The story of the Trojan War inspired much of the poetry and art of ancient Greece and, like so many of the other stories of antiquity, has gripped the imagination of later ages. The story was popular in the medieval period, but not in the Homeric form we follow today. For although he was “a marvelous clerk, both wise and learned,” Homer was not considered trustworthy as he was a Greek, “who gave to the Grekeshonor than to the Trojans.” This partiality was naturally offensive to western Europeans, who maintained that “pious Aeneas” founded Rome and fondly believed that the Trojans were the ancestors of their kings. To make matters worse, Homer showed gods fighting with men and, worst of all, was not even present at the struggle. Therefore Homer was rejected in favor of two “eyewitnesses”—Dictys the Cretan and Dares “the Phrygian.” The account of Dares, a Trojan, was naturally favored over that of Dictys whenever possible. Actually, Homer’s Iliad, the oldest and greatest account of the Trojan War that has survived, was probably composed in the eighth century B.C., reflecting a historical event supposed to have taken place about 1200 B.C. The accounts of Dares and Dictys, on the other hand, were written eight or nine hundred years after Homer, probably in the first and second centuries of our era. The objections that the medieval world had to Homer as a historian had already been raised in antiquity and were merely inherited.

The fall of Troy was closely associated by the French with their own history. As early as the seventh century, when history was clothed with romance, the Chronicles of Fredigerarius told of Francio, a leader of the Trojans, who, after the sack of the city, supposedly came as far as France, which was named in his honor. The Trojan wanderers were said to have founded a number of cities, including Paris, named for the princely lover of Helen; Troyes, the new Troy; Rheims, founded by Remus, son-in-law of Hector; and Tours named for Turnus.

The adaptation of classical tales by medieval storytellers seems incongruous to us in our period. Classical warriors speak and act like medieval knights. In an episode of the story of Troy, Hercules is represented as a knight-errant who takes part in a tournament. Even stranger was the transformation of another classical tale, that of Jupiter and Callisto. The maiden flees to a cloister under the charge of Diana, goddess of the hunt; Jupiter, disguised as a maiden, pursues her and is also admitted to the order.

The first important medieval account of the Trojan War appears to be that of Benoit de Sainte-More, a Norman writer of the twelfth...
century. His lively version was done over into dull, thirteenth-century Latin by the Sicilian Guido delle Columnis. The tale was again revamped in 1464 by Raoul Lefèvre, at the Burgundian court. His work is familiar to English readers through William Caxton’s *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, published about 1475 and one of the earliest works printed in English.

Lefèvre wrote his Trojan history at a time when the dukes of Burgundy were newly come to the full tide of their princely power. Wishing to assert the importance of their recently founded dynasty, they stressed their ancient lineage, which was the same as that of the French royal family, of which they were a cadet branch, by claiming descent from King Priam of Troy. This claim naturally led them to take a deep interest in the Trojan War. Philip the Good commissioned the history of Troy to be written by Lefèvre, who was his chaplain and a tutor to his son and successor, Charles the Bold. And Caxton made his translation of Lefèvre “at the commandement of the right hye myghty and vertuous Pryncess” Margaret of York, wife of Charles.

The means of telling a story in this period was not restricted to the spoken or written word. Complicated narratives were woven in tapestry series with highly detailed scenes. Numerous tapestries of the Trojan War were made and still exist, and there is documentary evidence that at least one set was made for the house of Burgundy. The Museum is fortunate in possessing three sections of Trojan War tapestries, two of which are attributed to this set, which is very likely the master set and was woven in Tournai between 1472 and 1474 for Charles the Bold.

The first tapestry (see p. 83) was acquired in 1939 from the Clarence Mackay estate. It represents Hector being armed and starting out to battle in spite of the pleas of his wife. The subject of the second tapestry (p. 78), which came to the Museum in 1952, is the fifth battle of the Trojan War, featuring a centaur Bowman, or sagittary, fighting the Greeks. This tapestry was woven
Section of a Trojan War tapestry showing the fifth battle, with the sagittary fighting the Greeks, and Hector and Achilles meeting in Achilles' tent, the same scene represented in the fragment illustrated on page 77. Made in the workshop of Pasquier or Jean Grenier during the last quarter of the XV century. Fletcher Fund, 1952

later than the master set, but a corresponding section showing the sagittary, in the Higgins Collection, Worcester, Massachusetts, may have been part of the original series. In the right corner of the Museum's tapestry is the meeting of Hector and Achilles in Achilles' tent, during the truce after the fifth battle. The last tapestry, recently acquired for The Cloisters, repeats a part of the scene in the tent, showing Achilles, Agamemnon, and Hector.

