

# Courtly Love

ARTH 312

Fall 2019

# Courtly Love

- modern term used to describe patterns of social interaction amongst the knightly and ruling classes
- The elites (secular + ecclesiastical) propagated patterns of interaction among men and women that were designed to formalize and sublimate some of the erotic and sexual aspects of social life, at least in theory.
- involves either the young, unmarried (heterosexual) couples or a married woman and an unmarried suitor
- luxury arts + literature
- adopting or adapting iconographic conventions first developed in religious art (kiss and embrace; conversation and offering gifts; adoration of God)



Dietmar von Aist  
disguised as a peddler  
woos his lady with his  
wares, from the  
*Manesse Codex*, Zürich,  
ca. 1300. Heidelberg,  
Universitätsbibliothek,  
Cod. Pal. Germ. 848,  
fol. 64r.

German love-poets

Three courtly couples. Front and back of a comb made in Paris, ca. 1320. Ivory. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.



chaplet\* (source document 1)

*The Gift of  
a Comb.*  
Mirror-  
back made  
in North  
Italy, ca.  
1390.  
Ivory.  
Baltimore,  
Walters Art  
Gallery.



personal beauty  
+ ivory  
(source document 2)

A lady accepts her suitor. Buckle on a man's girdle from the Mosan region, ca. 1200. Silver-gilt.  
Stockholm, Museum of National Antiquities.



joining + binding

Game with a  
hood. *Aumonière*  
made in Paris, ca.  
1340. Couched  
gold and silver  
threads on linen.

Hamburg,  
Museum für  
Kunst und  
Gewerbe.



“sack”

financial  
+ sexual  
potency



T oib iuvint a pleine bras  
et la ueront  
caillir en place

es une granz  
bourse pecanç  
Toute fausse  
a veranz  
Sel la ueoit  
caillir en place

The lady feels the lover's  
"purse," from *Le Roman  
de La Rose*, France, ca.  
1280. Rome, Biblioteca  
Apostolica Vaticana, MS  
Urb. 376, fol. 51v.

Casket with scenes of courtly love, ca. 1180. Limoges champlevé enamel. British Museum, London.



control + containment

The God of Love locking the lover's heart, from *Le Roman de la Rose*, Paris, ca. 1380. London, British Library, Add. MS 42133, fol. 15.



