

# INTERPRETATION OF THE SUBJECT OF THE PASTURAL POEM IN THE TAPESTRY FROM THE PRIVATE COLLECTION

Zukhra N. Galeeva<sup>1</sup>  
Michail K. Yao<sup>1</sup>  
Juliana G. Emanova<sup>1</sup>  
Iskander Z. Rauzeev<sup>1</sup>

1. Kazan Federal University. Email: [zuhra.i.m@gmail.com](mailto:zuhra.i.m@gmail.com)

## Abstract

The European tapestry of XI-XVII that have survived to our time are integral attributes of the interiors of that time. The combination of functionality and symbolic value provided tapestry an important place among the monuments of material culture. Living conditions that changed in the 18th century, the changes in the requirements for interiors and visual range content, led to the end of tapestry fashion lasted for several centuries. The methodological basis for the study of tapestry history and technology was the work of the Russian expert in decorative and applied art N.Yu. Biryukova, the Hungarian authors - L. Emokey, K. Kiado. Tapestry is regarded as the symbiosis of two masters - the artist of the cardboard and the weaver. A brief overview of the European tapestry plot is given, beginning with the German rugs of the XIIth century and ending with the XVIIIth, when the creative approach of the master weaver is more and more controlled by the cardboard artist. The article defines the plot depicted on the 17th century tapestry, which belongs to the private museum of the International Institute of Antiques in Kazan (Russia). On this tapestry, the images are interpreted as the scenes from the pastoral novel Honore d'Urfe (1568 - 1625) "Astrea". The novel is a vivid example of precision literature. The tapestry illustrates several scenes from the novel.

**Keywords:** tapestry, interpretation of the plot, pastoral novel, artistic image, cardboard artist, weaver.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

By its nature, the art of tapestry is the creativity fruit of two professions at once. The first is a cardboard artist - an exact image of a future life-size carpet. It can be a plot or ornamental composition. Sometimes the best artists of that time were involved in their creation. During the Renaissance they were represented by Robert Kampen, Jan fan Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Holbein (Jr.), Raphael, Andrea del Sarto; during the XVII-XVIII centuries: Nicolas Poussin, Peter Paul Rubens, Antoine Watteau, Francois Boucher, Fragonard, Francisco Goya and others.

Even during the Gothic era, a characteristic technique for making cardboard was developed. The basis was a drawing of peanut ink and watercolor paints. Both well

corresponded to the texture and coloristic structure of woven images on a tapestry, allowed to detail the depicted carefully including small ornamental details.

The second author who creates the tapestry is the master weaver, who directly weaves a cardboard-based carpet. He does not copy cardboard mechanically, but creatively interprets the selection of threads, their color and texture. Despite the fact that the work of the weaver demanded from him as well as from the artist the accuracy of execution and consistency with the work of his colleagues who performed other fragments, the work of the weaver, especially until the 18th century, often had an improvisational, creative character. Possessing the textured and tonal capabilities of the thread, the craftsmen provided the characteristic nuances to the final image that enriched the ideas of the cardboard artist. Since the final product consisted of separately woven fragments created by several masters, the complexity of the final “assembly” of the tapestry consisted in an exact fit of all details and thorough and at the same time minimally noticeable weaving of the carpet pieces.

The final product was an effective result of the joint work of both the artist and the weaver. But such a balance is violated at the end of the XVII-XVIII centuries, when the tendency of the dictate of the artist over the weaver was outlined at the royal manufactories in France, and later in other countries. The weaver, who previously creatively varied the author's idea and the details of the drawing, now requires the most accurate, mechanical repetition of cardboard. Thus, the tapestry begins to lose its originality as a characteristic object of decorative, applied, woven art. It becomes more and more like an easel picture, borrowing its painting techniques, but at the same time losing its specific carpet nature without gaining expressiveness of easel painting.

## 2. METHODS

To interpret the images on a 17th-century tapestry from the collection of a private museum of the International Institute of Antiques, they used the historical method to determine possible sources of the plot; the comparative analysis method to determine the plot; the stylistic analysis of forms, allowing to reveal the originality of interpreted scenes depicted on the tapestry.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most ancient samples of European tapestry come from Germany and Norway [1]. These tapestry dedicated to St. Gerion are now kept in the German Museum of Nuremberg. They are dated by the end of the 11th century and are woven using the technique that already includes silk thread. They bear the imprint of the Eastern and Byzantine traditions of weaving, including stylized, fighting animals in medallions. Three tapestries of the 12th century from the cathedrals in Hilberstadt dedicated to the history of Abraham have reached us. There are also tapestries there dedicated to Charlemagne.