The sequence of these scenes is understood by looking at an almost complete Trojan War tapestry now in the cathedral of Zamora in Spain, which is illustrated on page 81. At the extreme
left is part of the fifth battle, in which the sagitary is engaged (the rest was cut off and sold in 1906 after the tapestry had been partly burned). Next is the tent scene; then comes the eighth battle, not represented in the Museum's tapestries; and finally, the arming of Hector. The sixth and seventh battles were omitted by the tapestry designer as being of little consequence.

For the most part, tapestries of the Trojan War follow in shortened form the version of the story as it is given by Lefèvre and Caxton. At the top of the Museum's sagitary tapestry appears the first incident of the fifth battle. Achilles, mounted on horseback, has just thrust his lance into Hupon, who, in his death agony, is falling backward out of the saddle. In Caxton's words, “Achilles addressed hym first to Hupon that was grete as a geant and was kynge of Larrysse. And he smote hym so sore wyth a spere in the breste that he sleue hym and bare hym doun to the erthe.” Between the sagitary and the huge body of the stricken Hupon is Hector, in a plumed helm. As usual, the Trojan hero plays an important part, slaying many of the foe. Behind Hector a fierce head is labeled “Eneas,” the legendary father of the Roman race and, in the medieval story, a counselor of Priam's, who in this battle slew the king Amphymacus.

The center of the field is occupied by the sagitary, “a meruayllous beste that behynde the myddes was an hors and to fore a man,” who “had his eyen reed as a coole [red as a coal] and shotte right well with a bowe. This beste made the grekes sore aferd and slewe many of hem wyth his bowe.” The episode of the sagitary, who was brought to the relief of Troy by an allied king, was a colorful addition to the tale. “When the knyghtes of the grekes sawe this meruailling beste they had no will to goo forth and they that were afore began to wythholde hem and wente aback.” In the tapestry the sagitary threatens with destruction a row of Greek warriers in the left corner. Above them appear the tents of the Greeks, to which “by the strengthe of the Troians and the horrour of the sagittaire the grekes were reculyd [recoiled].” In front of the tents can be seen Diomedes, with raised sword. As the account dryly puts it, Diomedes “was not wellassewryd [assured],” but “it behoved him there to shewe his puys-sance.” Therefore, with a frenzy born of desperation, “he gaf so grete a stroke that he slewe hym.” Throughout the whole account the Greeks are never shown in so favorable a light as the Trojans.

As the meeting between Hector and Achilles in the right corner of the tapestry is largely restored, like areas around and above the sagitary, the tent scene can be better studied by turning to the beautiful earlier fragment acquired for The Cloisters (p. 77) and to the more complete hanging at Zamora. Hector, at the right, dominates the group—Hector, “flower of manhood, ground of chivalrie, so huge made, so wel growe on lengthe, there was never man that fully myght attayne to the prowes of this worthi knyght, of alle good I fynde he was the beste.” In the center is Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks, shorter than Hector but still “large, noble, eloquent, prudent.” Behind Hector is a fragmentary figure, Menelaus, the aggrieved husband of Helen and the brother of Agamemnon. Only a fraction of his face is visible, but his whole figure, inscribed with his name, appears in the hanging at Zamora, as well as Hector’s horse, held by his groom. On the left is Achilles, “blond, great-chested, with large and mighty limbs and well-curled hair, most fierce in battle,” who had “no pareyll ne like to hym amonge alle the Grekes.” Yet even this favorable impression is later modified by his treacherous slaying of Hector when he was off guard.

The meeting in the tent is well described by Caxton: “As they spack to geder of many thynge Achilles sayde to Hector I haue grete playsir to see the unarmed for as moche as I had neuer seen the to fore. But yet I shall haue more playsir whan the day shall come that thou shalt dye of my hande whyche thyng I most desire. For I knowe the to be moche stronge. And I haue often tymes prouyd hit unto the effusion of my blood.” Hector answers in like vein and challenges Achilles to single combat, “body ayenst body,” each champion to represent his army and the losing side to admit defeat in the war. Achilles accepts the challenge, but neither the Greeks nor the Trojans are satisfied with the agreement except for Priam. When Agamemnon hears of it he hastens to Achilles’ tent with a great com-
pany of noblemen who are against submitting many men under the strength of one.

