

List of tapestries called ‘Sheldon’ once thought the products of the looms at Barcheston now known

The tapestries listed below were given the name Sheldon in the 1920s in the belief that they were products of a workshop for which plans were outlined by William Sheldon of Beoley and Weston in his will. They were classified following criteria suggested by A. J. B. Wace in 1928. The criteria were derived from the stylistic characteristics of five tapestries found at Chastleton House, not themselves indisputable Barcheston work. No documents are associated with any of the tapestries listed below. Recent research has led to the re-attribution and re-dating of many of the tapestries listed below.

No attempt has been made to describe condition or to assign dates.

Images are best found by a search on the relevant repository’s web site.

1. The Maps

1.1 Warwickshire, Warwickshire Museum, Warwick

1.2. Worcestershire, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

1.3. Oxfordshire, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford,
and 1.3.1a,b, sections, lower right corner Victoria and Albert Museum, London

1.4. Gloucestershire

1.4.1 Section, lower right hand corner with border, Private Collection

1.4.2 Section, lower right, centred on the Bristol Channel, Bodleian Library,
University of Oxford

1.4.3a,b Two fragments, Bodleian Library University of Oxford

2. Judah and Tamar

2.1 Judah goes to Timnath, Private Collection

2.2 Judah gives his staff and bracelets, Aston Hall, Birmingham

2.3 Judah recognizes his staff and bracelets, whereabouts unknown

2.4 The Birth of Pharez and Zarah, Burrell Collection Glasgow, 47.20

3.0. The Judgement of Paris (also titled Paris gives the Golden Apple), Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T. 310-1920

4. Tapestry hangings at Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe, Gloucestershire

5. Arms of Walter Jones and his wife, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.21

6a. Arms of Sacheverell, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.195-1914

6b. Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.17

7. Abraham and Isaac

7.1 Abraham entertaining the Angels, whereabouts unknown, Standen 1985, ii, 689

7.1.1 Frau Budge sale, Paul Graupe, Berlin 27-29 September 1937, 437, illus.
whereabouts unknown

7.2.1 The Expulsion of Hagar, Parke-Bernet, New York, 6 March 1948, lot 64

7.3.1 Sacrifice of Isaac, Private Collection

7.3.2 Listed *Archaeologia* 78, plate xlix, fig.3

7.3.3 Private collection, similar to above

7.3.4 The sacrifice of Isaac, Burrell Collection Glasgow, 47.15

7.3.5 Sacrifice of Isaac, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, T.7A-1961

Variant presentation, small size, same theme

7.3.6 Metropolitan Museum, New York, 64.101.1282, Standen 1985

7.3.7 Sacrifice of Isaac, Private Collection

7.3.8. Sotheby's London, 4.3.1927, lot 76, *Archaeologia* 78; pl xli, fig.2

7.4.1 Isaac meeting Rebecca, paired with 7.3.1, Private Collection

7.4.2 Burrell Collection Glasgow, 47.16

7.5.1 Hagar comforted by an Angel, Burrell Collection Glasgow, 47.18

7.6 Jacob receives the blessing of his father, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, T.7B-1961

8. Susanna and the Elders

8.1-6. Susanna and the Elders, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.9-14

8.1 Susanna on her way to the bath, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.9

Similar Tapestries

8.1.1. Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.6

8.2 Susanna at her bath, Burrell Collection 47.10

8.3 Susanna before the Judge, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.12

Similar Tapestries

8.3.1. Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.5

8.4 Susanna led to Execution, (Daniel intercedes) Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.11

Similar Tapestries

8.4.1. Private collection. Identical vertical borders suggest a link with 8.1. 1 and 8.6.1

8.4.2. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford on Avon, SBT-1993-31/304b

Possibly related to 8.7.2, which has a similar border.

8.5 The Elders before Daniel, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.13

Similar Tapestries

8.5.1. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford on Avon, SBT 1993-31/304a
associated with 8.4.2, reversed from 8.5 above.

8.5.2. *The Antiquarian*, September 1931, whereabouts unknown. Reverse presentation from 8.5.

