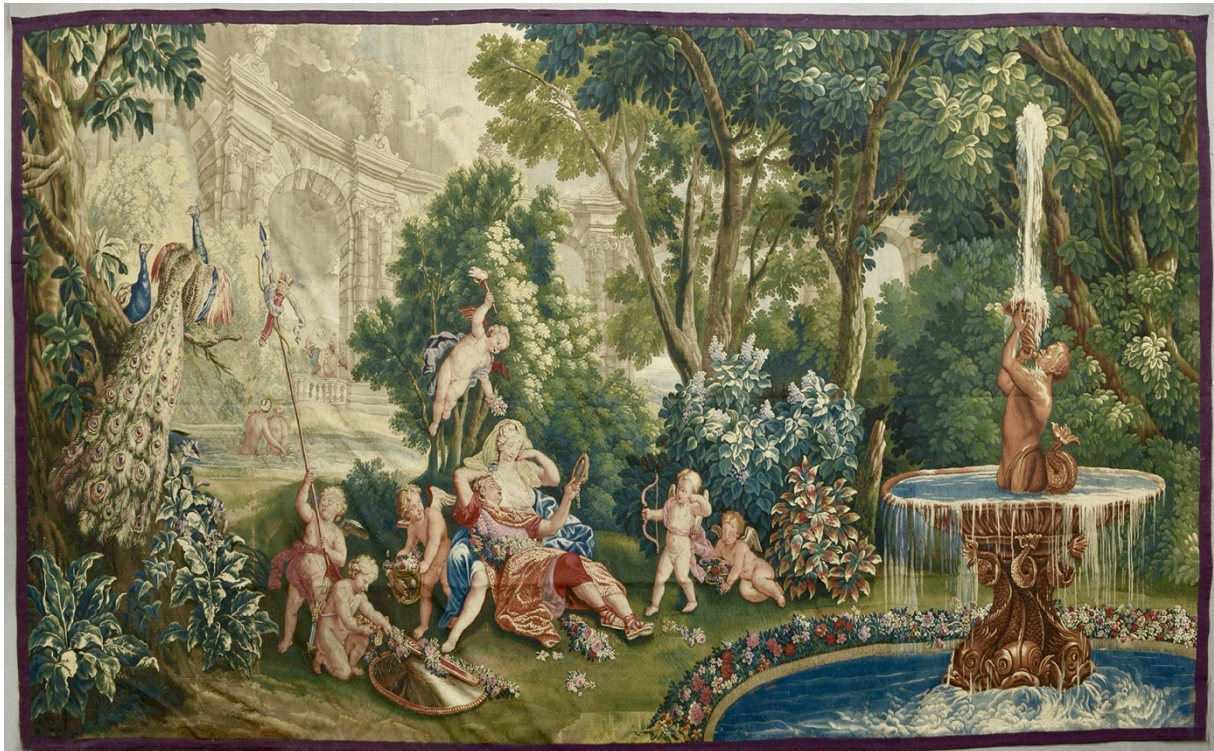


## Renaud and Armide

Tapestry from the Gobelins' Metamorphoses series  
Has the piece woven for the King been identified?



During the Ancien Régime, tapestries played a crucial role in decorating the interiors of aristocratic and royal residences. They were appreciated for their ability to beautify walls while offering thermal and acoustic insulation. Tapestries depicted mythological, historical, or pastoral scenes, reflecting the tastes and values of the era. One tapestry series, *The Metamorphoses*, was highly successful commercially and was woven several times at the Gobelins Manufactory before falling out of fashion. One weaving was made for the King in the 18th century, a piece later purchased by Madame de Pompadour, and it had been missing since the Duchess's death. It is likely that the panel representing *Renaud and Armide* being auctioned in Saint-Cloud on Sunday, October 13th, originates from this royal weaving.

## The Gobelins Manufactory

The Gobelins Manufactory was founded in Paris's 13th arrondissement by Henry IV to curb the high costs of importing Flemish tapestries. Colbert transformed it into the Royal Manufactory in 1663, providing the resources for high-quality production to glorify the monarchy.

## The Metamorphoses series

A *tenture* is a set of tapestries depicting a common theme and designed as a cohesive whole.

The *Metamorphoses* series draws its inspiration from the poem *Metamorphoses*, written by the Roman poet Ovid in the first century. The poem gathers several transformation tales from Greek and Latin mythology. Each tapestry in the series illustrates a different story, such as Narcissus and the Nymph Echo, Apollo and the Python serpent, etc.

