



## EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

### WOVEN GOLD: TAPESTRIES OF LOUIS XIV

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center  
December 15, 2015 – May 1, 2016

In the hierarchy of court art, tapestry was regarded, historically, as the preeminent expression of princely status, erudition, and aesthetic sophistication. Extraordinary resources of time, money, and talent were allocated to the creation of these works meticulously woven by hand with wool, silk, and precious-metal thread, after designs by the most esteemed artists. The Sun King, Louis XIV of France (born 1638; reigned 1643–1715), formed the greatest collection of tapestries in early modern Europe. By the end of his reign, the assemblage was staggering, totaling some 2,650 pieces. Though these royal hangings were subsequently dispersed, the largest, present repository of Louis's holdings is the Mobilier National of France. With rare loans from this prestigious institution, *Woven Gold: Tapestries of Louis XIV* explores and celebrates this spectacular accomplishment.

This exhibition was organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the Mobilier National et les Manufactures Nationales des Gobelins, de Beauvais et de la Savonnerie.

We gratefully acknowledge the Hearst Foundations, Eric and Nancy Garen, and the Ernest Lieblich Foundation for their generous support.



Catalogue numbers refer to *Woven Gold: Tapestries of Louis XIV* by Charissa Bremer-David, published by The J. Paul Getty Museum

 numbers refer to the GettyGuide® audio tour





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

## Louis XIV as Collector, Heir, Patron

By the end of Louis XIV's reign, the French Crown's impressive holdings of tapestries had grown by slow accumulation over centuries and by intense phases of opportunistic acquisition and strategic patronage. The collection was notable especially for the Renaissance hangings assembled by François I (reigned 1515–1547). This valuable inheritance was augmented later in the reign of Louis, after the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars known as the Fronde, with other magnificent antique sets of tapestries that became available on the art market. Moreover, from 1661, once Louis assumed the role of supreme patron of the arts, his administration systematically fostered French manufactories with new commissions. These treasured textiles adorned royal palaces, when the court was in residence, and lined outdoor public spaces on special occasions. The tapestries in this exhibition are arranged chronologically according to the year of the original design (rather than date of production). Thus, the display divides into three sections, aligning with the three means by which the collection evolved: antique sets of Renaissance tapestries purchased for Louis XIV in the seventeenth century; antique sets of tapestries inherited by the king; and new sets of tapestries ordered by the Crown. The three sections reveal Louis XIV as collector, heir, and patron.

## Louis XIV as Collector

When Louis XIV (reigned 1643–1715) assumed independent rule in 1661 at the age of twenty-two, the tapestry holdings of the French Crown were literally and metaphorically rich and visually splendid. Notwithstanding this legacy, Louis's own taste and aspirations for the monarchy prompted him to augment the collection. His agents actively pursued the remaining great sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sets, favoring those after the designs of Raphael (1483–1520) and his pupils. Indeed, contemporary art theoreticians argued that the grandeur and rich materiality of the best weavings surpassed their painted models. These hangings carried their own intrinsic value in terms of high quality; prestigious provenances; unique borders, sometimes blazoned with famous coats of arms; well-preserved colors; and excellent condition. By this means, Louis XIV effectively brought the art of Renaissance Rome to the heart of the French realm.

"You have seen those marvelous Works that are in H[is] M[ajesty]'s Furniture Warehouse and that are often displayed during major celebrations. I speak as to tapestries of the design of Raphael . . . The Acts of the Apostles, do they not surprise you when you see them?"

André Félibien, *Discussions Concerning the Lives and Works of the Most Excellent Painters, Ancient and Modern* (1666)





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

### 1. **The Miraculous Draft of Fishes**

From *The Acts of the Apostles*

Design by Raphael (Italian, 1483–1520), 1516

Border design by Francis Cleyn (German, 1582–1658), about 1625–36

Surrey, Mortlake Tapestry Works, under the management of Sir James Palmer (English, 1584–1657), 1636–37

Wool, silk, and gilt metal– and silver-wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 16/4

Catalogue number 1a

EX.2015.6.2

This episode from the New Testament, when Christ called the first disciples (Luke 5:1–10), took place at the Sea of Galilee. The fisherman Simon (called Peter) kneels before Jesus, whom he believes responsible for a miraculously large catch of fish. Jesus proclaims the prophetic words “Henceforth thou shalt be fishers of men.” Raphael originally designed the scene in 1516 for a tapestry destined for the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican. One century later, this version was created on an English loom for the uncle of Louis XIV, Charles I of England (reigned 1625–1649, when beheaded). The border bears his coat of arms and motto. Louis acquired the tapestry just after his cousin, Charles II, regained the English throne in 1660.