8.5.3. Burrell Collection 47.7

8.6 The Stoning of the Elders, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.14

Similar Tapestries

8.6.1. The Oak and Country Sale, Sotheby's Olympia, April 27 2004, Lot 43, illus.
Framed and glassed. With a London dealer 2014, unframed; whereabouts unknown

8.6.2. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Mallett Coll WA1947-299

8.6.3. Burrell Collection, Glasgow 47.8

8.7 Variant Presentations: combined scenes

8.7. Scenes 1,2,3, private collection

H.C. Marillier Tapestry Subject Catalogue, Fiche 204, card 82

8.7.1 Variant version, ex Frau Budge, illus. *Archaeologia* 78, pl xlii, fig 2, present
whereabouts unknown

8.7.2 Susanna, first three scenes, ex-Hedingham Castle
Associated with 8.6.2, illus *Archaeologia* 78, plate xliii, fig.2

8.8 Variant 2

8.8 Private collection, Scenes 1, 2

Sold as scenes from the story of David and Bathsheba, Wilkinsons, Doncaster, 23
February 2004, lot 240, illus

8.9 Variant 3. Single scenes, possibly once associated in the same tapestry

8.9.1: Susanna going to the bath, private collection

Associated with 8.9.3 below

8.9.2 Susanna at the bath, private collection

8.9.3 Susanna before the Judge, private collection

Associated with 8.9.1

9. Judith with the head of Holofernes

9.1 Judith, her maid and the head of Holofernes, under an arcade, private collection
Monogram : C R / I

Similar Tapestries:

9.1.1 The central section with very similar details, some reversed, is now in a private
collection. Bears the monogram W/ E M

9.2 Judith, her maid and the head of Holofernes, Victoria and Albert Museum,
London, T.273-1927

9.3 Judith alone, private collection

Similar Tapestries:

9.3.1 A tapestry similar to 9.3; *Burlington Magazine*, 51, no.352 July 1932, p.3

9.4 Judith, maid and the head of Holofernes, Metropolitan Museum, New York, illustrated Standen, ii, no.12

Inscription : Si Deus nobiscum / Quis contra nos

Similar Tapestries

9.4.1 Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.23

Inscription : Si Deus nobiscum / Quis contra nos

9.4.2. Packwood House, Warwickshire, National Trust

9.4.3 National Needle Museum, Redditch

10.0 Scenes from the Life of Joseph

10.1.1 Three scenes, Nash's House, Stratford on Avon, SBT 1993-31/299; Joseph sold into captivity, escapes Potiphar's bed, before Pharaoh

10. 1.2 Joseph sold into Captivity, Private Collection

10. 2.1 Joseph's Dream, Private Collection

10. 2.2 Joseph's Dream, Private Collection

10.3.1 Joseph embraces Benjamin, American Art Association, Anderson Art Gallery Inc., New York 21-25 October 1930, lot 970. Present whereabouts unknown

11. Tobias and the Angel

11.1 Tobias and the Angel, Parham House, Sussex

11.1.1 A virtually identical tapestry, Private Collection

11.2.1. Tobias taking leave of his father; Tobias and Sara pray for children
Known only from illustrations, *Archaeologia* 78, plate, xlix

11.3.1 Tobias and Sara praying

Known only from illustrations, *Archaeologia* 78, plate, xlix

11.4 Variant Presentation, three scene panel, Tobias departs, Tobias and the fish, Tobias returns, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, T.1-1953

12. The Prodigal Son

12.1 Society of Antiquaries Newcastle upon Tyne, Museum of the North, six scenes, unusual presentation on strips

Similar Tapestries:

12.2.1 The Prodigal's Farewell to his father, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.1-1933

12.2.2 Sold Christie's London 11 December 1980, lot 153, illus. present whereabouts unknown

12.2.3. Colour illustrated in E. Sachs, *International Studio*, vol. 94, 79-80; present whereabouts unknown

12.2.4 Listed in the Frau Budge sale, Paul Graupe Berlin 1937 lot 438, present whereabouts unknown

12.3.1 Riotous Living

Known only in 12.1; no similar tapestries in Sheldon style

12.4.1 The Expulsion, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York, 1950-13-1

Similar tapestries:

12.4.2. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 54.7.6

12.5.1 Repentance, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 54.7.7

Similar Tapestries

12.5.2. Henry Barton Jacobs sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries New York, 10-12 December 1940, lot 842, illus.; present whereabouts unknown

12.6.1 The Return of the Prodigal Son, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Mallett WA1947-298

Similar Tapestries

12.6.2. Henry Barton Jacobs sale, Parke-Bernet Galleries New York, 10-12 December 1940, lot 842, illus.; present whereabouts unknown

12.7.1 Feasting the Prodigal, Society of Antiquaries, Newcastle upon Tyne
See 12.0

Similar tapestries

12.7.2. Private collection, possibly one of the Partridge set, *Archaeologia* 78, 304

12.8 Variant Presentation as three scenes – 2,3,4 – combined

Two longer cushions, each showing the second, third and fourth scenes, are known only from illustrations.

