



# JACOB JORDAENS'S ELEMENTS AND HUMOURS TAPESTRIES

*Among the highlights at Hardwick Hall is a remarkable tapestry series by Jacob Jordaens, for which he skilfully appropriated a set of popular allegories then prevalent in print culture, writes JAMIE MULHERRON*

THE SCENES FROM COUNTRY LIFE AFTER JACOB JORDAENS (1593–1678) at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, is the earliest and most complete surviving example of one of the 17th century's most celebrated tapestry series.<sup>1</sup> They are among Jordaens's finest designs, and the tapestries themselves were woven in the leading Brussels workshop of Jacques II Geubels (c. 1599–c. 1630).

As one of the trinity of great Antwerp artists including Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck, Jordaens had a significant influence on English art and taste in the second quarter of the 17th century. He was commissioned to make a series of paintings of *Cupid and Psyche* for Queen Henrietta Maria at the Queen's House in Greenwich in 1639,<sup>2</sup> and it is also thought that Charles I owned a set of *Horsemanship* tapestries after his designs.<sup>3</sup> It is not known when the *Scenes from Country Life* tapestries came to Hardwick, but they were probably acquired in the early 1630s by Lady Christian Bruce or her son William Cavendish, 3rd Earl of Devonshire (1617–84).<sup>4</sup> The Cavendishes' ownership of the Jordaens tapestries was a reflection of Stuart Court taste.<sup>5</sup>

Five of the eight tapestries at Hardwick are marked with the Brussels town mark (two 'B's to either side of a shield) and are signed Jacq Geubels, for Jacques II Geubels, along the edge of the lower border. The three remaining tapestries have had their lower borders turned up, but it is likely that they are marked in the same way. In addition to the fully written-out signature, each of the tapestries is

also signed with a weaver's monogram on the edge of the right-hand border.<sup>6</sup> Five have the monogram of an as-yet-unidentified weaver, two bear a monogram that has been identified as that of Geubels, and one has the monogram of Conrad van der Bruggen (fl. 1622–69).<sup>7</sup> We can infer that Geubels was the entrepreneur in overall charge of the weaving but that, as was then very common, he collaborated with another weaver.

Geubels was part of a weaving dynasty, and his signature is found on many of the finest Brussels tapestries of the 1620s, such as the *Triumph of the Eucharist* and the *History of Decius Mus* after Rubens; and the *Story of Alexander*, the *Story of Ulysses*, *Horsemanship* and the *Scenes of Country Life* after Jordaens.<sup>8</sup> Geubels worked for the greatest patrons, including Archduchess Isabella of Spain, Governess of the Netherlands.<sup>9</sup> His weavings sometimes included woven morals such as *Divinae Palladis arte pictogram superavit acus* ('By the art of divine Pallas Athene the needle has conquered paint'); or *Cum Byssum Pingo non ita ut pictor fingo* ('When cloth I weave not as a painter do I deceive'), found on the *Alexander* set after Jordaens. As Guy Delmarcel has pointed out, these inscriptions suggest a great self-awareness,<sup>10</sup> if not precocity, on the part of the weaver.<sup>11</sup>

Although regarded as the earliest weaving of the *Scenes from Country Life*, the precise dating of the Hardwick tapestries remains uncertain. The known facts are that Geubels was born c. 1599 and died some time between 1629 and 1633. His widow, Elizabeth de Moor, remarried in 1633, after which point it is unlikely that the full 'Jacq Geubels' signature would have been used.<sup>12</sup> The date of Jordaens's designs for the tapestries has also been contested, and estimates range from the mid 1620s to the mid 1630s, although the weight of evidence suggests that he designed them in the late 1620s.<sup>13</sup> An important factor in the dating of Jordaens's designs for the *Scenes from Country Life* is the belief that the architectonic device of the framing columns, which dispensed with the traditional tapestry border, was directly inspired by the *Triumph of the Eucharist* (1625–28)<sup>14</sup> tapestry designs of Rubens.<sup>15</sup>

The architectural frames used by both Rubens and Jordaens derive in turn from the *Metamorphosis* tapestries designed by Battista Dossi (c. 1490–1548) and woven by Jan Karcher in Ferrara in the 1540s, two of which are now in the Louvre.<sup>16</sup> They were in the Este palace in Modena in the early 17th century,<sup>17</sup> and Rubens, based in Mantua at that time, may have seen them. But there is also a more traditional source for the 'new', borderless Brussels designs of the 1620s. Large leaf verdures from the second and third quarters of the 16th century often had framing devices, very

