 243 (*Birth of Venus*), 328 (*Arion*).

72. Hôtel de la Monnaie, Paris, *Louis XV, un moment de perfection de l'art français*, exh. cat. (1974) no. 375; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *An Elegant Art*, exh. cat. (1983) no. 419.



14. *Vulcan and Venus*, French (Beauvais), 1754-56. Wool and silk tapestry, 14 ft. × 17 ft. 10 in. (4.27 × 5.44 m.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, From the Collection of James Stillman, Gift of Dr. Ernest G. Stillman, 22.16.1

15. *Vulcan and Venus*, French (Beauvais), 1752-72. Wool and silk tapestry. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of J. Paul Getty (photo: Los Angeles County Museum of Art)







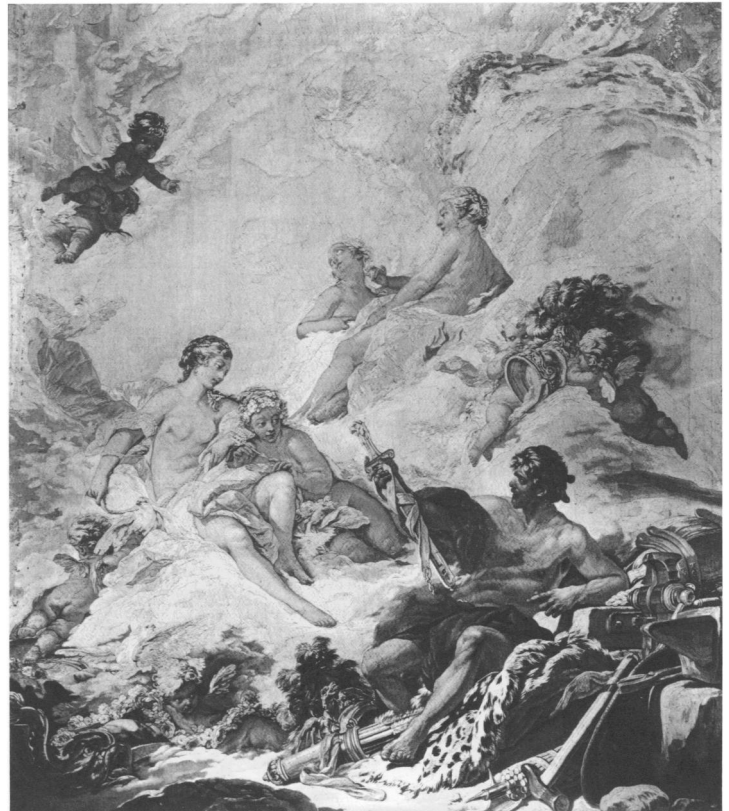
four little pieces woven in 1779, which included “Vénus chez Vulcain” and “les forgerons.”<sup>73</sup>

The cartoon was in four strips in 1820. Boucher repeated the subject many times over more than thirty-five years, including two other designs for tapestries. An upright painting in the Louvre with large figures of Vulcan and Venus is dated 1732; it shows him seated on the ground looking up at her in the clouds, with a piece of classical armor, a helmet, and a quiver of arrows at his feet very like the same objects in the tapestry. In a painting in a private collection in New York, Vulcan is seated with a hammer in one hand, much as in the tapestry, but Venus is behind his shoulder. A grisaille sketch in the Louvre (Figure 16) is close enough to the tapestry (without the “grand rapport”) to be considered a study for it, though there are some differences: the basket and the hammer beside it and the classical armor and quiver of the tapestry are not in the painting. One painting of a set of four, dated 1754, in the Wallace Collection is not related (cupids have taken over the forge).<sup>74</sup>

The 1754 painting at Versailles for a medallion in

16. Boucher, *Vulcan and Venus*. Oil on canvas. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Lacaze Collection (photo: Archives Photographiques)

17. *Vulcan and Venus*, French (Gobelins), 1760–71. Wool and silk tapestry. Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery (photo: Walters Art Gallery)



73. Ajalbert extracts, see note 16.

74. Ananoff, *Boucher*, nos. 85 (Louvre, 1732), 303 (private collection), 351 (Louvre sketch), 428 (Wallace).

the Gobelins *Tenture de Boucher* is closer to the Wallace Collection painting than to the Beauvais tapestry, though the helmet and classical armor, which do not appear in the former, have been incorporated. A large painting in the Louvre dated 1757 shows Vulcan in much the same attitude as he has in the Beauvais tapestry, and one of the nymphs in the sky is also close to her tapestry counterpart; a study for this picture, dated 1756, is in the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, and another is in the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.<sup>75</sup>

The Louvre composition of 1757 was woven at least five times at the Gobelins manufactory from 1759 to 1774. It was Boucher's contribution to a series of the *Amours des Dieux*; the other pieces were after Carle Van Loo, J.-B. Pierre, Joseph Vieu, and Noël Hallé;<sup>76</sup> an example is in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (Figure 17).<sup>77</sup>