During Gothic period, the most prominent centers of tapestry art were Paris, Aras, Tournai. The last center - Tournai, intensified when Paris was captured by the British during the centenary war. Among the tapestry created by Parisian masters, they note remarkable examples of tapestry art made in the Gotlis technique at the end of the 13th century. These were ornamental compositions on heraldic themes. The 14th century dates back to the tapestry orders made by the kings of France Charles V and

Karl VI, as well as by the Dukes of Orleans, Anjou and Berry. The Duke of Anjou Louis I ordered a grand series of tapestry dedicated to the apocalypse.

In the fifth century, Aras becomes so famous that the name "tapestry" is replaced by the word "Aras". Among the most famous tapestry of that time, there are the stories about the life of St. Piat and St. Eleterius. The well-being of this center was interrupted by the French king, who destroyed Aras in 1477. The next center of the XVth century was Tournai. According to Emoki Laszlo the products of this city became "the apotheosis of the tapestry art of the golden age of Flemish painting." It was the place where Robert Kampen and Roger van der Weyden created their famous, already mentioned cardboards. The cardboard master Jacques Doret worked here. Under the patronage of Philip the Good, as well as his son Karl the Bold, they created the series of tapestry, the compositions of which are consonant with the love ballads of troubadours, depicting hunting scenes, reproducing the scenes from the life of Alexander the Great.

In the fifteenth century, the cities of Flanders became the centers of tapestry production. This is, first of all, Brussels. Among the Brussels works of this time, one can name such one as "The Adoration of the Shepherds" (1433) from Dijon. The heyday of the Flemish tapestry falls on the period 1510 - 1568 - the reign of the two rulers of Flanders: Margarita of Austria and Maria of Hungary. At that time, they create the series of tapestry from the life of Christ, such as "Walking on the Waters", "Washing the Feet", "Christ before Kias", "Descent from the Cross", etc. A series of tapestry dedicated to the deeds of the apostles are no less famous. Their creation was attended by such painters and master cartonists as Peter fan Alst, Gerard David, Barend fan Orley, etc.

A great influence on the Flemish masters was performed by the work of Raphael, who created tapestry for the Sistine Chapel by the order of Pope Leo X. The compositions of these tapestries have wide ornamental border, including grotesques - plant motifs, human figures, and stylized images of animals [1]. France was also an important center for European tapestry. We have already mentioned such medieval centers as Paris, Aras and Tournai. Outstanding works of tapestry also include the works by the masters of the Loire Valley, where for the castles located along this river, as well as by the orders of the Duke of Burgundy, the series were created, united by one plot - "The Lady with the Unicorn".

As the result of complex political events, the tapestry of France was in a crisis situation during the second half of the 17th century. They say that at that time architecture was the noblest art, and the church was the noblest building [2]. In the 17th century, this crisis was replaced by a boom. France becomes the legislator of taste and style during the reign of Louis XIV. Since 1662, since the opening of the Tapestry manufactory, France has been dictating both the plot and the stylistic features in the field of tapestry art.

Unexpected tapestry for France was manufactured at the manufactories of Aubusson. All of them were private enterprises, that is, they did not have the privileges of the Royal Tapestry Manufactory. In their work, the masters focused not on the taste of the court, but on the aesthetic representations of wider social groups [3]. Their production was "affordable" to the wealthy strata of French provincial society. One should note another characteristic feature. The city is located in the center of France, or rather in the area where a significant part of the population was Huguenot Protestants. Aubusson products were made by the Huguenots and intended for the Huguenots [4]. That is why the characters of these tapestries are dressed in the modest clothes of Protestants - Hugents. The heyday of the workshops of this city stopped in 1685, when

Louis XIV canceled the famous Nantes edict on religious freedom. And the masters of Aubusson were forced in connection with the confessional ban on their activities to seek work outside France in England and Holland.

The private International Institute of Antiques has several tapestries made in Aubusson during the 17th-18th centuries. Among them stands out the tapestry "Lamentation in Celadon" of the 17th century made in Aubusson with the inv. No. 05-1091 in catalog No. 3. Provenance: Acquired in France at the Thierry de Maigret auction on 03/27/2009 [5]. Tapestry borders are lost. The brown border has been preserved. Crop fragments of tapestry could be re-framed with borders. It was not restored after the acquisition. According to the horizontal arrangement of the warp and weft threads, it can be argued that the tapestry is made in baslis technique with woolen and silk threads in 4-5 warp threads per 1 cm. In the baslis technique, cardboard is laid directly under the warp threads horizontally. The master, pushing them apart, selects a thread that is identical in color to the image on the cardboard. Since the front side is facing the cardboard, the finish image is a mirror image of the cardboard. That is, the compositional organization of the author is violated. (Unlike the later Gotlis technique, where the warp threads are located vertically).