FIG 1 *Love under a Trellis: The Wine Glass*, c. 1630 Jacques II Geubels (c. 1599–c. 1630) after Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678) Tapestry, wool and silk, 375x248cm Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire National Trust/Robert Thrift

FIG 2 *Phlegmatick* from a set of *The Four Complexions*, c. 1630 George Gower (c.1540–96) Engraving, 19.2x12.cm © The Trustees of the British Museum, London







FIG 3 *Feeding Chickens: The Basket of Grain*, c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk, 3750x2460cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift

FIG 4 *Melancholy* from *The Four Complexions*, c. 1630  
William Marshall (fl. 1617–48)  
Engraving, 18.2x12.6cm  
© The Trustees of the British Museum, London



often of classically inspired pillars, columns and pedestals, internal to the field. That these internal frames to some extent acted as borders is borne out by the much reduced width of the actual borders on these tapestries.<sup>18</sup>

Although the tapestries are called *Scenes from Country Life*, the exact subject matter is not entirely understood. Ledebur has most recently suggested that Jordaens's scenes had no allegorical context, and represent a move away from allegorical and emblematic

Netherlandish art of the period.<sup>19</sup> This view takes a stage further Kristi Nelson's opinion that the scenes are a rather loose amalgam of references to allegories of the five senses, the zodiac and the seasons, but that overall the set does not follow a consistent iconography.<sup>20</sup> Yet it is extremely unlikely that a set of tapestries of this date would not follow an iconographic programme. No other set by Jordaens lacked an overall theme, and one struggles to give any example of a 16th- or 17th-century figurative tapestry series with no definable subject. The *Scenes from Country Life* do indeed share a common theme: they are allegories of the Elements and the Humours.

The eight tapestries are divided into two discrete sets of four. The first, including *Feeding Chickens: The Basket of Grain* (Fig. 3), *Love under a Trellis: The Wine Glass* (Fig. 1), *Love on a Balcony: The Feather* (Fig. 6) and *Girl Carrying a Basket: The Candle* (Fig. 7) are set in a loggia with a single arch. The second 'set' of the *Return from the Hunt* (Fig. 8), the *Rest from the Hunt* (Fig. 11), the *Attack of the Falcons* (Fig. 12) and *The Kitchen* (Fig. 13) have a variety of outdoor and indoor settings and have double arches along the top, and a lower border of a snake coiled around a decorative plant.

The central motifs of the four narrow panels represent the four elements: earth by the basket of grain in *Feeding Chickens: The Basket of Grain*; water by the wine glass in *Love under a Trellis: The*

*Wine Glass*; air by the feather in *Love on the Balcony: The Feather*; and fire by the candle in *Girl Carrying a Basket: The Candle*. Similarly the four wider tapestries are each based on an element. The hunter carrying game in the *Return from the Hunt* was a traditional motif for earth; the hunter and his dogs resting by a lake in the *Rest from the Hunt* refer to water; the *Attack of the Falcons* represents air; and *The Kitchen* symbolises fire. In both sets, the scenarios and context develop the allegory of the four humours.

The theory of the elements developed in ancient Greece, firstly under the Pythagoreans (sixth century B.C.) and then by the Greek philosopher Empedocles in the fifth century B.C. Empedocles established the 'Tetrasomia', or the 'Doctrine of the Four Elements', in which all matter is made up of four roots or elements – earth, air, fire and water. He also developed the idea that the four elements were based on earth, sky, sun and sea, which related to the seasons (winter, spring, summer and autumn), the qualities (cold, dry, hot and moist), and the gods (Zeus, Hera, Hades and Nestis).<sup>21</sup> The harmony of the elements was essential to the health of man and the relationship between man and nature. Through the writing of Plato (c. 424–348 B.C.) and Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), the four elements would remain central to 'scientific' thought (medicine, astronomy, astrology and alchemy) until the late 17th century.

The theory of humours as discussed in *Saturn and Melancholy* (see n. 21) was a physiological development of the four elements and their associated qualities of hot, cold, dry and moist. The medical theory of the four humours was first developed by Hippocrates (c. 460–370 B.C.) in his work *On the Nature of Man*,<sup>22</sup> and then by the Roman doctor Galen (129–217 A.D.).<sup>23</sup> The four humours were blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile, and from the four humours derived the four temperaments (i.e. character traits) of sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic. For the individual to be both physically and mentally healthy, the humours had to be in balance, and if one humour dominated it could define character traits. Like the elements, the closely related humours were an essential part of the European world view, and indeed with the renaissance of Greek and Roman literature and medicine, the humours became more topical than ever in the 16th and early 17th centuries.