12.8.1. Christie's London 11 December 1980, lot 154, present whereabouts unknown

12.8.2. Goebel, III, ii, 125(b) present whereabouts unknown

13. The Nativity

13.1 Adoration of the Magi, Fenton House, Hampstead, National Trust

Similar Tapestries:

13.1.2 Known only from a photograph in the Getty Study Collection, present whereabouts unknown

13.1.3 A variation showing two scenes within the same borders, the Adoration of the Shepherds and of the Kings, is illustrated by Goebel, III, ii, 125 (a)

14. The Annunciation, Adoration of Shepherds and the Kings; the Flight into Egypt

14.1 Annunciation, Adoration of the Shepherds and of the Kings, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 50.145.56, Standen 1985, ii, 685

14.2 Large Flight into Egypt, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.191-1926

14.2.1 The Flight into Egypt, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.85-1913

15. Circumcision

15. The Circumcision, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 64.101.1281, Standen 1985, ii, 694

16. Christ and the Woman of Samaria

16.1 Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.86-1913

17. The Cleansing of the Temple, Private Collection

18. The Virtues

18.1 Faith, Hope and Charity, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, LLAG 4234
Illus Lucy Wood, *The Upholstered Furniture in the Lady Lever Art Gallery*, 2008, Cat.14.

Similar Tapestries:

18.1.2 Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.19

18.1.3. Charity as a single figure, Present whereabouts unknown.
illustrated *Archaeologia* 78, plate xlviii, fig 2

18.1.4. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 82.24

18.2 Temperance, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, LL 4234

18.3 Justice, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight, LL 4234

Similar Tapestries

18.3.1. *Archaeologia* 78, plate xlviii, fig 2

18.4 Prudence, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 82.23

18.5 a,b,c, Faith, Hope, Charity, National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh, A.1926.213, and A.1926.213, a,b,
Burlington Magazine, vol li, July 1927, no 292, 25-6, illus.

18.5a Hope, A.1926.213 (A)

Similar Tapestries : see above, 18.1

18.5b Faith, A.1926 .213 (B)

18.5c Charity, A.1926.213

Similar Tapestries:

18.5.1 *Charitas*, Private Collection

19 x 18½ inches, 48.2 x 47.0 cms

See also above 18.1, 18.1.1

19. Hunters

19.1 Lone Huntsman, Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 47.24

Similar Tapestries

19.2 Huntsman, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, T.645 - 1993

A similar depiction seen also on 12.1 and on 19.3

19.3 The Huntsman, private collection

20. Squirrel, Private Collection

No details; carries inscription, The Gift is Small, Good will is All

21. The Griffin tapestry, The Barber Institute, Birmingham, on display Chastleton House, Oxfordshire.

Inscription : EXΩN OYK EXOMAI

22. The valance for a bed, Victoria and Albert Museum, T.117-1934

23 The hart lives, private collection, whereabouts unknown

Christie's South Kensington 23 November 2005, lot 3, illus

Inscription : The hart lives/where it loves.

24. A purse or sweet bag Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, T.8-1961

25. The Four Seasons, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire

Commissioned by Sir John Tracy of Toddington, Glos. Carries arms Tracy/Shirley; zodiac signs for appropriate season; unusual borders inspired by illustrations to emblem books. Not now considered to be from the Sheldon workshop.

Mark : Bruges 1600-1610 on Spring and Winter

Bibliography

Many of the articles listed are available on the publisher's web site or in JStor

Barnard, E.A.B. and A .J. B. Wace, 'The Sheldon tapestry weavers and their work', *Archaeologia* 78, 1928, 255-314, Oxford 1928

Bath, Michael, *The Four Seasons Tapestries at Hatfield House*, Archetype, 2013

Cleland, Elizabeth, Karafel, Lorraine, et al. *Tapestries from the Burrell Collection*, Philip Wilson Publishers in association with Glasgow Museums, 2017

Humphreys, J., 'Elizabethan Sheldon Tapestries', *Archaeologia* 74, 1924, 181-202, reprinted as a monograph with the same title, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1929,

Kendrick A.F., 'The Hatfield Tapestries of the Seasons', *Walpole Society Annual*, ii, 1912-13, 89-95

Kendrick, A.F., *Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue of Tapestries*, London 1914 and 1924

Kendrick, A.F., 'Some Barcheston Tapestries', *Walpole Society*, vol xiv, 1925-26, 27-42.