Trellis. Crying over celadon. XVII century. Aubusson. 218 cm × 330 cm



By the patchwork nature of this tapestry installation, we can conclude that several weavers worked on the carpet. The material of the weaver in this tapestry is twisted wool threads. Despite the fact that the work of the weaver demanded from him as well as from the artist the accuracy of execution and consistency with the work of his colleagues who performed other fragments, the work of the weaver was of an improvisational, creative nature. Possessing the textured and tonal capabilities of the thread, the craftsmen provided the final image with the characteristic nuances that enriched the ideas of the cardboard artist.

Tapestries woven from warm wool have become almost the only heater of cold walls, not only castles, but also palaces, palazzos, hotels, city houses, etc. The tapestry hanging on the wall created a relatively effective air gap between the cold wall and the interior space. Tapestries could be an effective heat insulator, only if they insulated all the walls of the room. If necessary, tapestries were used to divide a single interior space into separate zones.

The lower left part of the tapestry with the signature on the image of a man: "Gilos".



It was this function - the insulation of the room - that determined the tapestry not as a single item, but as the part of a series of interior items. Therefore, from the very inception of this type of weaving, tapestries are conceived in series. Typically, the composition has a cross-cutting development from one carpet to another. Such series can include up to several tens of tapestries.

Most often, tapestries were made horizontally oriented. This allowed developing the plot on the carpet plane. In addition to this basic material, silk thread was used to reproduce subtle details such as the faces of the characters, their hands and so on. Often they also used the threads entwined with thin sections of lamb intestines, coated with gold or silver.

In addition to them, gold sewing materials were also used, in particular - foil cut into thin strips or thin twisted silver or gold wire. The base of the tapestry was made, as a rule, of unpainted woolen or even linen threads. Cotton thread began to be applied only during later time in the XVIIIth and especially in the XIXth century. The weaver passes the weft thread through the warp and simultaneously creates both the fabric and the image.

This tapestry is characterized by a color scheme based on combinations of green tones obtained from local natural dyes, with indigo and scarce madder inclusions.

The choice of canvas shape was influenced by its location in the interior. Lining carpet (entre-fenêtre), as a rule, was located between the windows, and had a rectangular, vertically oriented shape. Heraldic tapestries with family crests were often

square or rectangular, vertically oriented. Sometimes the shape of the tapestries was changed in accordance with the logic of the room layout or due to damage. Elongated vertically or square shapes of plot tapestries indicate most often that they have been trimmed and are only a fragment of the plot once depicted on the tapestry [6]. This tapestry is horizontally oriented.

Love scene. Image of the upper-right corner of the tapestry t over the lamentations of Celadon



In the lower left corner of the tapestry “Gilos” signature is woven on the man's image, which allowed to determine the literary work. The tapestry represents several stories from the French pastoral novel Honore d'Urfe (1568 - 1625) “Astrea” - the most significant monument of precision literature (from French précieux - exquisite, cutesy).

The book consists of five parts, the first of which was published in 1607. The central plot is the love of the shepherds Astrea and Celadon. The foreground of the tapestry is represented by the mourning ceremony in Celadon. The druid Adamas is in the center, with a branch in hand, leading the sacrifice, next to him are the assistants in wreaths, as well as shepherds and shepherdesses. The inconsolable Astrea kneels at the ritual table. Her image was interpreted by A. Bulgakova. Gilas is on the left side of the composition (the inscription “Hilas” is woven on its caftan). Celadon's grave is empty, his body was not found, he threw himself into the swift waters of Lignon, when Astrea unjustly accused him of infidelity and rejected him. He was discovered breathless by beautiful nymphs and carried to his palace.