Both the elements and the humours were schematised in the illustrated 1603 edition of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, and Ripa's characterisations did have some influence in the Netherlands and England.<sup>24</sup> But it was Antwerp artists of the generation earlier than Jordaens who made the greatest contribution to the iconography of the elements and humours,<sup>25</sup> not least Maarten de Vos (1532–1603). De Vos produced an influential set of prints of the four elements and two sets of the four humours, which were clearly an important source for Jordaens (Figs. 5 and 14). A further Antwerp artist, Adriaen Collaert (1560–1618), also designed a set of elements. Other Netherlandish artists who produced sets of the elements and the humours in prints include the Haarlem artists Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574) and Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617). Goltzius's two sets of the four elements (one

nude, the other clothed) were as influential as de Vos's humours (Figs. 9 and 10). Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629), originally from Antwerp and later trained by Goltzius, also made sets of elements and humours, and these too have a bearing on Jordaens's tapestries (Fig. 15). Jordaens could never be accused of lacking originality in his designs, but in the case of the *Scenes from Country Life*, he appropriated the idea of a set of allegories of the elements and the humours from print culture and translated it into the medium of tapestry.<sup>26</sup>

If Jordaens created his designs in a Netherlandish culture abounding with allegories of the humours and elements, his tapestries were destined for an English audience no less fascinated by such conceits. Late Elizabethan writers created what came to be known as the 'Comedy of Humours', where characters were portrayed with an imbalance of this or that humour. Well-known examples include George Chapman's *An Humorous Day's Mirth* (first performed in 1597), Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) and *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), John Fletcher's *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1625) and James Shirley's *The Humorous Courtier* (1640). Even if not the central theme, imagery of the humours pervaded nearly all drama and poetry of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, including most famously, Shakespeare's. In Hamlet, for example, at least three of the major characters are associated with the humours: the melancholic Dane himself, the phlegmatic Ophelia (who drowns in water) and the choleric Laertes (always ready to fight).<sup>27</sup> The humours and elements were part of everyday learning and experience, particularly in regard to well-being, as found in Thomas Elyot's *Castel of Helth* (1539), William Bullein's *The Government of Health* (1558), Thomas Walkington's *Optick Glasse of Humours* (1607), and of course one of the 17th century's best sellers, Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). In England, as the production of London printmakers such as William Marshall and George Glover demonstrates, the 1630s mark the high watermark of the popularity of the elements and humours;<sup>28</sup> Jordaens could hardly have designed a more fashionable theme for the moment.

Let us look more closely at Jordaens's comedy of humours. In *Feeding Chickens: The Basket of Grain* (Fig. 3), a servant girl holds a wicker basket in one hand and with the other throws down grain for a brood of hens. The girl wears clogs, her shirt is in a state of undress, her hair is slightly tousled, and she looks as though she has just got out of bed. The satyrs' heads and vine scrolls on the cartouche perhaps allude to a night of drinking and lovemaking. Detached from the general scramble for food, there is a stand-off between a large dog and a cock, perhaps an allusion to the idea of the *bas cour*, or the low court, in which barnyard society is representative of human society. The cock watches the dog, not the grain; this is reminiscent of a moral in George Wither's *A Collection of Emblemes* (1635) that cocks will not fight for gain (i.e. food) but only for their hens.<sup>29</sup> The other important bird in the scene is the peacock, whose wonderful tail is not only a marvellous passage of weaving but is also symbolic of pride. Suggestions of envy also pervade

the scene. On the bottom of the left-hand column can be seen the head of a woman with snakes for hair – a Medusa, the traditional personification of envy. Large dogs – as opposed to small dogs who represented faithfulness – also represented envy, and the dog is clearly envious that he is not being fed.

The meaning of the scene is deliberately ambiguous. On the one hand, a wholesome young servant girl is shown going about her chores, feeding the chickens. On the other, there are intimations that this is the morning after the night before, one of drinking and possibly illicit passion. The peacock and the Medusa's head represent the deadly sins of pride and envy. Perhaps the servant girl is not happy with her lot? Work, particularly drudgery, was associated with the humour melancholy; in contemporary 1630s prints such as William Marshall's *Melancholy from The Four Complexions* (Fig. 4), we find the inscribed moral: 'When I am forced to work my senses droope, for I am tall and do not like to scoop'.