The *Metamorphoses* series was woven several times at the Gobelins Manufactory, first in the 17th century and then in the 18th century with new models. Although the tapestries' themes remained drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the designs were updated, inspired by paintings from fashionable artists of the early 18th century.

Under the Ancien Régime, the Gobelins was the royal manufactory, but not all production was destined for the court. In addition to official production, workshop heads were authorized to take on private commissions. This was common for the *Metamorphoses* series, which enjoyed considerable success. While official production is well-documented (including workshop, date, and dimensions), private production was not cataloged, and we cannot claim an exhaustive understanding of it today.

## Renaud and Armide

### The theme

The *Renaud and Armide* tapestry is one of the subjects included in the *Metamorphoses* series both in the 17th and 18th centuries, even though the story is not actually derived

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from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It stands as an exception within the series.

Renaud and Armide are characters from the epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered*, written by the Italian poet Tasso in the 16th century. The story takes place during the First Crusade, which aimed to restore free passage to Jerusalem for Westerners, a right that had been revoked by the Seljuk Turks. Renaud is a Christian crusader who falls in love with Armide, a sorceress who initially seeks to sow discord among Christians before converting to the true faith.

The story of *Renaud and Armide* shares elements with *The Metamorphoses*, particularly in its use of surprise and the supernatural, which likely explains its inclusion in the series.

## Analysis of the depicted scene

In the center of the scene, a couple is set in a garden with a dolphin-adorned fountain. Renaud is reclining on Armide. The knight appears effeminate, quite unlike a crusader, indulging in sensual pleasures with Armide while holding a mirror. Around the couple, cupids are playing: one shoots an arrow, another holds a flaming torch. Renaud's shield and sword lie on the ground, draped with a flower garland. In the background, two nymphs are bathing in a pool, while two armored soldiers are visible in the distance through an architectural arcade, foreshadowing Renaud's return to duty.

## The model painted by Louis de Boullogne

A painting by the French artist Louis de Boullogne, who studied in Rome after winning the Grand Prix de Peinture in 1676, served as the model for the *Renaud and Armide* tapestry in the 18th century.





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A version of this painting is well-known, having been auctioned multiple times, most recently at Christie's on December 4, 2014. The painting is signed and dated 1704 by the artist. The perfect similarity between the painting and the tapestry suggests that this painting served as the tapestry's model.

## The Cartoons

Louis de Boullogne's painting measures 92.5 cm x 126 cm, which does not correspond to the dimensions of a tapestry, which is larger. Painters would then create a cartoon, that is, a pattern at the dimensions of the tapestry, which could be faithfully copied.

Regarding our Renaud and Armide panel, the *Comptes des Bâtiments* (Building Accounts), cited by Mr. Fenaille, mention a payment in 1705 to Jean-Baptiste de Fontenay for his work on Arnaud, Armide, and Diane. In 1715, when the only weaving for the King began, the models were too worn, and Yvart provided a new model for Renaud and Armide.

Mr. Fenaille also cites the *Inventaire des tableaux et dessins à la garde du Sr Chastelain* (Inventory of Paintings and Drawings in the Care of Sr. Chastelain), which lists the following models:

- **First Metamorphoses:** The painting of Arnaud and Armide, after M. Boulogne the Younger, measuring 18 feet long by 8 feet high, with the figures painted by Yvart the Son, the landscape by Sr. Chastelain, and the flowers by Sieur Fontenay.

- **Second Copy of the Metamorphoses:**

- A copy of Arnaud and Armide, measuring 15 feet 3 inches long by 8 feet high, with the landscape painted by M. de Chavanne and the figures by Yvart the Son.
- A strip for the Arnaud and Armide piece to enlarge it, painted by the same artist.
- Several border pieces intended for the Metamorphoses:
  - Two corners on the same piece measuring 2 feet 11 inches by 1 foot 10 inches
  - Another corner measuring 1 foot 11 inches by 1 foot 8 inches
  - Another corner measuring 1 foot 11 inches by 1 foot 8 inches
  - Two pieces of continuous border measuring 4 feet 4 inches long by 1 foot wide, painted by M. Audran

The main difference between the painting and the cartoon is related to the longer dimensions of the tapestry compared to the painting. Thus, the fountain, truncated in the painting, was completed on the left side of the composition, and a group of trees with two peacocks was added to the right. The two soldiers, barely visible in the grove on the left side of Louis de Boullogne's painting, do not appear in the tapestries. Instead, they are depicted smaller, under the arches of the architecture.