#### INSCRIPTION

The Latin text in the central cartouche below translates as:

*Who works at / sea, works hard. / [That] work [is] all futile, / unless [it is] divinely guided, / [then it becomes] skillful work. / Oh Fish who flee the nets: / Behold Christ descending / to the sea. He put you [in the deep], / [now] he catches [you]; and the reign of Charles / Mortlake*

The Middle French motto of Charles I (1600–1649) above translates as:  
*Shamed be he who thinks evil of it*

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



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### 2. **Neptune and Cupid Plead with Vulcan for the Release of Venus and Mars**

From *The Story of Vulcan*

Design by an unidentified Northern artist, formerly attributed to Perino del Vaga (Italian, 1501–1547), about 1530–40

Border design by Francis Cleyn (German, 1582–1658), about 1625–28

Surrey, Mortlake Tapestry Works, under the ownership of Sir Francis Crane (English, about 1579–1636), about 1625–36

Wool, silk, and gilt metal–wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 36/2

Catalogue number 3a

EX.2015.6.3

Neptune and Cupid plead with Vulcan to release the illicit lovers Mars and Venus (Vulcan's wife), who have been caught in bed, snared under a net. A window above the Three Graces, at left, opens onto an interior space where the resolution of the affair is visualized: Vulcan unbinds the net. *The Story of Vulcan* was the first tapestry series woven at the new English Mortlake Tapestry Works. It replicated an older cycle, thought to have been designed by Raphael or his pupil Perino del Vaga. Louis XIV and his court especially appreciated this Mortlake version for it inspired the popular poem of 1659 *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, by Jean de La Fontaine (1621–1695).

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

### 3. **The Triumph of Bacchus**

From *The Triumphs of the Gods*

Design overseen by Raphael (Italian, 1483–1520), about 1518–19

Design and cartoon by Giovanni da Udine (Italian, 1487–1564), in collaboration with other artists from the workshop of Raphael, about 1518–20

Brussels, workshop of Frans Geubels (Flemish, flourished about 1545–1585), about 1560

Wool, silk, and gilt metal-wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 1/3

Catalogue number 2a

EX.2015.6.4

Giovanni da Udine, a student of Raphael, devised these tiered vignettes showing the pagan deity Bacchus, in the central arbor, presiding over a celebration of wine, wine making, and revelry. Stylistically, he was inspired by ancient Roman wall frescoes newly revealed in excavations then underway. The composition was designed originally around 1518–19 for the Vatican, the papal residence in Rome, and conveyed sophisticated religious symbolism. In the intellectual circle around Pope Leo X (reigned 1513–1520), themes and images from classical mythology took on new meaning for educated Christians. This subject may have evoked, theologically, the sacramental wine of the Catholic mass and the sacred blood of Christ. Secular monarchs, such as Louis XIV, and art connoisseurs greatly admired subsequent editions of *The Triumphs of the Gods* tapestries as supreme expressions of Renaissance art by the esteemed master Raphael.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



### 4. **The Reception of the Envoys from Carthage**

From *The Story of Scipio*

Design in the style of Giulio Romano (Italian, about 1499–1546), possibly as early as the 1530s, no later than 1548/55

Border design incorporating motifs by Tommaso Vincidor (Italian, died 1534/36)

Brussels, attributed to the workshop of the Dermoyen family, possibly as early as 1544, no later than 1548/55

Wool and silk

Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument, San Simeon, California, inv. 529-9-93

Catalogue number 4a

EX.2015.6.26

The victorious Roman general Scipio (236–183 BC), in his starcovered cloak, receives representatives from Carthage after the final defeat of their commander Hannibal. From antiquity, Scipio's tactical decisiveness and magnanimity presented a model for military prowess and princely behavior. The most famous portrayal of the hero was the twenty-two-piece tapestry cycle, designed by Giulio Romano and others, purchased in the 1530s by François I of France. Although Louis XIV inherited the grand set of his predecessor, he also acquired another, smaller edition, which contained this unique hanging. It, in turn, had a profound effect on subsequent generations of designers. For example, Scipio inspired the figure of Alexander in *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* (see EX.2015.6.9).

Image © Hearst Castle®/CA State Parks. Photo by Victoria Garagliano



▶ 1363





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

## Louis XIV as Heir

In 1666 the royal inventory of tapestries comprised forty-four extremely valuable sets, woven with profuse quantities of precious metal-wrapped thread. Thanks particularly to the informed taste of the sophisticated Italophile François I, king of France (reigned 1515–1547), highly important Renaissance hangings complemented the illustrious but aging medieval weavings. Until about 1600, the most prestigious sets, especially the more costly ones portraying human figures, came from the powerful network of well-financed tapestry merchants in Brussels and Antwerp. Although a fragmented French industry existed, it was weaker than the efficiently organized northern competition. The situation evolved, however, at the turn of the seventeenth century, when King Henri IV (reigned 1589–1610) pragmatically built up the domestic industry in a strategic attempt to turn the luxury textile market to the kingdom's economic advantage. As a consequence of his revitalizing initiatives, Parisian workshops began to flourish and increasingly more of their weavings entered the royal collection, destined to adorn royal palaces. One half-century later, Louis XIV, grandson of Henri IV, inherited this rich patrimony.

"The King Louis XIII, having looked on [Simon Vouet], wanted him to provide both paintings for his Royal Houses, as well as designs for Tapestry . . . [And] as he made designs for Tapestry, of all genres, he employed Painters to work his drawings into [full-scale cartoons with] landscapes, animals, and ornament."

André Félibien, *Discussions Concerning the Lives and Works of the Most Excellent Painters, Ancient and Modern* (1685)

5. **The Golden Chariot**

About 1563–70

For *The Story of Queen Artemisia*

Antoine Caron (French, 1521–1599)

Black chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white on beige paper

La Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, Paris

RÉSERVE AD-105-FT 4, folio 12 (recto)

Catalogue number 5b

EX.2015.6.1

The allegorical figure of Immortality stands on the funeral chariot transporting the body of the king of Caria, Mausolus (died 353 BC), to his tomb (a massive structure regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World). This drawing was made to illustrate a text written by the humanist apothecary Nicolas Houel, who also envisioned a related series of monumental tapestries. The fictionalized Artemisia was a conflation of two female rulers: Artemisia I, who sided with the Persians against the Greeks at the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC, and Artemisia II, widow of Mausolus. Houel used these ancient precedents to justify the contemporary rule of Catherine de' Medici as queen regent of France (reigned 1560–1566, 1574).