*Love under a Trellis: The Wine Glass* (Fig. 1) is set in a trellised garden behind a little balustrade. Inside, a well-dressed cavalier and a lady are being served by a young, not entirely reputable-looking man with split jerkin and lace collar. He holds a ewer and hands the couple a glass of wine. Behind them stands an older woman with her hair in a turban. The cavalier has just come in from riding, probably hunting, leaving his sword outside the trellised



FIG 5 *Sanguineus* from the *Four Temperaments*, c. 1595  
Pieter de Jode (1606–74) after Martin de Vos (c. 1532–1603)  
Engraving, 18.1x22.3cm  
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam  
Photo: Studio Buitenhof, Den Haag

FIG 6 *Love on the Balcony: The Feather*, c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk, 375x320cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift





enclosure but still wearing his spurs. While he eyes the glass of wine he nonchalantly rests his hand upon the woman's breast. One of her hands entraps his hand while the other coyly pushes it away; the two 'lovers' are acting out a charade, in front of the older, hard-nosed woman. This is not a domestic scene between man and wife. There is an emblem on the cartouche of two hands squeezing a heart, and the theme of love is most poignantly found in the kissing doves in the roundels on the bottom of the columns, while the 'love hunting' aspect is indicated by the quivers that hang from the triple angel head device on the side pillars.

It is the interpretation of the humour rather than the element water, symbolised by the wine glass, which leads us to believe that these signs of love are ironic. The humour associated with water is phlegmatic; in George Glover's *Phlegmatick from his The Fowre Complexions* (1630s), we see a single female accompanied by a glass of wine and a tobacco pipe, with the accompanying 'moral' – 'If She shall any way be craz'd or sick, wine and tobacco cures the phlegmatic, who snatcheth up her clothes, as she would shove rhumes bred above may be drawn down below' (Fig. 1). Has our cavalier, feeling a little phlegmatic, gone off for a 'cure' – of wine and illicit sex. This is most likely a brothel scene, the older woman a procuress.

The sanguine humour was almost invariably represented by music-making, most often with a lute,<sup>30</sup> and Jordaens's *Love on a Balcony: The Feather* (Fig. 6) clearly owes a great deal to Maarten de Vos's *Sanguineus from the Four Temperaments* (Fig. 5). In the same way that de Vos associates the sanguine humour with the element

air, by including a windmill in the background of his scene of a music-making couple, Jordaens isolates the element with the feather held by the lady. The present happy-looking couple is more at ease than are the protagonists in *Love under a Trellis: The Wine Glass*. The prosperousness of the pair is not only evident in their sumptuous clothing and lustrous oriental carpet, but through the overflowing bounty of the architectural and decorative ornament – the swags of pears, grapes and peaches suspended from the columns and the overflowing cornucopia held by the putti in the upper frieze. Fertility is signified everywhere, especially by the infant satyrs underneath the cartouche that suck from the ends of cornucopia like nuzzling babies. Elements of lust are certainly present, but there are also many suggestions of conjugal fecundity – the clearest of which is the emblem of entwined snakes at the bottom of the pillars, which symbolises concord and timeless love.<sup>31</sup> This is also the import of the small Pomeranian-type dog, which, as in the famous Arnolfini Portrait by Jan van Eyck of 1434, symbolises faithfulness. The full-blooded (sanguine) marital eroticism of *The Feather* is in great contrast to the commercial liaison of *The Wine Glass*.

Unlike the spaces in the three scenes so far described, that in the *Girl Carrying a Basket: The Candle* (Fig. 7) is enclosed and ominous. A servant girl in clogs carrying a basket of fruit passes by a dark doorway and to her right, on a bench, is a feathery spread of dead birds: a peacock, a duck and small birds tied onto a stick for roasting. While the setting does not at first strike one as a kitchen scene, it clearly relates to the larger *Kitchen* tapestry (Fig. 13), much as the servant girl has a parallel in *Feeding Chickens: The Basket of Grain* (Fig. 3). Here, however, the key motif is not the wicker basket held by the servant girl, but the candle held in the hand of the woman in the shadows. As can be seen in sets of *Elements* by George Glover and Abraham Bosse (c. 1602–76), the candle was often the significant object for the element of fire. And it is the candle that lights up the choleric proceedings behind the door, where in the blackness a couple, highlighted in a strong, devilish-red colour, grope each other. The unbridled lust behind the door is underlined by the architectural symbolism: the cartouche includes a ram's head and an evil-looking satyr's head, while the faces in the column capitals are pointedly expressive. The one on the left looks horrified, while the one on the right is resigned. Most risqué of all are the pot-bellied faun statues, whose hands both conceal and draw attention to their genitals. If *The Wine Glass* represented phlegmatic love, and *The Feather* sanguine love, this represents hot-tempered choleric love, probably amongst the servants. It is no accident, therefore, that the faces of the gropers in the doorway have exaggerated red highlights; red was associated with the choleric humour, with violence and hot temperedness.