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## The tapestry woven for the King

The *Metamorphoses* series was woven once for the King in the 18th century at the Gobelins Manufactory between 1714 and 1720. The Gobelins' archives provide detailed information about this weaving. We learn that the series included the following seven pieces:

- Apollo and the Python Serpent
- Apollo and Hyacinth
- Renaud and Armide
- Diana's Return from the Hunt
- Narcissus
- Mercury and Argus
- Zephyr and Flora

The *Renaud and Armide* panel was woven in Jean Souet's low-warp workshop between 1717 and April 1720.

The dimensions of each panel are known, as well as the price paid.

HAUTEUR.	SUJETS.	COMMENCÉE.	TERMINÉE.	ATELIERS.	COURS.	AUNES CARRÉES.	PRIX.	SOMMES.
2 a. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$	Le Serpent Python...	1714.	Avril 1715.	De la Fraye.	3 a. 11	10 a. 9 b.	160 <sup>#</sup>	1,696 <sup>#</sup> 5
"	Apollon et Hyacinthe..	1717.	1717.	Souet.	1 a. 15	5 a. 8 b.	140 <sup>#</sup>	764 <sup>#</sup> 7.6
"	Renaud et Armide. . .	1717.	Avril 1720.	Idem.	4 a. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ a.	140 <sup>#</sup> 170 <sup>#</sup>	2,089 <sup>#</sup> 8.1
"	Argus. . . . .	1717.	1718.	De la Fraye.	3 a. 5 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	9 a. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ b.	140 <sup>#</sup>	1,345 <sup>#</sup> 17.2
"	Diane. . . . .	1717.	1719.	Idem.	4 a. 8	12 a. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ b. 4	140 <sup>#</sup>	1,804 <sup>#</sup> 8.9
"	Narcisse. . . . .	1717.	1718.	Le Blond.	2 a. 1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 a. 0 b. 5	140 <sup>#</sup>	842 <sup>#</sup> 14.8
"	Zéphire et Flore. . . .	1717.	Janvier 1720.	Idem.	3 a.	8 a. 10 b.	140 <sup>#</sup> 170 <sup>#</sup>	1,235 <sup>#</sup> 12.6
TOTAUX. . . . .					23 a. 7 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	67 a. 7 b. 9	.....	9,778 <sup>#</sup> 13.8

The tapestry was still in the royal collection in 1736 and was lent to M. de Tournehem, the Director of Royal Buildings, in 1747. It was listed in the Gobelins inventory in 1755 and 1760. In 1760, Madame de Pompadour acquired it, likely to furnish her Château de Ménars.

Reçu de Madame la Marquise de Pompadour, le 11 juin 1761, pour prix d'une tenture de basse lisse en 7 pièces, représentant divers sujets des *Métamorphoses*, au profit du Roi, la somme de. . . . . 8,829<sup>#</sup> 5.11

Upon the death of Madame de Pompadour in 1764, her belongings were divided between her brother, the Marquis de Marigny, and her nephew, Poisson de Malvoisin. It was the Marquis de Marigny who inherited the Château de Ménars. Upon the Marquis' death in 1781, only four tapestries remained in his château, whose furniture would be dispersed during the Revolution.

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Perfect match between our panel and the one woven for the King

## The known panels

Below is the corpus of known Renaud and Armide panels, with their dimensions and all the characteristics that allow them to be distinguished from one another.

The copies A to F were referenced by Maurice Fenaille in 1904, and the copies H to L by Edith A. Standen in 1988. We have completed this list with the copy M, which was auctioned at Drouot in 2023, and the copy N, which will be presented for sale at Saint-Cloud on Sunday, October 13. To date, we have not been able to gather any information on copy K. It is possible that it is a duplicate of a previously listed tapestry. All other copies are well differentiated by their dimensions, the orientation of their composition, their proportions, or their ownership history.

Thirteen copies of *Renaud and Armide* after the painting by Jean de Bollogne have thus been recorded, of which one may be a duplicate of another.