Image not available

INSCRIPTION

The Latin motto of Catherine de' Medici (1519–1589), widowed queen of Henri II of France, in the top border translates line by line, left to right, as:

*After the flame had died out, the tears testify to the ardor that lives on*





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## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

6. **The Chariot of Triumph Drawn by Four Piebald Horses (also known as The Golden Chariot)**

From *The Story of Queen Artemisia*

Design by Antoine Caron (French, 1521–1599), about 1563–70

Border design attributed to Henri Lerambert (French, about 1540/50–1608), about 1606–7

Cartoon by Henri Lerambert, about 1606–7

Paris, Louvre workshop of Maurice I Dubout (French, died 1611), about 1606–7

Wool and silk

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 11/4

Catalogue number 5a

EX.2015.6.5

The vibrant green and yellow tones of this hanging belie the grievous nature of its subject: the funeral procession of King Mausolus (died 353 BC), whose chariot bears symbols of death and mourning. Four decades after *The Story of Queen Artemisia* was illustrated (see *The Golden Chariot*, EX.2015.6.1), King Henri IV (reigned 1589–1610) commissioned the first tapestry sets portraying the narrative from Parisian weavers. Full-scale cartoons were created by several artists, notably Henri Lerambert. The top border of this weaving bears the coat of arms of Henri IV. *Artemisia* tapestries were also ordered by his widowed queen, Marie de' Medici (1573–1642), who ruled as regent of France for their young son Louis XIII (reigned 1610–1643).

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



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7. **The Daughter of Jephthah**

From *Stories from the Old Testament*

Design by Simon Vouet (French, 1590–1649), mid-to-late 1630s

Border design attributed, in part, to Jean Cotelle (French, 1607–1676), before 1643

Paris, Louvre workshop of Maurice II Dubout (French, died 1656), begun in the 1640s– completed by 1659

Wool and silk

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 23/2

Catalogue number 7a

EX.2015.6.7

Vouet brought the emerging Italian Baroque style to France when he returned to Paris from Rome in 1627. His visually poetic, luminous compositions with their sun-drenched, verdant settings and richly draped, broadly gesturing figures proved very popular. For the *Old Testament* series, these traits disguise the underlying violence of heartrending drama and impending infanticide. This scene captures an account about the ancient Hebrew military leader Jephthah (Judges 11:30–36). Having promised God a sacrifice from his household in thanksgiving for victory in battle, Jephthah returns home only to realize the sacrificial victim will be his own child. The daughter, at center, reaches toward her distraught father and signals acceptance of her fate.

#### INSCRIPTION

The Latin motto of Louis XIII (1601–1643) translates as:  
*They will be recognized, them also, with their brilliant deeds.*

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

8. **Constantius [I] Appoints Constantine as His Successor**

From *The Story of Constantine*

Design by Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640), 1622

Border design attributed to Laurent Guyot (French, about 1575–after 1644), about 1622–23

Paris, Faubourg Saint-Marcel workshop under the direction of entrepreneurs Marc de Comans (Flemish, 1563–1644) and François de La Planche (Flemish, 1573–1627), about 1625–by 1627

Wool, silk, and gilt metal–wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 43/3

Catalogue number 6a

EX.2015.6.6

At the British shoreline, in the northern reaches of the Roman Empire, co-emperor Constantius I (died 306) designates his son as his successor. Constantine receives symbols of power: an orb from his father and a ship's rudder with a staff in the form of a cross from the angel who represents Divine Providence. This tapestry series was especially meaningful to Louis XIII (reigned 1610 – 1643), for Constantine was held as the first model of a Christian ruler. Moreover, his conversion to Christianity was perceived as a historic parallel to the conversion of his own father, King Henri IV, from Calvinism to Catholicism in 1593.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



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## Louis XIV as Patron

After Louis XIV assumed independent rule in 1661, he employed the literary, visual, and performing arts to glorify the monarchy and to aggrandize his public persona. As the ultimate patron and protector of the arts, he founded new academies and manufactories to serve these objectives and to promote his reputation as the arbiter of informed, refined taste. Concerning the medium of tapestry, that costly and prestigious symbol of royal power and aesthetic discernment, Louis XIV approved the centralization of the sundry Parisian weaving workshops into one large unified complex at the Hôtel of the Gobelins in the Faubourg Saint-Marcel, then a suburb southeast of the city wall. Thus, in 1662, the Royal Tapestry Manufactory at the Gobelins was established to produce extremely high-quality tapestries after accomplished designs for the adornment of royal residences. The manufactory fulfilled its mandate, to great success, over the course of the next fifty years of the reign—and indeed beyond, for the Gobelins manufactory continues to operate.

"These works [the Gobelins tapestries] . . . are priceless objects. I don't just mean that they are laden with silk and gold; I mean that the greatness of the design and the beauty of the workmanship infinitely surpass the richness of the material."