The central part of the tapestry with a mourning ceremony.  
"Lamenting Celadon"



Another plot from the novel is reproduced in the depths of the tapestry. The beautiful Dorida combs her long white hair, brushing off Adrast's love confessions, and Palemon and Diana observe this scene, hiding in the bushes (Astrea, vol. II, Book 8) [7]. All the composition characters are dressed not just in the fashion of France during the mid-17th century, but in accordance with the tastes of the Huguenots.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The first series of tapestry based on the novel "Astrea" were made almost immediately after the release of the last volume - in the workshops of the province of La Marsh (Aubusson and Felten) and Bruges at the same time [8]. Eight tapestries were ordered by the widow of Count Francois de Gerard in Felten's workshop and are now with the descendants of this family. Six tapestries adorn the halls of Basti d'Urfe Castle (four Aubusson and two Flemish). The Mayer van den Berg Museum in Antwerp stores the series of ten tapestries made in the workshop of Bruges, with the coat of arms of the mayor of this city, Jean Parmantier (1569 - 1657). The mentions of many other tapestries illustrating the love of Astrea and Celadon, can be found in the inventories (usually they appear under the general names "History of Celadon" and "History of Astrea") or met at auctions. Mostly joyful or, on the contrary, funeral ceremonies are presented in the series of the 17th century [8]. The main characters occupy the foreground, the secondary characters enliven the background. Often, names are inscribed to facilitate recognition [9].

## 5. SUMMARY

This tapestry is indicative not only for Aubusson, but also for the European style of tapestry as a whole. In the XVIIIth century, tapestry loses its specificity, more and more imitating painting. An example is the tapestry "Allegory of Summer" from the cat. No. 15 (inv. No. 05-0788) of the same collection [10]. In addition, living conditions became more comfortable in the second half of the XVIIIth century and tapestries were not included in the interiors of the rococo. In the interior, tapestry is replaced by wood panels, silk drapes, wallpapers, mirrors and paintings [11]. Already at the end of the gallant century, tapestry, at best, is relocated to special "tapestry" rooms, or even thrown into attics and basements, some were barbarously burned for easy extraction of precious threads.

The fall of interest in tapestry led to the destruction and damage of many carpets. Therefore, few monuments preserved well, often these are the fragments of large compositions of varying degrees of preservation. Such remains determine our symbolic conception of tapestry art, and allow us to understand and represent history through the language of art [12]. A new flash of interest in tapestry arises already during the artistic movements of the mid-19th century. In the twentieth century, tapestry and, in particular, Aubusson tapestry, made in the aesthetics of modernism, become popular again.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## REFERENCES

- [1]Emoke L., Kiado K. Flemish and French tapestries in Hungary. - Budapest, Hungary, 1981.- 93 p. (il.)
- [2] A. PAZDUR-CZARNOWSKA. DOMESTIC INTERIOR IN THE EARLY RENAISSANCE AND ITS PICTORIAL DEPICTION. - SGEM SOCIAL SCIENCES AND ARTS. - 2018.
- [3] Konuratbayeva Z.; Karipzhanova G.; Sagdieva R.; Husnutdinov D.; Mirzagitov R.; Kurbangalieva G.; Galiullin R. Influence of urbanonyms on city image development. - International Journal of Mechanical Engineering and Technology 2018 vol.9. - pp. 405-415.
- [4] Amineva V.R., National perspective as axiological component of the composition art world//XLinguae. - 2018. - Vol.11, Is.2. - pp. 329-337.
- [5] European Tapestry Production and Patronage, 1600–1800 [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: (reference date 24.12.2018)
- [6] Tapestry [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/583114/tapestry>. (reference date 24.12.2018)
- [7] Biryukova N.Yu. French tapestries of the late XV – XX centuries in the collection of the Hermitage / N.Yu. Biryukova. - L.: Aurora, 1974. – 172 p.
- [8] Catalog of ASG Grand Collection of Fine Arts. Volume VI. Tapestries of Western Europe of XVI-XIX centuries. / Int. Institute of Antiques; authors: A.V. Bulgakova, M.S. Torshin, M.K. Yao; ed. by A.V. Bulgakova. - Kazan, 2017. - 78 p.



- [9] Tapestry - Aubusson. The Story of Gilas // Large Guide on ASG Digging Investment Group. - Kazan, 2013. - p. 83.
- [10] Mishina Nadezda, Javgildina Zilia, Mishina Anastasia, Design Practice as a Method of Professional Orientation of Teenagers in the System of Supplementary Education//TARİH KULTUR VE SANAT ARASTIRMALARI DERGİSİ-JOURNAL OF HISTORY CULTURE AND ART RESEARCH. - 2018. - Vol.7, Is.4. - pp. 132-137.
- [11] Lyajsan Kadyjrova, Elmira Akhmetshina. THE PLACE AND ROLE OF MUSEUM PEDAGOGY IN THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER ARTISTIC- PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION. - National Academy of Managerial Staff of Culture and Arts Herald, 2018. - pp. 274-277.
- [12] Vlad Ionescu. The interior as interiority. - Palgrave Communications, 4:33, Belgium, 2018. - pp. 24-29.