



# *Tapestry Topics*

## *Feature Article*

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### **Woven Stories:**

#### **Tapestry and Text in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance**

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#### INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2002 I team-taught a course at Vassar College, in Poughkeepsie, New York with Nancy Willard, an English professor, author and poet, and specialist in medieval literature. The tapestries were from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and many of the texts, such as *Le Roman de la Rose* and *Gawain and the Green Knight* were drawn from around the same period. We also looked at film and drama, as well as poetry, both medieval and contemporary. The students—mainly juniors and seniors—were also asked to learn to weave simple tapestry samplers and to construct their own visual narratives. It was a complex and various course and it provoked a number of ideas, some of which I would like to present here.

Initially, the students expected to study tapestries as more or less woven illustrations. Illustration that is auxiliary to text clarifies or explains the text by means of decorative images or diagrams. Although there are some instances where tapestries do indeed function in this way, most tapestries from this period have a more complicated relationship with the text or texts that inspired them and require a more complex narrative decipherment. For our study, we found ourselves in need of both a framework

and terms to describe the relationships between tapestry and text. Out of this inquiry came two central concepts.

The first falls under the general heading of *narratology* and is a classification or taxonomy of tapestry and narrative. It is based on how the designer organized the iconographic program in the three dimensional format of tapestry. The second of these concepts is a consideration of what is technically referred to as *poetics*. How does the tapestry tell its story? How does the viewer actually decode the story? I will begin with the first concept, taxonomy.

## PART I

### TAXONOMY OF NARRATIVE

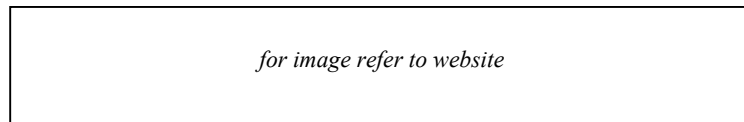
Scholarly writing about tapestry often organizes the material by period and provenance. As our main purpose was not to study the history of tapestry, but rather tapestry and text, we needed a different system of classification. The designers of the tapestries drew on many different literary sources: scripture, legend, myth, chronicle, romance, and drama. From these diverse texts they constructed visual narratives and iconographic representations. Narrative usually consists of characters and events aligned sequentially in time and space. Although there are exceptions, narrative is fundamentally a linear mode. So the question we asked was: How are characters, events, time and space represented in tapestry? This, we discovered, is done primarily in three different ways.

### THREE NARRATIVE STYLES

A/ Linear

B/ Non-Linear

C/ Iconographic



**Figure 1**

*Bayeux Embroidery*

**Scenes 57 and 58: Harold's death, William conquers England**

Figure 1 shows the last panels of the first narrative textile to have survived from this period. It was embroidered in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and can now be seen in the museum at *Bayeux*, France. It is over 70 yards long and about 20” high. In fifty-eight scenes it depicts the Norman invasion of England. It was probably designed by Odo, Bishop of *Bayeux* and half brother to William the Conqueror, who oversaw the manufacture of it in an Anglo Saxon workshop. It is a Norman version of the invasion of 1066, and as such can be considered to be Norman propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

There is a simple commentary explaining the images which appears to have been added as an afterthought and there is often not enough space for the letters. The *Bayeux Embroidery*, however, is not based on any extant text. In fact, it is in the unique position of being considered as primary material, or in other words, it is regarded by historians as a text itself, replete with subtexts in the upper and lower borders.

As such this textile, though not a tapestry, is an interesting example of the relationship between textile and text. It is clearly linear and sequential as one event logically succeeds the preceding one and it reads like a text, from left to right. It serves here as an introduction to the complex relationships between text and textile in the Middle Ages.

The first major tapestry narrative cycle is the *Angers Apocalypse* now in the *Chateau d'Angers*. Woven from 1360 to 1380, it is eighty-four framed scenes divided into six sections representing selected verses from *Revelations* in the New Testament. Originally it measured around 300 meters long and four and a half meters high and there were woven inscriptions of which only vestiges remain. These may have been either direct quotations from the text or supplementary descriptions of the actions and characters portrayed.

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, (Munich, New York, 1994), Prestel, pp. 79-80.