André Félibien, *Discussions Concerning the Lives and Works of the Most Excellent Painters, Ancient and Modern* (1666)





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

## The Story of Alexander

The greatest and most influential work painted by the court artist Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) was *The Story of Alexander*. The five-part series celebrated Le Brun's patron, Louis XIV, by employing the traditional strategy of likening the king to an admired ancient role model. Through associated moralizing verses, the painter masterfully exhorted the king to rise above human frailty and embody noble heroic virtue. The series was inspired by the life of Alexander III, king of Macedonia (reigned 336–323 BC), known to posterity as Alexander the Great. The magnificent tapestries produced at the Gobelins after Le Brun's designs rivaled the greatest sixteenth-century weavings depicting esteemed ancient heroes, such as *The Story of Scipio* after Giulio Romano (about 1499–1546), a pupil of Raphael (see *The Reception of the Envoys from Carthage*, EX.2015.6.26). The critical success of the Alexander paintings and the superlative tapestries woven after them in precious metal-wrapped thread also established the painter and the manufactory as the indisputable successors to the most distinguished artists of the history genre and the famed master weavers of Brussels.

9. **The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander**

From *The Story of Alexander*

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690),  
1661

Cartoon for the vertical loom by Henri Testelin  
(French, 1616–1695), by 1664

Paris, Royal Tapestry Manufactory/Royal Furniture  
Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the  
vertical-loom workshop of Jean Jans the Elder  
(Flemish, about 1618–1691), about 1664, probably  
by 1670

Wool, silk, gilt metal- and silver-wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 84

Catalogue number 10a

EX.2015.6.9

This tapestry celebrates Alexander the Great's restraint in victory and his clemency for the vanquished. Here, family members and servants of the routed Persian king Darius III kneel before the conqueror. The lenient hero, with a graceful open-armed gesture, gently and respectfully overlooks the misdirected plea of the prostrate matriarch. The captives react to the tension and its dissipation through pose and expression. The moralizing verse in the cartouche below extols the virtue of self-control: "It is for a king to vanquish himself." The figure of Alexander was based upon a Renaissance model, the Roman general Scipio, portrayed in a sixteenth-century tapestry (see *The Reception of Envoys from Carthage*, EX.2015.6.26).

### INSCRIPTIONS

The Latin text in the central cartouche translates as:

*It is for a king to vanquish himself*

The Latin motto of Louis XIV (1638–1715) in top and side borders translates as:

*Not unequal to many [tasks]*

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



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# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

### 10. **The Battle of Arbela**

From *The Story of Alexander*

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), 1669

Cartoon for the vertical loom by Louis Licherie (French, 1629–1687), Gabriel Revel (French, 1643–1712), and/or Joseph Yvert (French, 1649–1728), about 1669

Paris, Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the vertical-loom workshop of Jean Jans the Younger (Flemish, about 1644–1723) or Jean Lefebvre (French, act. until 1700), about 1670–76/77

Wool, silk, gilt metal- and silver-wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 92

Catalogue number 10d

EX.2015.6.12

### 11. **The Entry of Alexander into Babylon**

From *The Story of Alexander*

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), by 1665

Cartoon for the vertical loom by Henri Testelin (French, 1616–1695), about 1665

Paris, Royal Tapestry Manufactory/Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the vertical-loom workshop of Jean Jans the Elder (Flemish, about 1618–1691) or Jean Jans the Younger (Flemish, about 1644–1723) or Jean Lefebvre (French, active until 1700), about 1665, probably by 1676

Wool, silk, and gilt metal- and silver-wrapped thread

Presented through the generous support of Eric and Nancy Garen

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 82/3

Catalogue number 10e

EX.2015.6.10

The battle of Arbela took place in October 331 BC on a plain near Mosul (in present-day Iraq). The scene shows the chaos and confusion of the fierce melee, as a mounted Persian archer and his horse, each protected by fish-scale armor, are blindsided by a Greek cavalry officer charging from the right. This narrow tapestry presents only the right portion of the original composition. The full scene was too wide to render in one, long hanging so weavers at the Gobelins manufactory produced a tri-partite version, consisting of one central panel and two narrower lateral panels.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



After the battle of Arbela, the city of Babylon was surrendered to Alexander without a fight. Here, the victory cavalcade proceeds along the city's beautiful thoroughfare, spared the destruction of war, toward the golden statue of the ancient Assyrian queen Semiramis. Triumphant, Alexander rides in a chariot drawn by elephants. The cartouche below is blank but the verse usually associated with the subject encourages the tireless pursuit of goodness with the words, "Thus by virtue heroes rise," meaning that persistent virtuous endeavor makes the hero.

#### INSCRIPTION

The Latin motto of Louis XIV (1638–1715) translates as:

*Not unequal to many [tasks]*

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



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# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

12. **The Entry of Alexander into Babylon**

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690),  
by 1665

Cartoon for the horizontal loom by François  
Bonnemer (French, 1637–1689), Guy-Louis  
Vernansal (French, 1648–1729), Gabriel Revel  
(French, 1643–1712), and/or Joseph Yvart (French,  
1649–1728), before 1690

Oil on canvas

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. Gob 704

Catalogue number 10h

EX.2015.6.11.1–.2

The five original monumental canvases painted from 1661 to 1673 by Le Brun and his assistants for *The Story of Alexander* were considered masterpieces. In order to preserve the originals, artists at the Gobelins manufactory prepared working copies, known as cartoons, for the weavers' use. Cartoons played an important role in the workshop, for they were key visual references. Depending on the type of loom, a cartoon was either hung behind the loom or cut into strips and inserted sequentially under the warp threads in order to guide the weaving. Consequently, cartoons were worn and damaged over time from repeated use. This partial cartoon for *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon* (see tapestry, EX.2015.6.10) is a rare survivor; its strips have been rejoined.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



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13. **Male Nude, Standing, and Subsidiary Studies  
of His Upper Body, Arm, and Leg**

About 1661

For *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of  
Alexander*

Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

Red chalk heightened with white chalk on beige  
paper

Le Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts  
Graphiques, Paris, inv. 28010

Catalogue number 10b

EX.2015.6.17

More than two hundred preliminary drawings by Le Brun survive for *The Story of Alexander* cycle, testifying to the artist's diligence in carrying out this significant commission. This one for the pose of Alexander in *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* (see EX.2015.6.9), for instance, was a study in princely comportment. According to the contemporary art theoretician André Félibien (1619–1695), the figure was meant to embody clemency, with the open left hand; friendship, with the outstretched right arm; compassion, with the tranquil countenance; and civility, with the elegant position of the legs.