Unless he happened to read the names of the heroes someone looking at these tapestries for the first time would hardly suspect that Greek and Trojan warriors are represented. The battle scene, with the whole field broken up into individual combats between various knights, suggests the confusion of a medieval melee. The classical heroes, in the pictorial as well as the written account, have become medieval knights, bedecked with the trappings of the age of chivalry. The little bells that hang from the bottom of Achilles' tunic in the tent scene are typical of a period that indulged itself in all the fripperies of extravagant fashion. In the Hector tapestry the Trojan hero rides out to battle with harness pendants shaped like fruits, dangling from the brocaded trappings on his horse. Such fruit-shaped bells were worn at the tourney celebrating the marriage of Charles the Bold to Margaret of York in 1468. Their tinkling sound called attention to the wearer, if his rich costume had not already done so. The fantastic helm of Hector in the tapestry is another piece of pageantry hardly suitable for the rigors of combat. However, the rich brocade of Achilles' tent is a proper setting for the bejeweled velvet and brocade costumes and for "the brodered robes woven in Saragossa" spoken of in the texts. Above the tent waves Hector's banner, decorated with his medieval coat of arms, a field "alle of gold, and in the mydell a lyon of gowles [gules, or red]."

The sumptuous costumes and settings of the tapestries follow a literary tradition at least as old as Benoît's account. Such military pageantry was especially appropriate for tapestries belonging to a man like Charles the Bold, who glorified war as the most worthy occupation of a great lord and who went to battle surrounded by all the pomp and luxury of a tournament. Even on his crucial and disastrous campaign against the Swiss, Charles encumbered his baggage trains with innumerable coffers of objets d'art and rich furnishings, including some of his choicest tapestries to hang in his tents.

The tapestries of the Trojan War correspond closely to Lefèvre's version, as shown by the quotations from Caxton, but the possibility of other written sources cannot be ignored. The story was widespread and had countless minor variations. A play was written by Jacques Millet, called *L'Istoire de la destruction de Troyes la grant*, and in 1472, the same year the tapestries were commissioned by Charles, the Société des Coeurs Joyeux asked for permission to give another Trojan War play at Tournai.

At the top and bottom of the Museum's large tapestries there are rhymed couplets, which copy no known literary or dramatic source and may have been specially written for them. Those at the top are in French, those at the bottom in Latin. The same couplets are found on the backs of a series of small-scale drawings, identical to the tapestries, made by Jean Le Tavernier, a painter who worked for the Burgundian court. These drawings, now in the Louvre, may come from the three portfolios of sketches of the Trojan War stories for which Philip the Good paid Le Tavernier in 1455. They may well have been used as the "petits patrons," or models, from which were drawn the full-scale cartoons for the weaving of the tapestries less than twenty years later. A less likely explanation is that they are copies of the finished tapestries.

The sagittary tapestry still has most of its French inscription, somewhat abbreviated when the tapestry was repaired. A reconstruction of the doggerel couplets is as follows:

```
Achilles vint impetueusement
En bataille ou tau ung joyant [tue un géant]
Qui combatoit moult vertueusement
Fort terrible nomme hupon le grant
Le sagitaire orrible et espatant
Polixenar tua en cest effort
Diomedes vertueux et puissant
Le sagitaire occit et mist a mort.
```

The inscription above the tent scene with Hector and Achilles is now missing in both pieces belonging to the Museum, but it still exists in the Zamora tapestry:

```
Treves pendant comme est acoustume
Hector vint veoir achilles en sa tente
Que veu naivoit oncque synon arme
Deux prendre champ chacun contente
Hector vaincu rend helaye la gente
Ou achilles vaincu fait de partir
Tout lost des graz [grecs] par puisse patente
Mais les princes ny voldrent consentir.
```
An almost complete Trojan War tapestry, one of several in the cathedral at Zamora, Spain. Grenier workshop, after 1486. At the left is part of the fifth battle, the subject of the Museum's tapestry on page 78, which was woven earlier. Next is the tent scene, the central part of which is shown in the Cloister's fragment on page 77. In the center is the eighth battle; on the right is the arming of Hector, shown in the Museum's earlier tapestry on page 83.
The connection of two of the Museum’s tapestries, the tent-scene fragment and the large Hector piece, with the house of Burgundy seems undeniable. Documents exist showing that a series of Trojan War tapestries was woven for Charles the Bold in the workshop of Pasquier Grenier in Tournai between 1472 and 1474. Pieces of a set of Trojan War tapestries, traditionally considered to have been part of the booty captured from Charles by the Swiss, were in the château of Aulhac before the French Revolution. During the Revolution some of them were taken to Issoire, and at some point in their history they were cut into smaller sections, probably for greater convenience in hanging. In 1838, while they were still at Issoire, Achille Jubinal published watercolor drawings of sections of these tapestries by Victor Sansonetti, a former pupil of Ingres. Among them is a drawing, the central part of which was found to correspond exactly to the Cloisters fragment of the meeting of Hector and Achilles. There can be no doubt that the drawing is of this particular tapestry because of the many distinctive points in common, such as the colors, the peculiar way in which Agamemnon’s name is inscribed on his hat, and the representation of the hair and jewels. Other existing tapestries with this scene are different in these details. The evidence for the Cloisters piece being part of the master set of Trojan War tapestries could hardly be more direct.