*for image refer to website*

**Figure 2**  
*Apocalypse d'Angers*  
**Section 1**

Figure 2 shows the first scenes from the *Apocalypse*. The first image on the left is from Chapter 1, verse 4, which says: *John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before the throne.*

In the first upper panel in figure 2 Saint John is to the left of the seven churches. The seven angels on the churches are not mentioned in the text, but perhaps they represent the spirits.

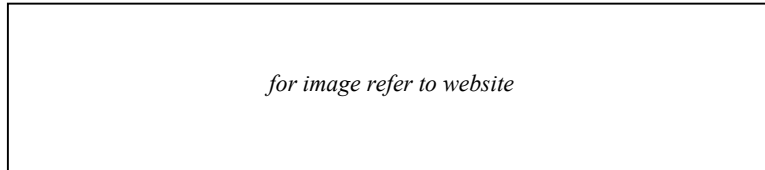
The next scene is the vision of the Son of Man and carefully represents the details enumerated in the text: the seven stars in the hand of God, the two edged sword, the candlesticks, etc. However, occasionally the text was too dense for the designers or perhaps the weavers. In panel 38, for example, which represents Chapter 9, verse 3: *and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads*, there are indeed seven heads and ten horns but no crowns.

In spite of these lapses the tapestries stay very close to the biblical text which is clearly legible. You can see, as in the case of the *Bayeux Embroidery*, the narrative is linear (one event follows the next). Here the format is a scroll, read from left to right. The apocalyptic events unfold sequentially and chronologically albeit in eschatological time. This set comes perhaps the closest of all to functioning as an illustration of what would have been a very familiar text in the Middle Ages.

Other tapestries that employ this linear format include the fifteenth century Swiss German tapestries which depict myth, scripture, and legend in a narrow scroll-like

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format. Many depict mythic wild people and fabulous beasts such as the wild folk working the land in Figure 3, from the collection of the *Oesterreiche* Museum in Vienna. Here again the events, although fabulous and mythic, are depicted sequentially and as such are legible to the viewer.



**Figure 3**  
*Wildleute Verrichten die Arbeit der Bauern*  
1460 100 cm X 603 cm

#### *B/ Non-Linear*

The second group in our taxonomy is non-linear narrative. Here, in contrast to the preceding examples, instead of logical presentation of scenes the characters and events exist in a sort of time/space implosion with everything seeming to happen simultaneously.

#### TROJAN WAR

The main example I have chosen to represent this group is one of the eleven panels from *Scenes from the Trojan War* woven around 1465. This tapestry (figure 4, *The Death of Achilles*) is one panel from a set in the collection of the Cathedral Museum in Zamora, Spain and was exhibited in the tapestry exhibition, *Art and Magnificence*, at the Metropolitan Museum in 2002. I have used Thomas Campbell's catalogue entry for my reading of the tapestry<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance, Art and Magnificence* (New York, 2002) The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 60-64.

*for image refer to website*

**Figure 4**  
***TheStory of the Trojan War***  
***The Death of Troilus, Achilles, and Paris***

The set represents a medieval revision of classical history. The designers of the tapestries drew largely from two texts for their iconography: Benoit de Maure's *Roman de Troie* and Guido de Colonne's Latin *Historia*. There are woven French verses above and Latin below. However, these are not direct quotations from the medieval texts but original descriptive verse instead.

In upper and lower registers the tapestry is divided into five main and six secondary scenes. Some characters are identified by woven titles and make multiple appearances. In the upper left corner Achilles is about to decapitate Troilus. Directly below, Telamon rescues Agamemnon from Philimenes. And below that, Antilochus uses his lance to unseat Brunnus de Gemelles.

In the lower left corner, Troilus's headless corpse is being tied to the tail of Achilles's horse. King Merion attacks Achilles to stop him from further humiliating Troilus. And in front of Achilles' horse a Greek soldier is killing a Trojan wearing a turban. Above King Merion is the battle between Menelaus and Paris in which Agamemnon is attacked by Philimenes.

In the center is a temple to Apollo. Achilles is being killed by arrows from Paris's bow – one in his forehead, one in his chest, and one in the proverbial heel. The inscriptions tell that Achilles has been lured to the temple by Hecuba who wishes to avenge the death of her son Troilus. There are no images of this. The battle wages on in the last third of the tapestry with Ajax killing Paris and being killed himself along with many others.