Image not available





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

14. **Draped Female, Arms at Waist Level**

About 1661

For *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander*

Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

Red chalk heightened with white chalk on beige paper

Le Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris, inv. 29126

Catalogue number 10c

EX.2015.6.18

Le Brun demonstrated his understanding of human nature and his virtuoso ability to convey human expression through the variety of emotions communicated by the figures in *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* (see EX.2015.6.9). This study for the attendant at the far right of the composition signals astonishment, with her open mouth, wide eyes, and raised hands.

Image not available

15. **Youth, Seated**

About 1664

For *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon*

Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

Red chalk heightened with white chalk on beige paper

Le Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris, inv. 29642

Catalogue number 10f

EX.2015.6.20

This youth corresponds to the figure who rides the elephant pulling the parade chariot in *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon* (see tapestry, EX.2015.6.10; see cartoon, EX.2015.6.11.1-.2). The splay of his legs and outstretched arm suggest his precarious perch on the lumbering creature (omitted here but visible in both *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon* cartoon and tapestry). Through the foreshortened arm and hatched shadowing, Le Brun gives striking dimensionality to the form.

Image © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY



16. **Two Males, Nude, Standing**

About 1664

For *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon*

Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

Red chalk heightened with white chalk on beige paper

Le Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris, inv. 29187

Catalogue number 10g

EX.2015.6.21

These powerfully muscled men exhibit Le Brun's mastery of anatomy and the human form in motion. The pair are part of a team of three men who struggle to carry a bier (suggested by the sketchy horizontal poles) that in the corresponding cartoon and tapestry for *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon* (see tapestry, EX.2015.6.10; see cartoon, EX.2015.6.11.1-.2) bears a massive and weighty gilt-bronze ornamental vase.

Image not available





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

Group Label (17–21) **Suite of Five Prints: The Story of Alexander**  
Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)  
Etching and engraving

From 1672 to 1678, Gérard Audran (1640–1703) and Gérard Edelinck (1640–1707) graphically reproduced the five scenes of *The Story of Alexander* on a grand scale. Le Brun personally supervised the creation and execution of the etched and engraved series to his exacting standards and, in so doing, controlled and elevated the artistic quality of the printed medium. Critical acclaim for the prints contributed to the enduring prestige of Le Brun's *Alexander* cycle. Their circulation generated new editions of the tapestry series in weaving workshops located in Aubusson and Brussels.

See below

17. **The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander**  
About 1675  
Engraved by Gérard Edelinck (Flemish, 1640–1707)  
The Getty Research Institute  
2003.PR.42

**INSCRIPTION**  
The dual French and Latin captions translate as:  
*It is for a king to vanquish himself / Alexander, having vanquished Darius near the town of Issus, came to the tent where the mother, wife / and daughters of Darius were, where he provided a singular example of restraint and clemency / Engraved by Edelinck after the painting which was made by Le Brun, first painter of the king, and which his Majesty took pleasure in seeing him paint at Fontainebleau in the year 1661.*



18. **Crossing of the Granicus [River]**  
1672  
Engraved by Gérard Audran (French, 1640–1703)  
The Getty Research Institute  
2003.PR.33.1

**INSCRIPTION**  
The dual French and Latin captions translate as:  
*Virtue surmounts every obstacle. / Having crossed the Granicus, Alexander attacks the greater forces of the Persians / and puts to flight their vast multitude*  
  
The verses left and right translate as:  
*Engraved by Gir. Audran, after the painting of M. Le Brun first painter to the king / This painting is in the cabinet of his Maje[sty]. It is 16 [feet] tall by 30 [feet] long*





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

19. **The Battle of Arbela**

1674

Engraved by Gérard Audran (French 1640–1703)

The Getty Research Institute

2003.PR.33.2

### INSCRIPTIONS

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Virtue is worthy of the empire of the world. / After several victories, Alexander defeated Darius in the battle near Arbela, and this final combat / having achieved the overthrow of the throne of the Persians, all the East was subjected to the might of the Macedonians*

The verses left and right translate as:

*Engraved by Gir. Audran, after the painting of M. Le Brun first painter to the king / This painting is in the cabinet of his Maje[sty]. It is 16 [feet] tall by 39 [feet] 5 [inches] long.*



20. **Alexander and Porus**

1678

Engraved by Gérard Audran (French, 1640–1703)

The Getty Research Institute

2003.PR.33.3

### INSCRIPTIONS

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Virtue pleases, although vanquished / Alexander not only is touched by compassion, upon seeing the nobility of spirit of the king Porus whom he had vanquished, and / made his prisoner, but also bestows on him honorable marks of his esteem, by welcoming him as a friend, / and by giving him in the end a greater kingdom than that which he had lost*