Another large picture of the subject in the Kimbell Art Museum is dated 1769; it preserves the quiver and piece of classical armor that appear below Vulcan in the Beauvais tapestry, as well as the general scheme of a seated god looking up at Venus in the clouds, features that had first appeared in 1732. A grisaille sketch for this painting is recorded. The three nymphs in the sky of the Beauvais tapestry are close to a similar group in the 1749 painting, *Vénus Désarmant l'Amour*, in the Louvre.<sup>78</sup>

One can only speculate why this particular mythological subject was so popular with Boucher's patrons, including Louis XV.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the reason was that it provided such a piquant contrast between the soft whiteness of Venus, with her nymphs, cupids, and doves, and the masculinity of Vulcan and his fierce

helpers at their noisy and dirty labors. Boucher, in fact, has been quoted as recommending the subject to a pupil whose noble patron had asked for a painting. He said it was "une tâche fort attrayante à remplir: le dessin d'une belle figure de femme environnée d'Amours, la silhouette d'un homme musculeux accompagnée de quelques cyclopes à l'arrière-plan."<sup>80</sup> The drama of the situation, a wife asking a favor of her husband for her son by another man, may also have had its appeal.

## APOLLO AND CLYTIE

Clytie is gazing wistfully at Apollo, who is about to abandon her. On the left is the sunflower into which he changed her; this flower was believed to keep its face always turned to the sun.<sup>81</sup> The subject was woven at least seven times between 1750 and 1772. It was also known as "Apollon dans sa gloire."<sup>82</sup> There are examples in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Figure 18) and the Fitzwilliam Museum, both with the French royal arms.<sup>83</sup> Another version with these arms was sold at the Galerie Jean Charpentier, May 24, 1955, and Maurice Fenaille owned one in 1935.<sup>84</sup> Pieces without arms were in the Albert Lehmann sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, June 4, 5, 1925, no. 135, and the comte de Gramont sale, Galerie Jean Charpentier, June 15, 1934, no. 98.

The cartoon was in three strips in 1820. Boucher is not known to have painted the subject again, although the nymph leaning on the urn from which water pours is close to the figure in the 1749 Louvre *Toilette de Vénus* who reclines beside the goddess.<sup>85</sup>

75. Ibid., nos. 84 (Versailles), 478 (Louvre, 1757), 479 (Williamstown), 479 bis (Musée des Arts Décoratifs).

76. Fenaille, *Gobelins*, IV, pp. 189–223.

77. Thomas B. Bruhn, "The Loves of the Gods," *Bulletin of the Walters Art Gallery* 21, no. 6 (Mar. 1969) n.p.

78. Ananoff, *Boucher*, nos. 675 (Fort Worth), 673 (sketch), 331 (Louvre).

79. Ibid., I, p. 31, no. 279 of "Tableau chronologique." Mme du Barry owned one of the Gobelins examples (Fenaille, *François Boucher*, p. 105).

80. Ananoff, *Boucher*, I, p. 111, no. 920 of "Tableau chronologique." The quotation is from Ernest Seillière, "Un Témoin de la vie parisienne au temps de Louis XV: Les 'Mémoires' du peintre J. C. de Mannlich," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 1 (July 1912) pp. 199–228.

81. Ovid describes Clytie as changed into a flower that keeps its face turned to the sun, usually interpreted as the heliotrope, but by the 17th century it was taken to be the much more pictorially effective import from the New World, the sunflower (Robert B. Simon, "Poussin, Marino, and the Interpretation of Mythology," *Art Bulletin* 60 [1978] p. 63 n. 49).

82. Badin, *Beauvais*, p. 84 nn. 6, 10.

83. "A Beauvais Tapestry by Boucher," *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts* 32 (1943) pp. 31–34; Carl Winter, in *Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Forty-first Annual Report for the Year 1949*, pp. 2–5.

84. Badin, *Beauvais*, ill. facing p. 56; Fenaille, *François Boucher*, p. 17; *Exposition de l'art français au XVIIIe siècle: Catalogue* (Copenhagen, 1935) no. 821.

85. Ananoff, *Boucher*, no. 330.



18. *Apollo and Clytie*, French (Beauvais), 1750–72. Wool and silk tapestry. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Dunwoody Fund, 1942 (photo: Minneapolis Institute of Arts)

It is almost impossible today to imagine what a room looked like when hung with a set of the *Amours des Dieux* in their original clarity and brilliance. They are generally seen one at a time, as if they were paintings, instead of in combination, covering the walls like frescoes. All too often, also, the lavishly used silks have lost their color, so that once bright blue skies are a pale yellowish tan, and the flesh tones, always in wool, are dirty and have become darker than their surroundings. But when even one sadly solitary piece in good condition can be enjoyed, Boucher comes into his own and is seen to have been a superb designer on a grand scale, a creator of the majestic and powerful as well as of the delicate and enchanting.