This tapestry can be read, as we have, from upper left to lower left, half way up again, then, down to the central action in the temple, up to the right, and down again. Read this way the action moves from top to bottom and left to right. Another possible reading would begin with the central action, then left, where events precede the death of Achilles, and finally right, where events occur after his death. Either way the viewer of these images is not really helped by the narrative structure in sorting out what is supposed to be happening when. Instead, events happen here and there all at once, in a fashion that is more filmic than strictly textual.

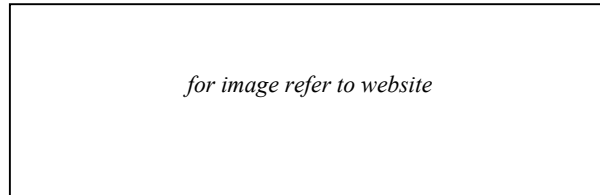
The final group of examples in our taxonomy of narrative departs from linear and non-linear narrative and includes emblematic or allegorical tapestries which I call *iconographic*

### *C/ Iconographic*

Iconographic tapestries differ from the first two classifications in two ways: first, they are not always based on a particular text or texts; and second, they are not strictly narratives. Rather, the characters in these tapestries are iconic; that is, they are presented as central images apart from a sequential flow of time. They do not represent chronological cause and effect, or action and reaction. Their purpose was to demonstrate the wealth and power of the person who commissioned them as well as to symbolically represent philosophical maxims or moral precepts to the nobility. They derive their emblematic authority from association with the legends and *romans* of courtly literature. Hence we can adduce stories from these images based on their tangential relationship to narrative.

A clear example of iconographic tapestry is the well-known set from the Cluny Museum, *The Ladies and the Unicorns*. Fabienne Joubert and A. Erlande-Brandenberg agree these tapestries are emblematic of the five senses, with the sixth panel representing

renunciation in favor of a spiritual world.<sup>3</sup> Figure 5 represents Taste with the courtly lady selecting a sweet from the tray held by her handmaiden. And figure 6, *A Mon Seul Désir* shows the noble lady taking off her jewels, or putting aside the pleasures of the world.



**Figures 5 & 6**

***The Lady with the Unicorn***

**Left: *Taste* Right: *A Mon Seul Desir***

This set of *millefleurs*, probably woven around 1500, is not based on a known text. Instead there is a generic link to the romance literature of the court. For example, here is a quotation from the allegorical *Roman de la Rose* from the same period which is clearly evocative of just such a scene as depicted in these tapestries. It is a description of the Garden of Love.

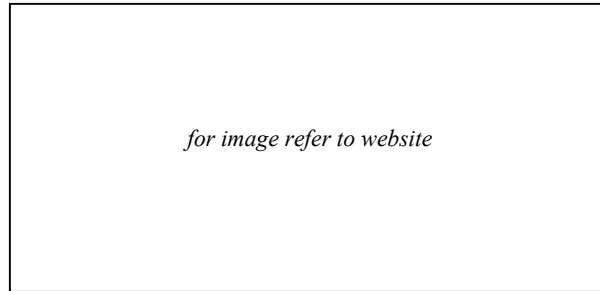
*There were rabbits coming out of their burrow and playing. ... In winter and summer there was always an abundance of flowers as far as I could see. There were ....white and red flowers and wonderful yellow ones.*

There are many other examples of iconographic tapestry. One is the Metropolitan Museums set called the *Five Worthies with Attendant Figure*, also known as the *Heroes*, which hangs in New York at the Cloisters. Here the characters are emblematic of heroism. The narrative content is concentrated in one central symbolic figure surrounded by supportive smaller figures. In this example (figure 7) the central figure is King Hector, seen with courtiers above and warriors on each side who provide a sub-text

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<sup>3</sup> Fabienne Joubert, *La Tapisserie médiévale au Musée de Cluny*, (Paris 1988) pp. 66-84.

informing the viewer that this is a Pagan hero. The figure of Hector, of course, derives its emblematic authority from association with the legends of Troy.



**Figure 7**  
***Five Worthies with Attendant Figures***  
***Hector of Troy 13'9" X 8'8"***  
**Woven around 1400-1410**

## CONCLUSION I

In our study of the way texts were represented in medieval and early Renaissance tapestry I devised a system of classification that provides a means for organizing a plethora of material into a system—or taxonomy—based on the three different formats, either: a linear narrative, a non-linear narrative, or an iconographic representation.