The verses left and right translate as:

*Engraved by Gir. Audran, after the painting of M. Le Brun first painter to the king / This painting is in the cabinet of his M[ajes]ty. It is 16 [feet] tall by 39 [feet] 5 [inches] long.*



21. **Triumphal Entry into Babylon**

1675

Engraved by Gérard Audran (French, 1640–1703)

The Getty Research Institute

2003.PR.33.4

### INSCRIPTIONS

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Thus by virtue heroes rise. / Triumphal entry of Alexander into Babylon, in the midst of concerts of / music and the acclamations of the people*

The verses below translate as:

*Engraved by Ger. Audran, after the painting of M. le Brun first Painter to the king / This painting is in the cabinet of his M[ajes]ty. It is 16 [feet] tall by 21 [feet] 5 [inches] long.*





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

Group label (22–23)

### Suite of Six Prints: The Story of Alexander

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

and

### The Gallery of the Royal Hôtel at the Gobelins

Design by Sébastien Le Clerc (French, 1637–1714)

Etching and engraving

The complete suite of six prints consisted of the five *Alexander* episodes together with an interior view of the Gobelins gallery displayed with tapestry versions of the same scenes. The drawing nearby (see *View of the Gallery in the Royal Hôtel at the Gobelins*, EX.2015.6.14) was executed in preparation for the gallery view. The small-scale suite, proportionally priced more modestly, appealed to a wide market. Images of the famed Le Brun cycle, coupled with this privileged peek inside the celebrated Gobelins manufactory, demonstrated an owner's connoisseurship.

See below

### 22. Three Prints from a Suite of Six

1694

Engraved by Sébastien Le Clerc (French, 1637–1714)

The Getty Research Institute

2003.PR.26.2

#### Top: Alexander and Porus

##### INSCRIPTION

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Virtue pleases, although vanquished / Alexander not only is touched by compassion, upon seeing the nobility of spirit of the king Porus whom he had vanquished, and made his prisoner, but also bestows on him honorable marks of his esteem, by welcoming him as a friend, and by giving him in the end a greater kingdom than that which he had lost.*

#### Center: The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander

##### INSCRIPTION

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*It is for a king to vanquish himself / Alexander, having vanquished Darius near the town of Issus, came to the tent where the mother, wife and daughters of Darius were, where he provided a singular example of restraint and clemency.*

#### Bottom: Triumphal Entry into Babylon

##### INSCRIPTION

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Thus by virtue heroes rise. / Triumphal entry of Alexander into Babylon, in the midst of concerts of music and the acclamations of the people.*





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

23. **Three Prints from a Suite of Six**  
1694  
Engraved by Sébastien Le Clerc (French, 1637–1714)  
The Getty Research Institute  
2003.PR.26.1

### Top: **The Gallery of the Royal Hôtel at the Gobelins**

#### INSCRIPTION

The French caption translates as:

*The Gallery of the Royal Hôtel at the Gobelins [sic] / where are shown to / Monseigneur Colbert, Marquis of Villacerf and Patens, Lord of St. Memin, Courlange, La Cour, St. Phal, Fontaine and other places: king's counselor / First household manager of the late Queen, superintendent and general administrator of the Office of Buildings, Gardens, Arts and Manufactures of His Majesty / some feats of Alexander represented in tapestry after the paintings of M. Le Brun.*

### Center: **Crossing of the Granicus [River]**

#### INSCRIPTION

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Virtue surmounts every obstacle. / Having crossed the Granicus, Alexander attacks the greater forces of the Persians / and puts to flight their vast multitude.*

### Bottom: **The Battle of Arbela**

#### INSCRIPTION

The dual French and Latin captions translate as:

*Virtue is worthy of the empire of the world. / After several victories, Alexander defeated Darius in the battle near Arbela, and this final combat / having achieved the overthrow of the throne of the Persians, all the East was subjected to the might of the Macedonians.*



24. **View of the Gallery in the Royal Hôtel at the Gobelins**  
1694  
Sébastien Le Clerc (French, 1637–1714)  
Black and red chalk, pen and brown ink, gray wash, and heightened with white on cream paper  
Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTB 675  
EX.2015.6.14

*The Story of Alexander* tapestries were prized by the craftsmen at the Gobelins, where examples were displayed on special occasions. Le Clerc captured one such notable event, when Édouard Colbert, marquis de Villacerf (1628–1699), visited the site. He was the successor of Jean-Baptiste Colbert as superintendent of the Office of Royal Buildings, Gardens, Arts, and Manufactories. Workmen hoist the last of the five main tapestries, *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* (see EX.2015.6.9). The other subjects are just discernible, with *The Entry of Alexander into Babylon* (see EX.2015.6.10) on the short wall opposite the viewer. The two peaceful episodes flank the three violent battle scenes. The later French notation on the mount refers to an eighteenth-century catalogue of Le Clerc's works.



▶ 1369

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

## The Royal Tapestry Manufactory at the Gobelins

The Royal Tapestry Manufactory was established at the Gobelins under the aegis of Louis XIV in 1662 when the Crown's administrator Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683) joined dispersed weaving workshops into a single complex located outside Paris in the neighborhood known as the Faubourg Saint-Marcel. The site had long been affiliated with the textile trade. In the fifteenth century, a family of scarlet dyers occupied the premises and then, from 1601, immigrant Flemish entrepreneurs operated a successful tapestry workshop there. Once designated a royal manufactory, the enclave at the Gobelins grew to employ some 200 to 300 weavers in five workshops, each equipped with several looms. In March 1663, the court painter Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) was appointed director, responsible not only for artistic creation but also for the entire chain of production from materials to execution. In November 1667, the endeavor was broadened to fabricate other types of luxury furnishings for the royal household and renamed the Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown.