Standen, E.A., *European post-Medieval Tapestries and Related Hangings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York 1985 (includes two pieces found since 1928)

Turner, Hilary L.,
No Mean Prospect: Ralph Sheldon's Tapestry Maps, Plotwood Press 2010

"'A wittie devise': the Sheldon tapestry maps belonging to the Bodleian Library, Oxford", *Bodleian Library Record*, 17, no.5, April 2002, pp. 293-313

'In Stately View': Ralph Sheldon's map of Gloucestershire', *Bodleian Library Record*, vol. 31, nos 1-2, April-October 2018, pp. 31-46

'The Sheldon Tapestry Maps: their Content and Context', *The Cartographic Journal*, 40 no1, June 2003, pp.39-49.

'The Sheldon Tapestry map of Warwickshire' *Warwickshire History*, 12, no1, Summer 2002, pp.32-44

'Oxfordshire in Wool and Silk: the tapestry map of Oxfordshire woven for Ralph 'the Great'', *Oxoniensia*, vol. 71, 2007, pp.67-72

'The Yorkshire Philosophical Society's 'Sheldon' tapestry maps', *Annual of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society*, 2006.

'Tapestries once at Chastleton House and their influence on the image of the tapestries called Sheldon: a re-assessment' *Antiquaries Journal*, vol 88 2008, pp. 313-343

'Tapestry strips depicting the parable of the Prodigal Son; how safe is an attribution to Mr Sheldon's venture at Barcheston?' *Archaeologia Aeliana*, fifth series, vol 37, 2008, pp. 183-196

‘Some small tapestries with Judith and the head of Holofernes: should they be called Sheldon ?’ ,*Textile History*, 41(2), 2010, pp. 19-39

‘Working Arras and Arras Workers: Conservation in the Great Wardrobe under Elizabeth I’, *Textile History*, 43 (1), May 2012, pp. 43-60

‘The Tapestry Trade in Elizabethan London: Products, Purchasers and Purveyors’, *The London Journal*, vol.38(1), March 2013, pp.18-33

Wace, A.J.B., ‘Some Tapestries in the Collection of Sir William Burrell’, *Old Furniture*, vol. 5, 1928, 78-82

Wace, A.J.B., ‘A pair of gloves with tapestry-woven gauntlets’, *Embroideress*, no.42,1932, 990-994, figs 1336-7-9.

A.Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558-1625*, Yale University Press, 1997, pp.221-234

Wingfield-Digby, G. *The Victoria and Albert Museum, Catalogue of Tapestries Medieval and Renaissance*, London 1980 (includes two pieces found since 1928)

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

Catalogue of the loan exhibition of English decorative Art at Lansdowne House, February 17-28th 1929; two editions, one on sale at doors, the other a hardback deluxe illustrated limited edition with different numbering, London 1929.

Loan Exhibition Depicting the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, 22&23 Grosvenor Place London 26 Jan-26 March 1933.

Royal Academy of Arts, *Exhibition of British Art c.1000-1860*, 6 January-10 March 1934.

An Exhibition of Treasures from Midland Homes, 2 November – 2 December 1938, City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, no. 45.

Wingfield-Digby, George, 1951 *Festival of Britain in Birmingham, An Exhibition of Tapestries*, 11 July-26 August 1951.

2000 Years of Tapestry Weaving, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford Connecticut, December 1951 - 27 January 1952; nos 105, 106, 107.

Vigo-Sternberg Galleries, London, *400 Years of English Tapestries*, November 1-12, 1971, nos. 1, 2, 3.

Exhibitions of material in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, McLellan Galleries, Glasgow 1949; for the Festival of Britain, 1951 and in 1969.

The Elizabethan Midlands, An exhibition of later 16th century art objects with a Midland provenance and in Midland Collections, 22 June – 30 September 1979, Birmingham.

The Treasure Houses of Britain, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1985, no. 33.

The Needles' Prayer, Glasgow, 23 February – 14 May 1995

The Sheldon Tapestry Map of Gloucestershire, The Bodleian Library, Oxford, January 23 – February 22 2008

Talking Maps, Nick Millea and J.R. Brotton, Bodleian Library Publishing, Oxford, 2018

Vitiated by major errors: it was not Ralph Sheldon who established the tapestry works but his father, William; only two tapestries were woven in a second version – Oxfordshire and Worcestershire. They were not commissioned by Ralph Sheldon's grandson but by his great grandson, Ralph 'the Great' Sheldon (d. 1684) whose arms are in the second Oxfordshire tapestry. Finally, both Oxfordshire tapestry end near Maidstone, Kent, not at London as stated.

Tudor and Stuart Textiles 1485-1688, Frances New York, 10 December 2008-20 February 2009.

Last revised 14-08-2025