The second section of this study centers on the second question, the poetics, or how does the tapestry tell its story and how does the viewer decode it.

## PART II

### THE POETICS OF TEXT IN TAPESTRY

As I mentioned in the introduction, many of our students initially expected to study tapestry as simply an exotic, large scale illustration of medieval texts. However, they discovered that the relationship was not that simple. I have chosen to create a system of poetics to describe this relationship as a “reverse *ekphrasis*,” or in other words, a visual narrative that invites decoding.

*Ekphrasis* is a Greek term for a particular exercise in verbal rhetoric described by Hermogenes of Tarsus in the second century as:

*An account with detail: the style must contrive to bring about seeing through hearing.*

This term was subsequently picked up by modern art historians and literary critics and can now be defined as “a verbal description of a work of art.” There are two varieties of normative *ekphrasis*: literal or actual *ekphrasis* and notional or imaginative *ekphrasis*. Literal *ekphrasis* denotes a description of an existing work of art, while notional *ekphrasis* is a description of a purely fictional (or lost) work of art. A well known example of notional *ekphrasis* is the description of Achilles’ shield in the *Iliad*, which is an elaborate account of an imaginary object. Another famous notional *ekphrasis* is the description of the tapestries woven in the competition between Pallas Athena and Arachne (who, of course, loses and is turned into a spider) in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. But whether the art is actual or imaginary, the *ekphrasis* is a written description intended to evoke a specific work of art.

Tapestries have often been the subject of *ekphrases*. A recent example, cited in John Hollander’s book, *The Gazer’s Spirit*,<sup>4</sup> is an *ekphrastic* poem by the American poet Marianne Moore, written about a late fifteenth century iconographic tapestry in the Burrell collection in Glasgow and entitled *Charity Overcoming Envy*.

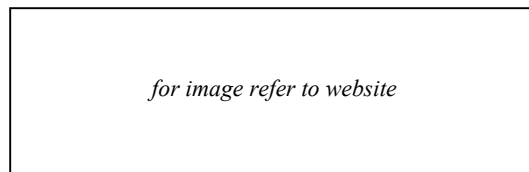


Figure 8

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<sup>4</sup> John Hollander, *The Gazer’s Spirit*, (Chicago, 1995), University of Chicago Press.

Here is the first stanza of the poem:

Have you time for a story  
(depicted in a tapestry?)  
Charity riding on an elephant,  
on a “mosaic of flowers,” faces Envy,  
the flowers bunched together not rooted.  
Envy, on a dog, is worn down by obsession,  
His greed (since of things owned by others  
He can only take *some*).<sup>5</sup>

A story is first “depicted in a tapestry”, then deciphered into an ekphrastic poem. When performed, the poem—the *ekphrasis*—can be said to evoke seeing through the medium of hearing. Obversely, the tapestry, in its turn, evokes a poetic voice through its visual images—that is, hearing is brought about through seeing. In other words the tapestry, in relationship to the text upon which it is based, functions as the reverse of a normative *ekphrasis*. If *ekphrasis* is a verbal or textual description of a real or imagined work of art, then the reverse of this is a work of art, such as a tapestry, that functions as a visual description of text.

According to the Burrell catalogue, the tapestry, *Charity Overcoming Envy*, is based on the *Psychomachia* by the Roman writer Prudentius. I suggest however that we look at it as a reverse *ekphrasis* of the text inscribed in the tapestry. The inscription reads (in Hollander’s translation): “The envious soul’s sorrow is at the prosperity of its neighbor; it rejoices at the evil befalling him, like the dog. But the elephant doesn’t know this. And charity smashes evil.”

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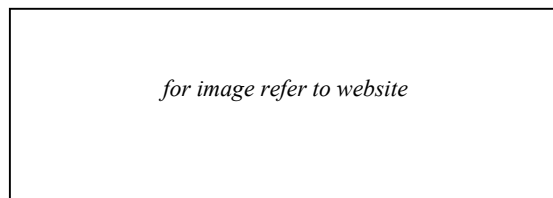
<sup>5</sup> Hollander, pp. 297-301.