 1361

25. **The King's Visit to the Gobelins**

About 1672

Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

Black chalk on beige paper

Le Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts  
Graphiques, Paris

EX.2015.6.22

In 1667 the Royal Tapestry Manufactory at the Gobelins was restructured and expanded to produce other types of luxury furnishings for the royal household, especially furniture made with exotic wood, precious metal, and semiprecious hardstones. Its name changed to the Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown. Le Brun captured the historic visit of Louis XIV to the site. His drawing, a preliminary study for a tapestry, contains fifteen identifiable portraits, notably at left: the king, wearing a plumed hat, and superintendent Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), whose face is in profile. The figure at right, carrying a rolled tapestry, is thought to be Jean de La Croix (died 1714), foreman of a weaving workshop.

Image © RMN-Grand Palais / Art Resource, NY



26. **Allegorical Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Colbert**

1664

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690)

Engraved by Pierre Louis van Schuppen (Flemish,  
1627–1702)

Engraving

The Getty Research Institute

2003.PR.20.2

Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683) was a trusted and influential advisor to Louis XIV. Among his responsibilities, he served as the powerful superintendent of the Office of Royal Buildings, Gardens, Arts and Manufactories from 1664 until his death. In this position, he was in charge of all the Crown's art commissions. Under his ambitious vision and brilliant administration, the French monarchy became the ultimate model of princely splendor for all of Europe. Being a keen lover of tapestry and textile, he particularly nurtured French development of these luxury arts. Here, the patron goddess of weavers, Athena, embroiders a cloth in homage to him. The visage of Colbert is based upon a portrait by the artist Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674).







# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

27. **Study of Purple Swampheens (or Study of Purple Rails)**

About 1668

Pieter Boel

Flemish, 1626–1674

Black, white, and colored chalks, on light brown paper

Le Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris, inv. 19389

Catalogue number 11a

EX.2015.6.23

Drawing from life, the animal painter Boel focused on capturing the gait of his subject, the Mediterranean swampheens. These birds, and other exotic species, were residents of the menagerie on the grounds of Versailles, a royal estate with extensive parkland and forest. Like many other specialized artists in the employ of the French Crown, Boel collaborated at the Gobelins to paint working models—or cartoons—for the tapestry weavers. Dozens of preliminary sketches usually preceded the execution of one large full-scale cartoon.

Image not available

28. **Château of Monceaux/Month of December**

From *The Royal Residences/The Months of the Year*

Design conceived by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), about 1665–by 1668

Cartoon for the vertical loom painted collaboratively by Beaudrin Yvart (French, 1611–1690), Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer (Flemish, 1636–1699), Pieter Boel (Flemish, 1622–1674), Guillaume Anguier (French, 1628–1708), Adam Frans van der Meulen (Flemish, 1632–1690), and others, by 1668

Paris, Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the vertical-loom workshop of Jean Jans the Younger (Flemish, about 1644–1723) or in the vertical-loom workshop of Jean Lefebvre (French, active until 1700), about 1668–76

Wool, silk, and gilt metal-wrapped thread

Presented through the generous support of Eric and Nancy Garen

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 108/12

Catalogue number 11b

EX.2015.6.15

In the wintry landscape of this tapestry's middle ground, Louis XIV leads a boar hunt. Behind is the Château of Monceaux, a favored retreat of Louis's grandfather, Henri IV (reigned 1589–1610). The hanging is one of twelve representing the months of the year, each with the corresponding sign of the zodiac, a French royal residence, and a court activity typical of that time or place. Le Brun conceived the iconographic program to visualize and aggrandize the persona of his royal patron. He drew inspiration from the symbol laden artistic tradition of calendrical cycles that portrayed the months of the year and their associated occupations coupled with depictions of key seats of dynastic power.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis





# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

29. **Château of Monceaux/Month of December**

From *The Royal Residences/Months of the Year*

Design conceived by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), about 1665–by 1668

Cartoon for the horizontal loom painted collaboratively by Joseph Yvart (French, 1649–1728), Abraham Genoels (Flemish, about 1640–1723), Adriaen-Frans Boudewyns (called Baudoïn; Flemish, 1644–1711), François Bonnemer (French, 1637–1689), Jean-Baptiste Martin (called Martin des Batailles); French, 1659–1735), and others, about 1668

Paris, Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the horizontal-loom workshop of Jean de La Croix (French, died 1714), before 1712

Wool and silk

The J. Paul Getty Museum

Catalogue number 11c

85.DD.309

This tapestry series showcased the magnificence of Louis XIV, the patrimony of the Bourbon dynasty, the diversity and quality of the Crown's menagerie and art collections, and the monarch's own pursuits. This narrow version of the composition, however, was woven for an unidentified private patron. It is in reverse orientation to the royal weaving (see *Château of Monceaux/Month of December*, EX.2015.6.15), and its border lacks the king's emblems. Specialized artists at the Gobelins collaborated on the cartoons for the series. For instance, the birds portrayed here, such as the great bustard, derive from life sketches by the animal painter Pieter Boel (1626–1674) (for example, see *Study of Purple Swamphens*, EX.2015.6.23).