Ref M. Fenaille P 131	Width (cm)	Height (cm)	Proportions: Width/Height	Marque	Orientation of the composition in relation to Louis de Boullogne's painting	Group (according to the drawing of the water from the fountain / fire pots)	Border	Remarks	Photo	Sale catalo g	Location	Source	Dimensions of the borders to reach the dimensions of the royal weaving	
A 1	500	235	2,13		Same	A	None		Yes		Collection of the King of Spain, at the Château d'Epainay (Seine) in 1902.	Maurice Fenaille 1904	30	47
B 10	590	300	1,97	JANS	Same		Frame with ornamental leaves on the inside, with molding composed of a double interlacing with ornamental leaves in the center, and fitted brackets on the outside.	Mark "JANS" on the lower right edge.	No		Collection of Mr. Bourdariat in 1900.	Maurice Fenaille 1904	-15	14,5
C 17	540	327	1,65		Same		Border with interlacing, yellow and red tones, with shells in the corners.		No		Collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild.	Maurice Fenaille 1904	10	1
D 20	465	305	1,52		Same	B	Border simulating a gilded frame and composed of alternating acanthus leaves and interlacing patterns on a blue background.		Out (catalog and Standen)	Yes	Sale of May 7, 1897, Hôtel Drouot, n°118: collection of Comte H. de C. Galerie Chevalier, Paris, en 1986	Maurice Fenaille 1904 Edith A Standen 1988	47,5	12
E 23	565	415	1,36		Same			Required the use of the additional cartoon strip due to its height > after 1717?	No	Yes	Sale of tapestries from the Château de Fonbeauzard (Haute-Garonne) on April 20, 1963	Maurice Fenaille 1904	-2,5	-43
F 27	480	350	1,37		Reversed		Border with yellow and red interlacing, with palmettes in the corners, similar to the border of tapestry B.		No		Collection of Mrs. Louis Stern in Paris in 1900.	Maurice Fenaille 1904	40	-10,5
H	480	318			Reversed	?	Border simulating a frame with spandrels (shells in the corners). Border identical to I and J.		Yes	Yes	Sotheby's sale, May 11, 1928, no. 161.	Edith A. Standen 1988	40	5,5
I	540	290			Reversed	?	Border simulating a frame with spandrels (shells in the corners). Border identical to H and J.		Yes	Yes	The Krupp von Bohlen und Holbach sale, Galerie Georges Petit, Dec. 5 & 6, 1911, lot 216.	Edith A. Standen 1988	10	19,5
J	530	325	1,63		Reversed	A	Border simulating a frame with spandrels (shells in the corners). Border identical to H and I.		Yes	Yes	Palais Galliera sale, Paris, March 28, 1968, no. 192.	Edith A. Standen 1988	15	2
K									To be found	To be found	The Elvedon Hall sale, Christie's, May 22, 1984, no. 1772.	Edith A. Standen 1988		
L			1,04 d'après la photo		Same		Narrow border, composed of a frieze (of foliage?) and palmettes in the corners. Bears the mark "A. C. C. Beauvais." Applied border.	Almost square format, the entire left part with the fountain is missing.	Yes		Previously in the stock of French & Co., New York.	Edith A. Standen 1988 et Pascal-François Bertrand 2019 (Photo)		
M	460	250	1,84		Same	A	None		Yes	Yes	Galerie Chevalier, Giquello sale, Hôtel Drouot, October 10, 2023, acquired by the Mobilier National.	Giquello et associés	50	39,5
N	474	248	1,91		Reversed	B	None	Our weaving	Yes	Yes	Private collection since the mid-20th century. For sale Sunday, October 13, 2024, in Saint-Cloud.	Le Floc'h Maison de ventes	43	40,5
	585	260	2,25								Cartoon from 1704 (18 feet long by 8 feet high)			
	495	260	1,90								Cartoon from 1715 (15 feet 3 inches long by 8 feet high) + an additional strip for enlargement.		32,5	34,5
	32	32									Border cartoon from 1715 (1 foot wide).			
	560	329	1,70								Royal tapestry (4 ells 14 1/2 in length and 2 ells 14 in height).		0	0

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Below are reproductions of the panels for which we have photographs.



A



D



H



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M



N

## Dimensions

The archives inform us about the dimensions of the cartoon used for the royal weaving and the dimensions of the tapestry executed for the king itself.

### Dimensions of the Cartoon

The cartoons were redone for the royal weaving.

The new cartoon for *Renaud et Armide* measures 15 feet 3 inches long and 8 feet high.

One foot is equal to 0.3248 meters and is divided into 12 inches.

Thus, the dimensions of the cartoon are:

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$$(15+3/12) * 0.3248 = \mathbf{4.95 \text{ meters wide}}$$

$$8*0.3248 = \mathbf{2.60 \text{ meters high}}$$

The second cartoon is the same height as the first (2.60 meters) but 90 cm narrower (4.95 meters instead of 5.85 meters). The archives also mention the existence of an additional strip to extend the piece belonging to the new group of cartoons (probably a lengthwise strip to allow the execution of the *Exemplaire E*, whose height of 4.15 meters greatly exceeds that of the 2.50-meter cartoons).