What is the viewer to make of this? As Hollander goes on to ask, “Who is this Charity? She is not accompanied by the usual iconographically familiar sign (a flame or a candle) nor is she involved in any of her usual occupations of attending those in need. Instead, she is riding on a ‘triumphal elephant’ and is about to cut off the right hand of her helpless adversary.”

Thus, we might say, the inscription is problematic in relationship to the tapestry, and requires a cognitive effort on our part. The modern viewer must sort out the relationship between text and tapestry. Marianne Moore regards the tapestry and goes on to create a new parable. As her poem develops she gives Envy a voice with which to beg pity of Charity. Moore ends with an ironic deliverance that pays tribute (in a metaphoric reference to weaving) to the timeless quality of the iconography when she declares: “the Gordian knot need not be cut”; the action, iconographically suspended in time, need never be completed. Envy is condemned to beg for pity in perpetuity.

As Marianne Moore’s poem is an *ekphrasis* of the tapestry, I call this tapestry a reverse *ekphrasis* of the text, a visual iconographic description (albeit an enigmatic one) of a written text.

Another example of a literal (or actual) reverse *ekphrasis* is a linear narrative tapestry the 23 episodes of the woven *vita* of St. Stephen, now hanging in the Cluny Museum in Paris, but originally woven for the Cathedral of Auxerre around 1500 a section of which can be seen in figure10, *The Capture, Stoning and Vigil of St. Stephen*.



**Figure 9**  
*The Legend of St. Stephen*  
Scenes 6, 7, 8

Because this tapestry is based on actual texts, I call it a “literal reverse *ekphrasis*.” The texts are: Jacob de Voragine’s *Golden Legend* (1260) and *Letters of Lucien and Anstase* from the fifth century<sup>6</sup>. St. Stephen is the proto-martyr or the first Christian martyr. The earlier panels of the set show Stephen consecrated to the church by his parents; chosen by the Apostles to be one of the first seven deacons of Christ’s Church; having a vision of Christ and a subsequent dispute with the Jewish elders; in the panels in the figure we see him being captured, taken outside the city, stoned to death and finally the vigil.

How does this tapestry function in relationship to the original texts? *The Golden Legend*, chapter 8, reads: “...with one accord [the Jews] ran violently upon him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him.” The text goes on to describe how the false witnesses (the stoners) laid their garments at the feet of the young Saul.

The woven inscriptions read: “How the Jews pushed forcefully and violently Monsieur St. Stephen outside of the city.” And in the next panel: “How the stoners threw their clothes at the feet of the adolescent named Abtha (Saul), later called Saint Paul and threw stones at St. Stephen who commends his spirit to God on his knees praying to God for the ones who stone him” (my translation).

Although the images follow the general outline of the story, they are obviously not a literal representation of it. For example, although we are told in the inscription that the stoners throw their garments at Saul, it is not shown. And Saul is hardly a young adolescent here.

There are similar discrepancies in the next panel which depicts a scene from the letters of Lucian that describes the vigil. The woven inscription reads: “How the body of St. Stephen is left in the place of his martyrdom and exposed to beasts and by divine power

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<sup>6</sup> Laura Weigert and Micheline Durand, *Histoire de Saint Etienne. La tenture de la cathedrale d’Auxerre*, (Auxerre, 2000), Musées d’Art et d’Histoire d’Auxerre.

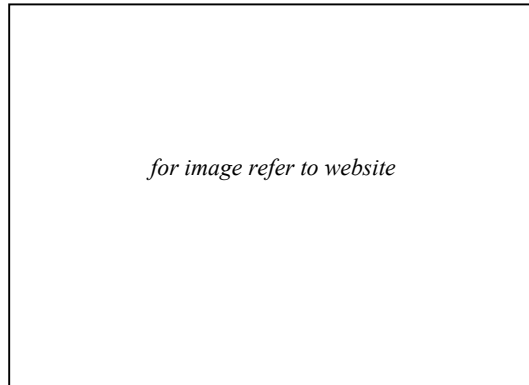
preserved.” However, a rather charming array of beasts hold the vigil, with Christ symbolically present as a unicorn.

The remaining scenes represent how the relics travel miraculously and dramatically from Jerusalem to Constantinople and finally to Rome. Although it is not depicted in the tapestry, the relics from Rome were said to have been taken to the cathedral of Auxerre in the Middle Ages.