In the *Return from the Hunt* (Fig. 8), one of the four larger tapestries, a cavalier in a plumed hat holds a falcon while he rears his horse. In contrast, a bearded old man, accompanied by a dejected melancholic dog, stoops under the burden of the hind carried on a pike over his shoulder. Carrying the dead weight of a large animal for any distance would be no easy matter for a man of any age,

and nothing could better illustrate social inequality than the contrast between the toiling servant and the young aristocrat, riding home care-free while performing fancy equestrian manoeuvres. In Goltzius's influential set of the *Elements, Earth* (Fig. 9) is personified by a huntsman carrying his game after the hunt, whereas air is personified as a falconer (Fig. 10). In de Gheyn's *Elements*, earth and air are likewise personified as a returning huntsman and a falconer. Jordaens includes both motifs in one scene to striking effect. Yet it is the contextual interpretation of the humour that leads one to believe this is the element earth. As in *Feeding Chickens*, the old man's melancholy is induced by heavy toil and it is he rather than the cavalier who anchors the meaning of the scene. And as in *Feeding Chickens*, the large, melancholic dog signifies a degree of envy – like their master, the cavalier's hunting dogs run home with care-free abandon.

The *Rest from the Hunt* (Fig. 11) is the only true landscape design in the series, and with *The Kitchen* it is also the largest tapestry. An aristocratic huntsman sits by the side of a lake with his pack of dogs, patting one of them with great affection. While the ornamental detail refers to hunting, it also alludes to water: the satyr and nymph half-body bracket figures that support the arches have entwined dolphins. If the element is water, the humour should be phlegmatic. A phlegmatic temperament was associated with mild, passive, sensitive character traits, but also laziness, sluggishness and indolence, all of which apply rather well to our resting hunter.<sup>32</sup>

*Attack of the Falcons* (Fig. 12) is far removed from restful indolence. Here we witness a pair of falcons attacking the barnyard, and a barefoot servant girl running into the scene beating away the birds of prey (this part of the tapestry is hidden). The falcons have caused the barnyard fowls to panic. *Attack of the Falcons* parallels the social contrast found in the *Return from the Hunt* – between those who can fly (hunters), and those rooted to the ground (labourers). Andrea Alciato's (1492–1550) *Emblemata* (1550), one of the most influential emblem books ever published, uses a scene of a falcon attacking a duck in the emblem 'imparilitas' – inferiority. The accompanying Latin verse translates: 'As the falcon cleaves the thin air flying high, as the jackdaw, the goose, the duck feed on the ground, so mighty Pindar soars above the highest heaven, so Bacchylides knows only how to creep along the ground'.<sup>33</sup> This goes some way to explaining the emblems that Jordaens has included on the bottom of the columns: to the left, a tortoise within snakes; and to the right, a crab within snakes.

In *Attack of the Falcons*, the falcons represent air and the chickens earth, just as the aristocrat represents air and his servant earth in the *Return from the Hunt*; the aristocracy soar like falcons whilst the servants crawl along the ground like chickens or crabs. The Cavendishes, like other patrons of Jordaens's *Scenes from Country Life*, were aristocrats, and in order to soften this brutal allegory, eagles were included, flanking the upper cartouche and supporting the arches. As symbols, eagles were considered more positive than falcons. In Ripa's *Iconologia*, the eagle was emblematic of *liberalita* – liberality. Although hunters, eagles would not



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FIG 8 *Return from the Hunt*, c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk, 375x405cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift

stoop to terrorise a barnyard and always left scraps for other animals, as good aristocrats would do for their underlings. The associated element to the *Attack of the Falcons* is obviously air. While most representations of the element air did involve birds, the eagle in particular was used to symbolise the sanguine humour, as in images by Martin van Heemskerck (1498–1574), Virgil Solis (1514–62) and many others. This probably derived from the association of the eagle with Jupiter, god of the sanguine humour.