Although the Hector tapestry is not included in the drawings it appears to have been originally attached to the right of a piece that has since disappeared but is illustrated on plate iv of Jubinal’s book. It may have become separated from the other pieces before the water colors were made. The association of the Hector tapestry with the set from Aulhac is confirmed by the brocade pattern on the panoply of Hector’s horse, which is identical to a pattern seen in another Trojan War tapestry, known to be from Aulhac. This tapestry, now in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, represents the meeting of Priam with Diomedes and Ulysses near the gates of Troy. The conclusion seems inevitable that the two pieces were part of the same set.

The origin of the Museum’s sagittary tapestry is still a puzzle. Nothing is known of it before its appearance in the Heilbronn sale in Paris in 1921. It is an orphan of the storm of neglect and mistreatment to which most medieval tapestries have been subjected. Originally it must have belonged to one of the Trojan War sets that have wholly or partly disappeared. Among such series, whose existence is known from inventories, are those listed in the possession of Louis XII of France, Henry VII of England, and James IV of Scotland. The Museum’s tapestry cannot be associated with the set at Zamora, as the corresponding tapestry at Zamora also includes the tent scene, though the sagittary is missing from it.

All existing Trojan War tapestries of this period have a general family resemblance, and in composition they are so similar that they appear to have been woven from the same car-
The arming of Hector and his departure for battle, section of a Trojan War tapestry to which the fragment on page 77 originally belonged. Fletcher Fund, 1939
toons. It seems to have been the usual practice for cartoons to become the property of the workshop that wove the tapestries. As Pasquier Grenier was commissioned by Charles the Bold to weave the original set, it is possible that his workshop also wove the other sets. However, Grenier was a great merchant as well as a master weaver, who sold many more tapestries than he could have woven, and the volume of work involved in making all these sets makes it more probable that he called on other workshops under his direction. The similarity of style in all the Trojan War tapestries certainly implies some such general supervision.

The weaving of the tapestries must have covered a span of at least twelve to fourteen years, if one counts the time between Charles the Bold’s set, woven between 1472 and 1474, and the set at Zamora, woven for the Count of Tendilla after 1486. However, the chances are that some of the series were made even later than the one in Zamora, considering the enormous labor of weaving a half dozen or more sets, each apparently composed of eleven tapestries about thirty feet long by fifteen feet high.

It is inevitable that there would be a certain amount of variation in so much weaving. Judging by a study of the three pieces in the Museum and of available photographs, the tapestries are separable into two groups. Those associated with the château of Aulhac and Charles the Bold seem to form the nucleus of one group, in which the brocade patterns are simpler and the facial types younger and fresher than those in other tapestries, which are more like the set at Zamora, woven later. The Museum’s sagittary tapestry may be assigned to this later group. These groupings, of course, can only be finally determined by a study of the colors and weaves of the tapestries themselves. The differences are not very striking, but they are better explained by an evolution in the style of one large atelier, or group of related ateliers, than by the complete independence of several distinctly separate ateliers working at the same time.

All Flemish tapestries of the Tournai school make great use of Italian brocades, remarkable for the richness and clarity of their designs. Brocades are also very prominent in Flemish paintings and manuscript illuminations, used for the dress of persons of rank and for canopies behind and above thrones. At this time there must have been an influx of Italian materials on the international markets of Flanders. One of Pasquier Grenier’s varied enterprises that he probably passed on to his son Jean was the buying and selling of brocades, some of which were doubtless used as stage properties for the weavers in the workshops. The use of one brocade pattern, a pomegranate design, in two Trojan War tapestries of the set from Aulhac has already been pointed out. The same pattern appears a third time in a tapestry also attributed to Grenier, in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. It represents part of the story of Esther and Ahasuerus and probably belonged to one of the lost series of Esther tapestries made after a set woven by Grenier for Philip the Good in 1462. More elaborate versions of this pomegranate pattern are used in later Trojan War tapestries attributed to Grenier’s workshop.

The effect achieved in the Museum’s Tapestry Hall by hanging the Trojan War tapestries near the series of the Sacraments, also made in Grenier’s atelier, suggests the splendor that must have been produced by a set of Trojan War tapestries when new and complete—an appropriate background to the pomp and ceremony surrounding a medieval lord. One can only lament that the luxury-loving Charles lived up to his name, apparently being bold enough to take his Trojan War set along with him to decorate his camp on his ill-fated Swiss campaign. Perhaps his set might otherwise have survived in more complete form, like the one at Zamora. Like his Trojan “ancestors” he went down, a little later, fighting valiantly. Like their kingdom his too fell apart at his final defeat and death. The wily Louis XI was too much for him, as the Greeks had been for the Trojans.