Our tapestry measures 4.74 meters wide and 2.50 meters high. Its dimensions correspond to those of the cartoon, with a few centimeters of difference (our tapestry is 21 cm narrower and 10 cm shorter than the cartoon, which may not have been fully reproduced in the weaving).

## Dimensions of the Tapestry

The dimensions of the *Renaud et Armide* panel given by the archives are:

4 aunes 14 ½ long and 2 aunes 14 high

An *aune* is equal to 1.143 meters and is divided into 16.

Thus, the dimensions of the panel produced in the Gobelins workshops are:

$$(4+14.5/16)*1.143 = \mathbf{5.61 \text{ meters wide}}$$

$$(2+14/16)*1.143 = \mathbf{3.29 \text{ meters high}}$$

These dimensions include the border, whereas our example is without a border.

Let's calculate the theoretical width of the border so that the dimensions of our panel with the border match those of the king's example.

Difference in width = 5.60 - 4.74 = 86 cm, or a border of 43 cm wide on each side.

Difference in height = 3.29 - 2.48 = 81 cm, or a border of 40.5 cm in height.

By adding a border approximately 42 cm wide, our panel has the same dimensions as the tapestry woven for the king. This border width is feasible.

The archives specify that the cartoon for the running border, part of the second copy of the *Metamorphoses* cartoons, measured one foot wide, or 32.5 cm. It may have been completed with one or more strips totaling about 10 cm in width.



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The dimensions of our example are very slightly smaller than those of the cartoon executed for the king's weaving by a few centimeters. Moreover, the dimensions of our example are the same as those of the king's tapestry, adding 87 cm to its width and 81 cm to its height, which can correspond to the dimensions of the lost border.

## Weaving on a low-warp loom

Archives indicate that the King's tapestry was woven on low-warp looms, in Jean Souet's workshop (3rd low-warp workshop).

The Gobelins Manufactory is equipped with both low-warp and high-warp looms. Low-warp looms are horizontal, and the warp threads are separated to allow the weft thread to pass through with the help of pedals, which the weaver (licier) operates with their feet. High-warp looms are vertical, and the warp threads are separated using handles located above the weaver's head, which they operate with their hands. In both cases, the weaving is done on the reverse side: the weaver is positioned in front of the back of the tapestry. The result is identical regardless of the type of loom used, and it is impossible to distinguish work done on a low-warp loom from that done on a high-warp loom.

However, a tapestry woven on a low-warp loom will have its composition reversed in relation to the design it is copying, which is not the case with a high-warp loom. In a low-warp loom, the design (cartoon) is placed horizontally, just below the warp threads, supported by cords. The weaver separates the warp threads to see the design, which they can copy. Since the tapestry is woven on the reverse side, a mirror effect is created between the design and the front of the tapestry.

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—••( VIII )••—

—••( IX )••—

**TABEAU DES SURINTENDANTS ET DIRECTEURS DES BÂTIMENTS DES DIRECTEURS ET DES CHEFS D'ATELIERS  
DES GOBELINS, DE 1662 À 1794.**

DATES.	SURINTENDANTS ou DIRECTEURS DES BÂTIMENTS ou DES SAL.	DIRECTEURS des GOBELINS.	ENTREPRENEURS DE HAUTE LISSE.			ENTREPRENEURS DE BASSE LISSE.					DATES.
			1 <sup>er</sup> ATELIER.	2 <sup>e</sup> ATELIER.	3 <sup>e</sup> ATELIER.	1 <sup>er</sup> ATELIER.	2 <sup>e</sup> ATELIER.	3 <sup>e</sup> ATELIER.	4 <sup>e</sup> ATELIER.	5 <sup>e</sup> ATELIER.	
1662	J.-B. Colbert (1662-1683).	Charles Le Brun (1662-1699).	Jean Jans (1662-1683).	Jean Le Febvre (1662-1700).	Henry Laurent (1662-1683).	Jean De la Croix (1662-1712).	Jean-Baptiste Moiss (1667-1693).				1662
1667			Jean Jans le fils (1668-1723).								1667
1668											1668
1669											1669
1669	Louvois (1669-1691).	Pierre Mignard (1669-1695).									1669
1691	Colbert de Villacerf (1691-1699).										1691
1698											1698
1699	Mauvart (1699-1708).	Robert de Cotte (1699-1735).		Jean Le Febvre fils (1699-1730).							1699
1701											1701
1708											1708
1708	Le duc d'Antin (1708-1730).										1708
1712											1712
1723			Jean-Jacques Jans (1723-1731).								1723
1724											1724
1727											1727
1730											1730
1732											1732
1733		Jules-Robert de Cotte (1733-1735).									1733
1736											1736
1737	Orry (1737-1745).										1737
1745	Le Normant de Tournefort (1745-1751).										1745
1747											1747
1749		Garnier d'Idre (1749-1758).									1749
1751	Le marquis de Marigny (1751-1773).										1751
1755											1755
1771											1771
1773	L'abbé Turrey (1773-1778).										1773
1774	Le comte d'Angoulême (1774-1793).										1774
1781		J.-B. Pierre (1781-1789).									1781
1788											1788
1789		Ch.-A. Guillaumot (1789-1791).									1789
1792		J. Androu (1792-1793).									1792
1793		A. Belle (1793-1795).									1793
1794											1794