Finally, in *The Kitchen* (Fig. 13) we see a vast and sumptuous array of produce: a swan, ducks, a peacock, chickens, deer, a boar, rabbits, lobsters, oysters, grapes, apples, cabbages, artichokes and peas. Amongst the dead animals there are living ones, such as the cat to the left of the swan. Perhaps the most poignant moment, a meeting of life and death, is the dog shown almost nose to nose with the dead deer. As they go about their chores, we recognise, from the *Return from the Hunt* and *Feeding*

FIG 9 *Terra* from a set of the *Four Elements*, c. 1590  
Johann Israel de Bry (1565–1609) after Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617)  
Engraving, 18 x 12.3cm  
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FIG 10 *Aer* from a set of the *Four Elements*, c. 1590  
Johann Israel de Bry after Hendrick Goltzius  
Engraving, 18 x 12.3cm  
© The Trustees of the British Museum, London



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FIG 7 *Girl Carrying a Basket: The Candle*, c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk, 375x305cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift



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FIG 11 *Rest from the Hunt*, c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after  
Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk,  
375x505cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift

FIG 12 *Attack of the Falcons*,  
c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after  
Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk,  
375x390cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift



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*Chickens*, our two protagonists, the older man who hangs a deer from an iron bar, and the servant girl who skewers a chicken. Representations of the element fire were, for very obvious reasons, often kitchen or cooking scenes: Goltzius's *Fire* (c. 1590), for example, is an image of a pie chef, while de Gheyn's is a woman skewering a hare and a bird for roasting (Fig. 15). But it is de Vos's *Cholericus* (c. 1595) – a soldier and his female companion, loaded with game and kitchen utensils – to which Jordaens's design owes the most (Fig. 14), including the sexual overtones. While Jordaens's *Kitchen* is not entirely innocent, it has nothing like the erotic intensity of *Girl Carrying a Basket: The Candle*. Just as the huntsman resting with his hounds represents the good phlegmatic, and the huntsman in the whorehouse the 'bad' phlegmatic, so *The Kitchen* is the 'good' choleric to the 'bad' of the candle.

The social inequality of the *Return from the Hunt* and the *Attack of the Falcons* is mitigated in *The Kitchen*; the bountiful produce suggesting that there is enough for everyone, even if the most tasty dishes are reserved for the masters. Although our servants are working, they are animated by a choleric warmth rather than the melancholic chill of *Feeding Chickens* and the *Return from the Hunt*. The series ends on an image of stability, which affirms the liberality of the masters (eagles rather than falcons),

and the contentment of the servants – although all experience ups and downs along the way. Jordaens's *Scenes of Country Life* are far from being narrative tapestries. From a framework of country-house scenes as allegories of the elements and the humours, Jordaens has created a wonderful self-contained world in which some scenes refer to other scenes, and where some characters make more than one appearance. There is also philosophy in Jordaens's designs. Both the elements and the humours were central to the idea of the microcosm and the macrocosm that man contained in himself, all that was of the universe, and in Jordaens's little universe we catch a glimpse of our own elements and humours – just as we should in a good comedy of humours of the same period.

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1. The only other complete set, woven slightly later, of the *Scenes from Country Life* is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. See Ludwig Baldass, *Die Wiener Gobelinsammlung*, Vienna, 1919–20, nos. 196–203, and Katja Schmitz-von Ledebur in Thomas P. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor*, New York, 2007, pp. 234–40.
2. Dora Schlugleit, 'L'Abbé Scaglia, Jordaens et l'Histoire de Psyché de Greenwich-House (1639–1642)', *Revue Belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art*, vol. VII, 1937, pp. 139–55.
3. Schmitz-von Ledebur in Campbell, op. cit. in n. 1 above, p. 244, and Wendy Hefford, 'Brussels Horsemanship tapestries owned by Charles I and Frederick Prince of Wales', in Koenraad Brosens (ed.), *Flemish Tapestries in European and American Collection: Studies in Honour of Guy Delmarcel*, Turnhout, 2003, p. 126.
4. Schmitz-von Ledebur has suggested that the *Scenes of Country Life* were acquired by William Cavendish, 2nd Earl of Devonshire, but he died in June 1628, before the tapestries could have been completed. See Schmitz-von Ledebur in Campbell, op. cit. in n. 1 above, p. 237.
5. William Cavendish, 3rd Earl of Devonshire was made Knight of Bath at Charles I's coronation in 1625. He spent part of the Civil War in exile on the Continent. His younger brother Charles was a leading royalist officer and was killed in 1643 in action against the parliamentarians. Lady Christian Bruce remained a devoted plotter to the Stuart cause after the execution of Charles I.
6. The information on the signatures and monograms on the Hardwick *Scenes of Country Life* tapestries in Kristi Nelson's catalogue is mostly incorrect. Kristi Nelson, *Jacob Jordaens: Design for Tapestry*, Turnhout, 1998, pp. 85–100. For