### INSCRIPTION

Text in French in the central cartouche:

*Château / of / Monceaux*



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# WOVEN GOLD

## TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

### 30. **Autumn**

From *The Seasons*

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), with the collaboration of Adam Frans van der Meulen (Flemish, 1632–1690) for the hunt scene in the medallion, 1664

Border design by Issac Moillon (French, 1614–1673), 1664

Cartoon attributed to Beaudrin Yvart (French, 1611–1690), by 1667

Paris, Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the vertical-loom workshop of Jean Jans the Elder (Flemish, about 1618–1691), before 1669

Wool, silk, and gilt metal–wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 107/2

Catalogue number 9a

EX.2015.6.8

The lavish imagery of *Autumn* conveys an overflowing sense of abundance, plenty, and prosperity. Louis XIV is at the center, literally and metaphorically, as he is shown riding at hunt in the roundel upheld by Bacchus, god of wine, and Diana, goddess of the hunt. The verse below with the motto “Who gives better?” layers additional meaning onto the scene, for although the gods bestow their bounty on the king, he generously shares what he receives with the people he protects. The background depicts the New Château of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the king’s birthplace and his preferred country residence until the court’s official move to Versailles in 1682.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

The Latin verse in the central cartouche translates as:

*Diane regales us with delicious treats, Bacchus his good wine; Who gives better? These are yours, Great King, whose liberal hand spreads your glorious benefits.*

Surrounding the emblematic roundels in the border are Latin praises that translate as (clockwise from upper left):

*Guaranteed the internal crown, Quicker than the wings of thunder, [His magnanimity] increases enormously, Leads and excites the column [of troops]*

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



▶ 1370

### 31. **The Portiere of the Chariot of Triumph**

Design by Charles Le Brun (French, 1619–1690), about 1662–63

Cartoon attributed to Beaudrin Yvart (French, 1611–1690), about 1662–63

Paris, Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the horizontal-loom workshop of Jean de La Croix (French, died 1714), 1699–1703, or possibly in the horizontal-loom workshop of Jean de La Fraye (French, about 1655–1730), 1715–17

Wool and silk

The J. Paul Getty Museum

Catalogue number 8a

83.DD.20

Exemplifying the ancient tradition in which heraldic emblems proclaimed identity, this tapestry carries the coat of arms of the king of France and Navarre. The realm of Navarre (in the northern Pyrenees) was united with France since the Bourbon rule of Henri IV (king of Navarre 1572–1610 and king of France 1589–1610) until the dissolution of the French monarchy in 1792 and, afterward, during the Bourbon restoration 1814/15–30. Le Brun conceived this armorial hanging for Louis XIV, the grandson of Henri IV, as a portiere to be draped across an interior doorway in a royal residence. Its imagery represents good government and the severed snake, beneath the wheels of the chariot, a symbol of vice and rebellion.

#### INSCRIPTION

The Latin motto of Louis XIV (1638–1715), barely discernable in the ribbon entwined with the balance scales, translates as:

*Not unequal to many [tasks]*



▶ 553





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

32. **Winter, Cybele Begs for the Sun's Return**

From *The Gallery of Apollo at the Château of Saint-Cloud*

Design by Pierre Mignard (French, 1612–1695), 1677–78

Border design by Rodolphe Parent (French, died 1694), about 1686

Cartoon attributed to Pierre Bourguignon (French, about 1630–1698) and retouched by Pierre Mignard, before 1686

Paris, Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins, in the vertical-loom workshop of Jean Jans the Younger (Flemish, about 1644–1723), 1692–93

Wool, silk, and gilt metal–wrapped thread

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. GMTT 69/4

Catalogue number 12a

EX.2015.6.13

The Royal Furniture Manufactory of the Crown at the Gobelins occasionally replicated select artworks not originally intended as models for tapestry, as a means to preserve and disseminate the most esteemed paintings. One notable effort rendered scenes from the vaulted ceiling painted in 1677–78 by Mignard at the Château of Saint-Cloud into the woven medium. This was particularly fortuitous as the château was subsequently destroyed by fire in 1870. The hanging of *Winter*, executed under the supervision of Mignard himself, preserves the composition and its original color palette. Boreas, god of the north wind, blows snow and hail while the Pleiades pour drenching rain upon the Earth goddess Cybele.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis



▶ 1371

33. **Diptyque/I**

From *D'Eustache à Natacha*

Design and cartoon for the horizontal loom painted by Raymond Hains (French, 1926–2005), about 2000

Beauvais, National Manufactory at Beauvais, on the horizontal loom of Philippe Playe and Sylvie Schnell, 2001–4

Wool and linen

Le Mobilier National, Paris, inv. BV 465/1

EX.2015.6.16

Tapestry continues to be an expressive artistic medium. In this self-portrait of Raymond Hains, weavers at the present-day French manufactory in Beauvais rival, in wool and linen, the high-resolution of a computer screen, complete with tool bar above. Three windows are open: in one, photographer Hains captures his own reflection in the glass front of a shop; in another, the arm of Bacchus takes the crown of the mythical princess Ariadne; and in the third, tosses the crown into the heavens, to form a constellation of stars. Hains took inspiration from the painting of Bacchus and Ariadne (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) by artist Eustache Le Sueur (1616–1655), who produced tapestry designs for the Beauvais manufactory in the seventeenth century.

Image © Le Mobilier National. Photo by Lawrence Perquis

Image not available

▶ 1372





# WOVEN GOLD

TAPESTRIES *of* LOUIS XIV

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