So far we have been looking at the tapestries without reference to their possible reception at the time they were made, or in other words decontextualized. Recent scholarly research on choir tapestries has thrown new light on the way tapestries such as Stephen’s *vita* were used in their original context. This adds yet another element to their relationship to the texts that inspired them.

Laura Weigert, from Reed College, delivered a paper on the relationship of these tapestries to medieval drama at the Metropolitan Symposium in March, 2002 where she talked about the impact that social context would have had on the reception of visual narrative in choir tapestries. The tapestries, woven to hang in the choir of the cathedral, would have been seen by the clergy in the choir of the cathedral on the Saint’s feast days. And, in Auxerre, they would have been shown in conjunction with a display of the actual relics of the saint.

Weigert pointed out that there are scenes in the tapestry, not drawn from either text, which refer directly to the activities of the feast days. Also, facial expressions and gestures that are included in the tapestry would have replicated those used during the actual performance of the liturgy. This context, she argues, would have added another powerful dimension to the visual narrative, lifting it out of the tapestry to resonate in the present moment for the viewers. The Saint’s relics in Auxerre would have acted as an actual sequel to the events depicted in the tapestry and the tapestries, in turn, would have evoked a liturgical voice to complete the ekphrastic cycle. These tapestries would have been not just objects but rather an event for the viewer.



**Figure 10**

***The Hunt of the Unicorn***

My next example is not based on any specific texts but instead on a fictional work of art and is therefore notional (a notional *ekphrasis* being a description of a fictional work of art). The Metropolitan Museum's *Hunt of the Unicorn*, now hanging in New York at the Cloisters, presents us with special problem because, unlike the previous tapestries, they are not all from the same set. However they are exhibited as one set and read something like this: the hunt begins, the Unicorn is sighted at a fountain, the Unicorn tries to flee, the Unicorn fights back, a virgin is brought in to subdue the Unicorn after which he is killed and brought to the Lord and Lady of a castle. In the final panel he is resurrected.

Scholars remain at odds about whether the four central narrative panels (which are a set) represent a classical stag hunt, with the Unicorn as Love and the Hunter as Lover or the Mystical Hunt of the Passion with the Unicorn as Christ<sup>7</sup>. Iconographic interpretation is not my primary concern here.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the question remains: what is the relationship to text?

In spite of the interpretative problems, I see this set as an example of the compelling relationship between narrative and tapestry in this period. The way the tapestries are

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<sup>7</sup> Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, (New York, 1998), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 47-75.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, pp 70-78.

exhibited (in their modern context) invites us to decode them as a single narrative, even if such a narrative has little bearing on the original intent. In fact, in doing so, we have invented an ekphrastic story which functions in a manner similar to Homer's notional *ekphrasis* of Achilles' shield, but in reverse. The tapestries function (however we interpret them) as a visual description of an imaginary text.

So far we have looked at tapestries based on actual and imagined texts. There is one remaining group of tapestries to include in this system of poetics: and these are tapestries based on multiple texts.

An example of this group is from the nine tapestry set *Los Honores* woven around 1525. These tapestries now hang in the Patrimonio Nacional in San Idelfonso and were designed by Bernart van Orley assisted by humanist rhetoricians drawing on multiple literary sources including St. Augustine, Boethius, Plato, Ovid, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Dante, Christine of Pisan, Alain de Lille, Vincent of Beauvais, Valerius Maximus and many others. In fact, in this panel no less than thirty-one named authors are portrayed in the balconies of Fame's gallery.

This set represents an allegorical program of good behavior for a monarch (probably for the young Hapsburg Emperor Charles V). The tapestries were shown on state occasions such as the *Entrées Joyeuses* (when royalty visited or passed through a town) or royal marriages. Guy Del Marcel, in his book on the set,<sup>9</sup> discusses the relationship of these tapestries to medieval pageantry. He points out that the word pageant actually means a movable cart that carried groups of emblematic figures arranged in a *tableaux vivant*. The same artists that designed the *tableaux* also designed tapestries and the tapestries indeed resemble a collage of *tableaux*.