- detailed description of the marks, see National Trust Collections Online: [www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk)
7. Heinrich Göbel, *Wandteppiche. Vol. 1. Die Niederlande*, 2 vols., Leipzig, 1923, vol. II, p. 3.
8. For Jacques II Guebels and the weaving of the *Triumph of the Eucharist*, see Concha Herrero Carretero in Campbell, op. cit. in n. 1 above, p. 230; for the *Decius Mus* see Guy Delmarcel, *Flemish Tapestry from the 15th to the 18th Century*, Tiel, 1999, p. 365; for the *Alexander* see Delmarcel, op. cit., pp. 224 and 234; for the *Ulysses* see Erik Duverger, 'Une Tenture de l'Histoire d'Ulysse livrée par Jacques Geubels le Jeune au Prince de Pologne', *Artes Textiles*, no. 7, 1971, pp. 74–98; and for the *Horsemanship* see Hefford in Brosens, op. cit. in n. 3 above, p. 117, and Göbel, op. cit., vol. I, p. 323.
9. Duverger, op. cit. in n. 8 above, published a dispute between the young Jacques Geubels and an Antwerp merchant, who Geubels accused of slowing down the completion of a project for the archduchess due to non payment.
10. Delmarcel in Campbell, op. cit. in n. 1 above, p. 214.
11. These quips are based on a *paragone* between weaving and painting, and the design and the manufacture of tapestries. It shows a trade pride and a certain disingenuousness on the part of Geubels; while he claims that weaving has conquered painting and that weaving is a more truthful medium than painting, he draws attention to the fact that the tapestries were designed by a great painter.
12. For recent archival documents on the Geubels family, see Koenraad Brosens, 'New Light on the Raes Workshop in Brussels and Rubens's Achilles Series', in Thomas P. Campbell and Elizabeth A. H. Cleland (eds.), *The Metropolitan*



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*Museum of Art Symposia: Tapestry in the Baroque New Aspects of Production and Patronage*, New York, 2010, p. 25. For the Geubels family and workshop in general, see G. L. Meesters, 'De herkomst van Janneke Geubels de vrouw van Petrus Plancius', *Gens Nostra*, no. 37, 1962; Nora de Poorter, 'Over de weduwe Geubels en de datering van Jordaens' tapijtenreeks De taferelen uit het landleven', *Gentse Bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis*, no. 25, 1979–80, pp. 208–34; Erik Duverger, 'Enkele archivalische gegevens over Catharina van den Eynde en over haar zoon Jacques II Geubels, tapiissiers te Brussel', *Gentse bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis*, no. 26, 1981–84, pp. 161–93.

13. Two of Jordaens's preparatory drawings in watercolour and body-colour for the *Scenes of Country Life* are in English collections. The *Return from the Hunt* is in the British Museum, and the *Rest from the Hunt* is in the V&A Museum, both London.

14. For the dating of the project and the first weaving for the convent of Descalzas Reales, see Herrero Carretero in Campbell, op. cit. in n. 1 above, pp. 221–30. For the series as a whole, see Nora de Poorter, *The Eucharist Series*, 2 vols, Brussels, 1978.

15. While Jordaens may have initially borrowed the idea from Rubens, architectonic borderless frames became very much a trademark of his own tapestry designs found in the series known as the *Proverbs* (1644–47), and in the original designs for the *Horsemanship* tapestries. There are three beautiful drawings at Castle Ashby, Northampton – *Gentleman and Lady with a Groom Saddling a Horse*, *Gentleman in Armour on Horseback under an arch*, and *Groom holding a rearing grey horse in front of an arch* – which are so close in style and technique to the *Scenes from Country Life* drawings that they must be

contemporaneous. These are likewise borderless and set within a decorative architectural framework.