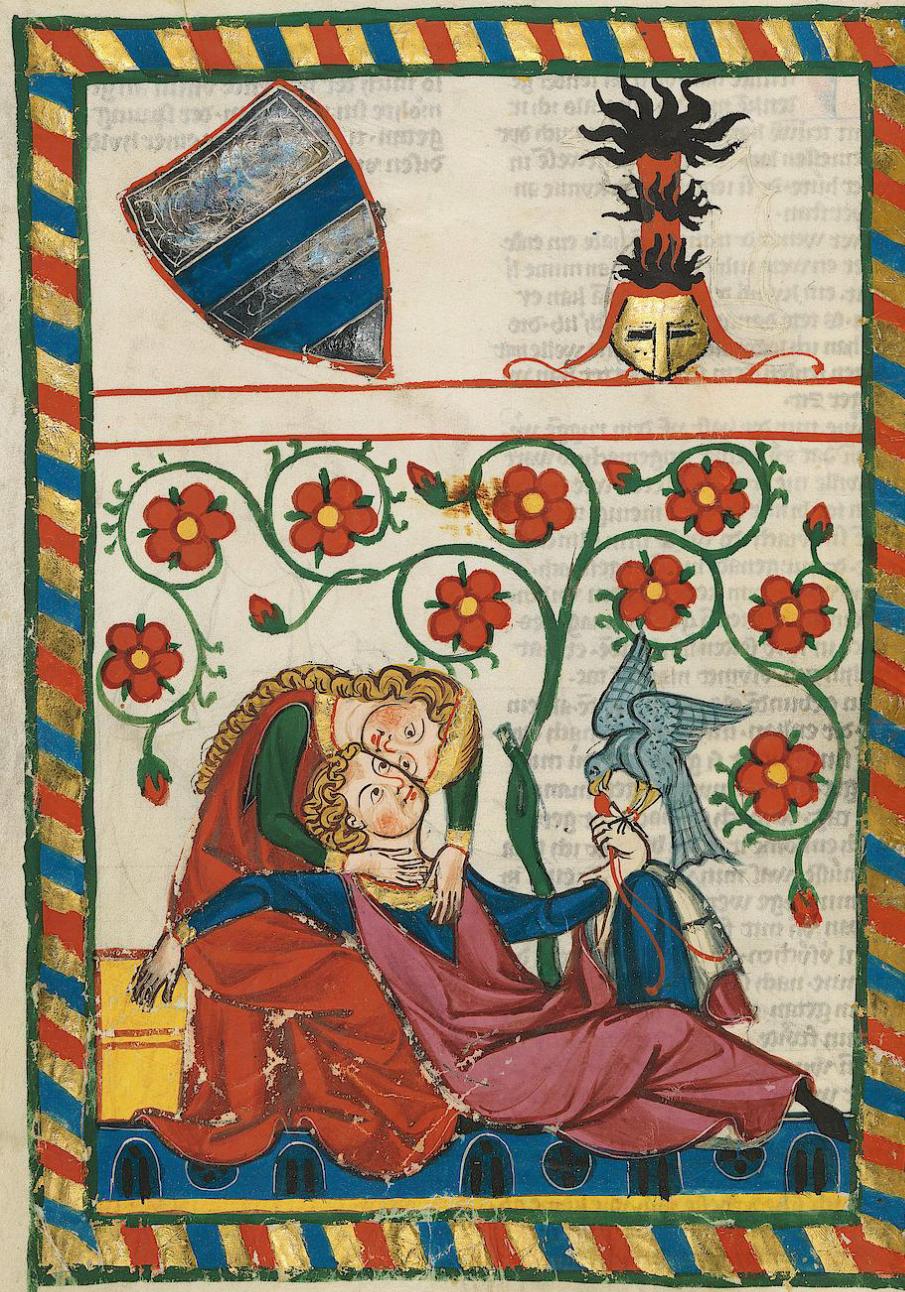
O went h duci domours frine a

A lady with a  
dog and a falcon  
and the offering  
of the heart.  
Tapestry made  
in France or the  
Southern  
Netherlands, ca.  
1400. Paris,  
Louvre.



a metaphor of  
either the lover,  
the lady, or even  
Love itself

women + falcons  
(source document 3)



Konrad von Altstetten  
as hunter and hunted,  
from the *Manesse Codex*,

Zürich, ca. 1300.

Heidelberg,  
Universitätsbibliothek,  
Cod. Pal. Germ. 848,  
fol. 249v.

Who is feeding on  
whom here and who is  
really in control?



Two messengers and two ladies. Pen and ink drawing on parchment, Paris, ca. 1400. Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett.



*Castle of Love*, lid of a jewelry box, from Paris, France, ca. 1330-1350. Ivory and iron,  
4 1/2" x 9 3/4". Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.







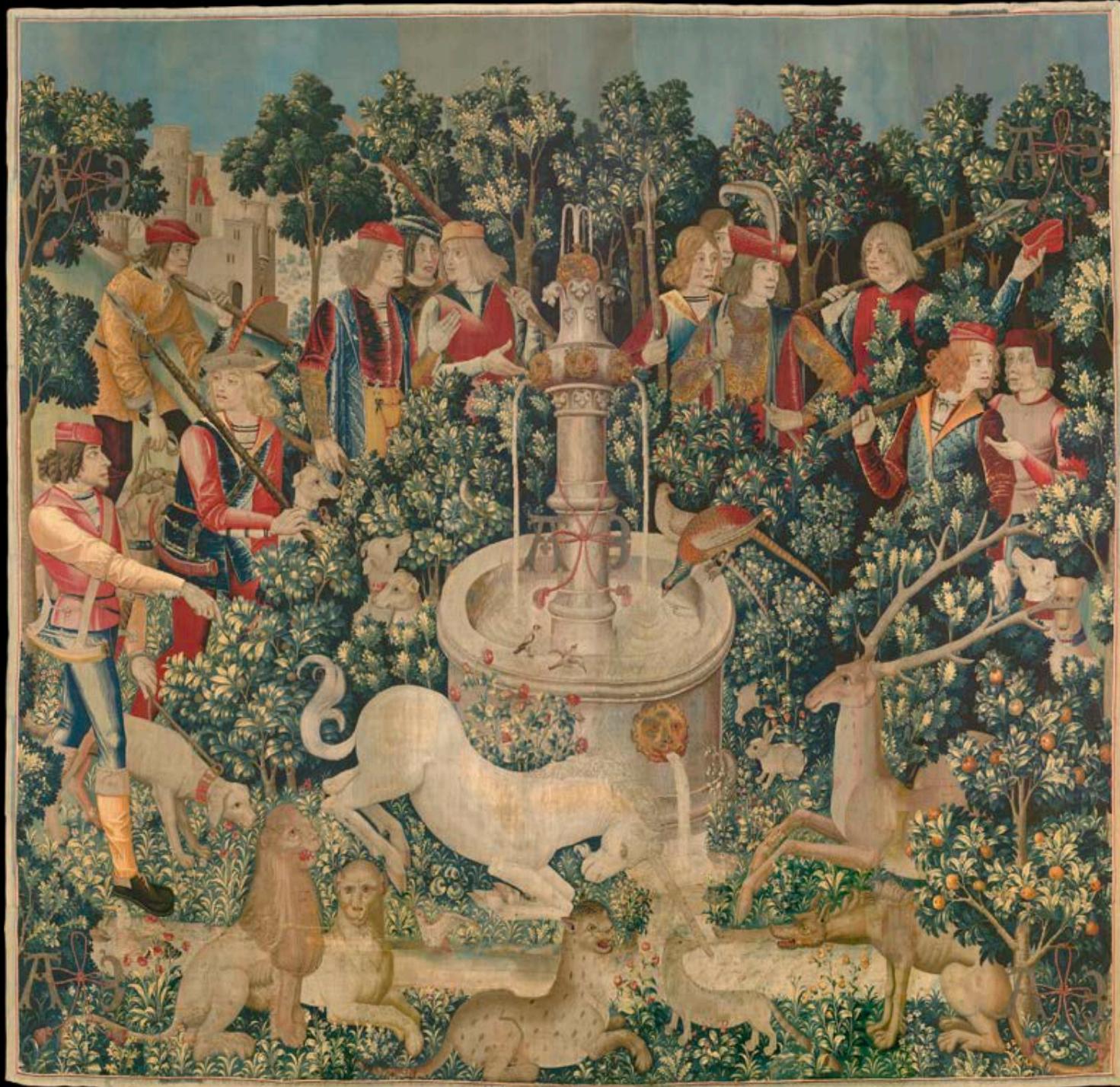
Sixth hanging from *The Lady with the Unicorn*, a set of six tapestries made in France or the Southern Netherlands, ca. 1500. Cluny, Paris, Musée du Moyen Age.

