UNRAVELING CHRIST'S PASSION: ARCHBISHOP DALMAU DE MUR, PATRON AND COLLECTOR, AND FRANCO-FLEMISH TAPESTRIES IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN


Abstract

This dissertation considers the artistic patronage of Dalmau de Mur i de Cervelló (1376-1456), a high-ranking Catalan prelate little known outside Spain. As Bishop of Girona (1416-1419), Archbishop of Tarragona (1419-1431) and Archbishop of Zaragoza (1431-1456), Dalmau de Mur commissioned and acquired works of art, including illuminated manuscripts, panel paintings, sculpted altarpieces, metalwork and tapestries. Many of these objects survive, including two remarkable tapestries depicting the Passion of Christ that he bequeathed to Zaragoza Cathedral upon his death in 1456. Surviving primary documents, particularly Dalmau de Mur's testament and the Cathedral inventory of 1521, show that his collection was still more significant. A major part of the dissertation is a study of the style and iconography of the Passion of Christ tapestries at Zaragoza Cathedral. They were woven in the French northern counties of Flanders or Artois in the early fifteenth century. Technically, they are among the earliest surviving examples of tapestry that comprise silk, silver and gold threads. Furthermore, they are the only surviving Franco-Flemish tapestries to have been imported into an ecclesiastical collection in Spain. Dalmau de Mur's acquisition marks the beginning of an important phase of the artistic exchange between northern and southern Europe that would culminate in the patronage of the "Catholic Kings" later in the fifteenth century. The Zaragoza tapestries are also the oldest extant tapestries that represent the Passion of Christ. Consequently, they provide a rare insight into the treatment of Passion iconography in the rich and expensive medium of luxury tapestry during the early fifteenth century. An extensive iconographic survey reveals that the designers of the Zaragoza Passion tapestries were influenced by a select group of objects owned by the leading patrons of art in France—King Charles V and his brothers, the Dukes of Berry, Burgundy and Anjou. Stylistic criteria confirm that the designers of the Zaragoza tapestries were French or Flemish artists who either worked for the French royal court or knew the objects produced by French court artists.
London, 2002), pp. 129–134.. n/a: n/a, 2002. Lawson, Margaret. Large tapestry canvas. Probably Flemish 16th-17th century hunting scene in the Renaissance style, male hunting party and hunting dogs in a wide landscape with mountains in the back. Early 17th Century European Renaissance Antique Tapestries. Tapestries were ubiquitous in the castles and churches of the late medieval and Renaissance eras. At a practical level, they provided a form of insulation and decoration that could be Category. In the late 1440s and early 1450s, Alfonso de Palencia (1423–92), a young Castilian scholar and prebendary of burgos Cathedral who later served Queen Isabel as royal chronicler and adviser, traveled to Rome. According to a route outlined in his Tratado de la perfección del triunfo militar, he traveled through Castile to Barcelona, north and east through southern France, across the Alps and down to Florence, continuing south to Siena, Perugia, Rimini, and Rome. He is much struck by what he sees and experiences on his travels, particularly by Florence, and has the opportunity both in that city a