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<sup>9</sup> Guy delMarcel, *Los Honores*, Flemish Tapestries for the Emperor Charles V, (Belgium, 2000) Pandora/Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoom, pp. 18-21.



**Figure 11**

***Fama***

The sixth panel in the series (figure 11) represents the triumph of Fame. There are both French and Latin inscriptions. Many of the figures are named. The composition is divided into upper and lower registers presenting the viewer with multiple examples of the famous drawn from medieval mythology. Center top is *Fama*, blowing two trumpets, and riding on a triumphal elephant. She is seen in the center of the gallery of writers, not all of whom represent literary sources in the tapestry, although many do, including Petrarch, the author of the *I Trionfi* sonnets. On the upper left side of the tapestry is Pegasus and in the upper right is the hag *Mala Fama* of which the only two examples in the tapestry are Catiline and Mohammed. All the other figures surrounding the gallery are justly famous. The iconography here is primarily from Petrarch, Boccaccio, the Moralised Ovid, and Valerius Maximus although many others are quoted. These tapestries are in fact a vast collage of literary allusion.

How does this type of tapestry function in relationship to the text? Although it is a visual description of actual texts, it does not seem to me to be reverse actual *ekphrasis* in the same manner as, for instance, the Life of Stephen. The relationship is far more complex. Neither does it appear to function as a visual description of an imagined text, although it could be argued that it visually describes a non-existent allegorical text representing philosophical maxims. I call this third variety of reverse *ekphrasis* collagic. It is a visual description of a collage of texts represented, in turn, by a collage of dramatic tableaux constituting an intricate sub-text to a central idea; in this case, that the vicissitudes of fortune can be held in abeyance by good behavior.

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## CONCLUSION

My conclusion is more of a commencement than an ending. First a brief summary. My colleague and I found ourselves in need of a new way of organizing material in our course on early tapestry and text, so I created a taxonomy of narrative in tapestry based on how narrative texts were represented as three dimensional objects. I proposed three distinct styles: linear, non-linear and iconographic.

We also felt the need for a term that would describe the way tapestries functioned in relationship to text, and selected “reverse *ekphrasis*.” The tapestries functioned not as auxiliary illustrations but often as complex visual narratives, based on both actual and imaginary texts, requiring decoding. And just as there was a cognitive or interpretative element in a written *ekphrasis*, (for example, a poem about a tapestry) so was there a new or additional cognitive element in the deciphering of visual narratives in the tapestries. Finally I devised a third variety of *ekphrasis*, the “collagic,” to describe more accurately the relationship of tapestry to an assemblage of multiple texts.

One further conclusion: it seems to me that tapestry from this period, particularly the non-linear collagic tapestries, created a unique visual event that virtually reinvented the meaning of the word tapestry. The original definition of tapestry is, of course, a specific woven structure, weft faced plain weave with a discontinuous weft. But in fact the dictionary program in my MacIntosh computer defines tapestry as: “Something considered to be rich, varied and with many themes intricately interwoven.”

The technique of tapestry has in some fashion metamorphosed into a linguistic concept, no longer confined to the description of a woven structure. Rather it has expanded to include a new trope, or metaphor, for which there is no other word than tapestry itself.

Photograph Acknowledgements  
Scans from:

- Figure 1, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux*, Edition Ville de Bayeux, pp. 57 & 58.  
Figure 2, *La Tenture de l'Apocalypse d'Angers*, (Nantes, 1987), Cahiers d'Inventaire 4, pp. 90-91.  
Figure 3, *Zahm und Wild*, (Mainz, 1990), Philipp von Zabern, pp. 150-151.  
Figure 4, *Tapestry in the Renaissance, Art and Magnificence* (New York, 2002), MMA, pp.56-57.  
Figures 5 & 6, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, (New York, 1998), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 96 & 99.  
Figure 7, *Medieval Tapestries*, New York, 1994), MMA, p.,106  
Figure 8, *The Gazer's Spirit*, (Chicago, 1995), University of Chicago Pressp. 298.  
Figure 9, *La Légende de saint Etienne*, Editions RMG, Palais de Papes, pp 4-5.  
Figure 10, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, (New York, 1998), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 33, 52, 58, 59, 64, 70, 44, & 39.  
Figure 11, *Tapestry in the Renaissance, Art and Magnificence* (New York, 2002), MMA, p. 178.

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