16. Thomas P. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence*, New York, 2002, p. 486; Nello Forti Grazzini, *L'Arazzo ferrarese*, Milan, 1982.

17. Campbell, op. cit. in n. 16 above, p. 504.

18. Examples of the type with internal pillars and very narrow borders can be seen in the Art Institute of Chicago (Koenraad Brosens, *European Tapestries in the Art Institute of Chicago*, New Haven, 2008, cat. no. 32, pp. 214–15); the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo, *Medieval Tapestries in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1993, cat. no. 52b, p. 602); and two large leaf verdures at the National Trust's Lyme Park, Cheshire. For a discussion of the architectural inner frames in large leaf verdures, see George Wingfield Digby, *Victoria and Albert Museum – The Tapestry Collection: Medieval and Renaissance*, London, 1980, p. 56.

19. Schmitz-von Ledebur writes: 'In this series Jordaens abandons such conventions in favour of vignettes in which his subjects are caught in moments of artless, unposed activity.' Schmitz-von Ledebur in Campbell, op. cit. in n. 1 above, p. 234.

20. Nelson, op. cit., p. 31.

21. See the 'Doctrine of the Four Humours' in Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*, London, 1964, pp. 3–15.

22. Probably written by his son-in-law Polybus.

23. A contemporary edition of Hippocrates' *De Humoribus* was edited by Louis Duret and Pierre Girardet in Paris, 1631. An earlier edition published in 1521 in England

of Galen's *De Temperamentis et De inaequali intemperie libri tres* was edited by Thomas Linacre.

24. For the influence of Ripa's emblems of the four elements on the decoration of Amsterdam Town Hall, see Katherine Fremantle, 'Themes from Ripa and Rubens in the Royal Palace of Amsterdam', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. CIII, no. 699, 1961, pp. 258–64. In England Henry Peacham liberally borrowed from Ripa, including emblems of the four humours in his emblem book *Minerva Britannia* of 1612.

25. Interestingly, de Gheyn's print sets of the *Elements* and the *Humours* use the same character of a bearded fisherman for 'water' and for 'phlegmatic'. In *Water* he descales a large fish and in *Phlegmatic* he empties out a wicker basket of fish and eels. De Gheyn also uses the same character of a long-haired gallant for *Air* with a hawk and for *Sanguine* playing the lute.

26. Francis Cleyn did much the same thing at Mortlake in the same decade, the 1620s, with the designs for the *Five Senses* tapestries. See Jamie Mulherron and Helen Wyld, 'Mortlake's Banquet of the Senses', *Apollon*, vol. CLXXV, no. 596 (March 2012), pp. 122–28.

27. One of Shakespeare's best-known sonnets, sonnet 14, is an erotic poem based on the elements and humours.

28. William Marshall published a set of *The Four Elements* and *The Four Complexions*, and George Glover a set of *The Four Complexions* in London in the 1630s.

29. 'To brawle for Gaine, the Cocke doth Sleight; But for his Females, he will fight', George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes*, London, 1635, book 2, p. 71. Wither used the plates of two earlier Netherlandish emblem books, Gabriel Rollenhagen's *Nucleus emblematum selectissimorum*, Arnheim, 1611, and Rollenhagen's *Emblematum*



14



15

*centuria secunda*, Arnheim, 1613.

30. As in Ripa's *Iconologia*.

31. Nelson, op. cit., p. 92.

32. Jordaens's subject here is very much akin to the *Otia* scenes of Abraham Bloemaert (c. 1566–1651), and closely related to the genre scenes of the de Wael brothers, who, originally from Antwerp, lived and worked in Genoa but were part of the Rubens-Van Dyck-Jordaens network that was especially popular in England.

33. The definitive edition of Andrea Alciato's *Emblemata* was produced in Lyons, 1550, by Macé Bonhomme and Guillaume Rouille, with illustrations thought to be by Pierre Eskrich.

FIG 13 *The Kitchen*, c. 1630  
Jacques II Geubels after  
Jacob Jordaens  
Tapestry, wool and silk,,  
375x480cm  
Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire  
National Trust/Robert Thrift

FIG 14 *Cholericus* from a set of the *Four Temperaments*, c. 1595  
Pieter de Jode after  
Martin de Vos  
Engraving, 19 x 25cm  
© The Trustees of the British Museum, London

FIG 15 *Fire* from a set of the *Four Elements*, c. 1588  
Jacques de Gheyn (1565–1629)  
Engraving, 18.73 x 13.97cm  
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