Fenaille, Maurice. Etat général des tapisseries de la manufacture des Gobelins depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours, 1600-1900.  
Source gallica.bnf.fr

Our Renaud and Armide tapestry features a composition that is reversed compared to Louis de Boullogne's painting, which served as the model for the tapestry. This indicates low-warp weaving.

To date, only one known version bears the mark of its manufacturing workshop. This is Version B, which carries the mark "JANS," for Jean JANS the son or Jean-Jacques JANS, who both headed the first high-warp workshop. Version B features a composition in the same orientation as the painting, confirming that high-warp weavings follow the painting's composition, whereas low-warp weavings have a reversed composition.

Our tapestry was woven on a low-warp loom, like the one made for the King in Jean Souet's workshop.

*The two groups of tapestries based on the use of the first or second cartoon (before or after 1717)*

A close examination of the various versions of the Renaud and Armide tapestry reveals two groups distinguished by specific details that differ between them, especially the representation of the water streams falling from the fountain's basin, the jet of water emerging from the fountain, and the fire pots adorning the arches.

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For example, Versions A, J and M were most likely woven from the same cartoon, while Versions G and N were based on another. Once one version is dated, we will then be able to date the others as being before or after 1717.

## Conclusion

The Metamorphoses series woven at the Gobelins Manufactory achieved great commercial success and was produced in several copies during the 18th century, based on models that were updated at the very beginning of the century. Only one weaving was made for the King, which was later purchased by Madame de Pompadour before its whereabouts were lost.

None of the known weavings, until now, matched the dimensions of the tapestry made for the King. The Renaud and Armide panel that will be auctioned in Saint-Cloud on Sunday, October 13, 2024, has lost its border. When considering a 42 cm border, the dimensions of our version match those recorded in the archives for the royal version (with only a few centimeters of difference). Moreover, our version was woven on a low-warp loom, just like the royal version. Thus, in all likelihood, the tapestry to be auctioned on Sunday, October 13 in Saint-Cloud, under the hammer of Maître Guillaume Le Floc'h, is indeed the one commissioned by the King and later owned by Madame de Pompadour.



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## Bibliographic References

Pascal-François Bertrand, *La tenture des Métamorphoses des Gobelins : émulation artistique et stratégies commerciales*, Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles n°15, 2019

M. Fenaille, *Etat général des tapisseries de la Manufacture des Gobelins*, Imprimerie nationale, Paris, 1904, Tome I p.419 et 420, Tome III p. 1241 à 132

E. A. Standen, *Ovid's Metamorphoses : a Gobelins Tapestry Series*, *Metropoleum Museum Journal* n°23, p.149 à 191, 1988

## Practical Information on the Sale

### When?

Sale: Sunday, October 13, 2024, at 2:30 PM

### Public Exhibitions:

- Friday, October 11, from 11 AM to 6 PM
- Saturday, October 12, from 11 AM to 6 PM
- Sunday, October 13, from 11 AM to noon

### Where ?

Saint-Cloud Auction House  
3 Boulevard de la République  
92210 Saint-Cloud (France)

### Inquiries and Purchase Orders:

Email: [contact@lefloch-drouot.fr](mailto:contact@lefloch-drouot.fr)  
Phone: +33 1 46 02 20 15

### Presentation and Discussion:

Thursday, October 10, at 6:30 PM at the Saint-Cloud Auction House  
Registration by email: [contact@lefloch-drouot.fr](mailto:contact@lefloch-drouot.fr)