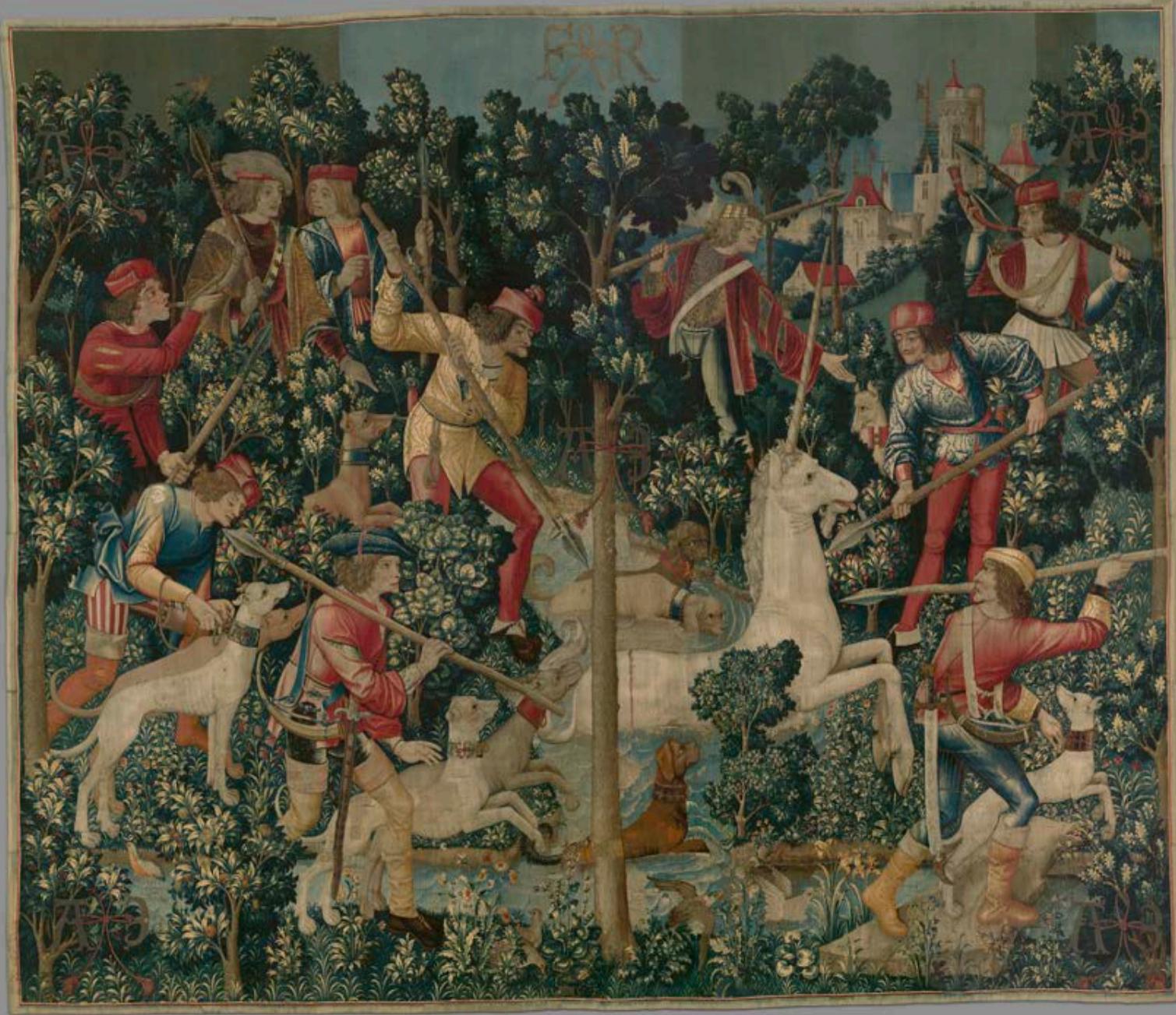


*Start of the  
Hunt*

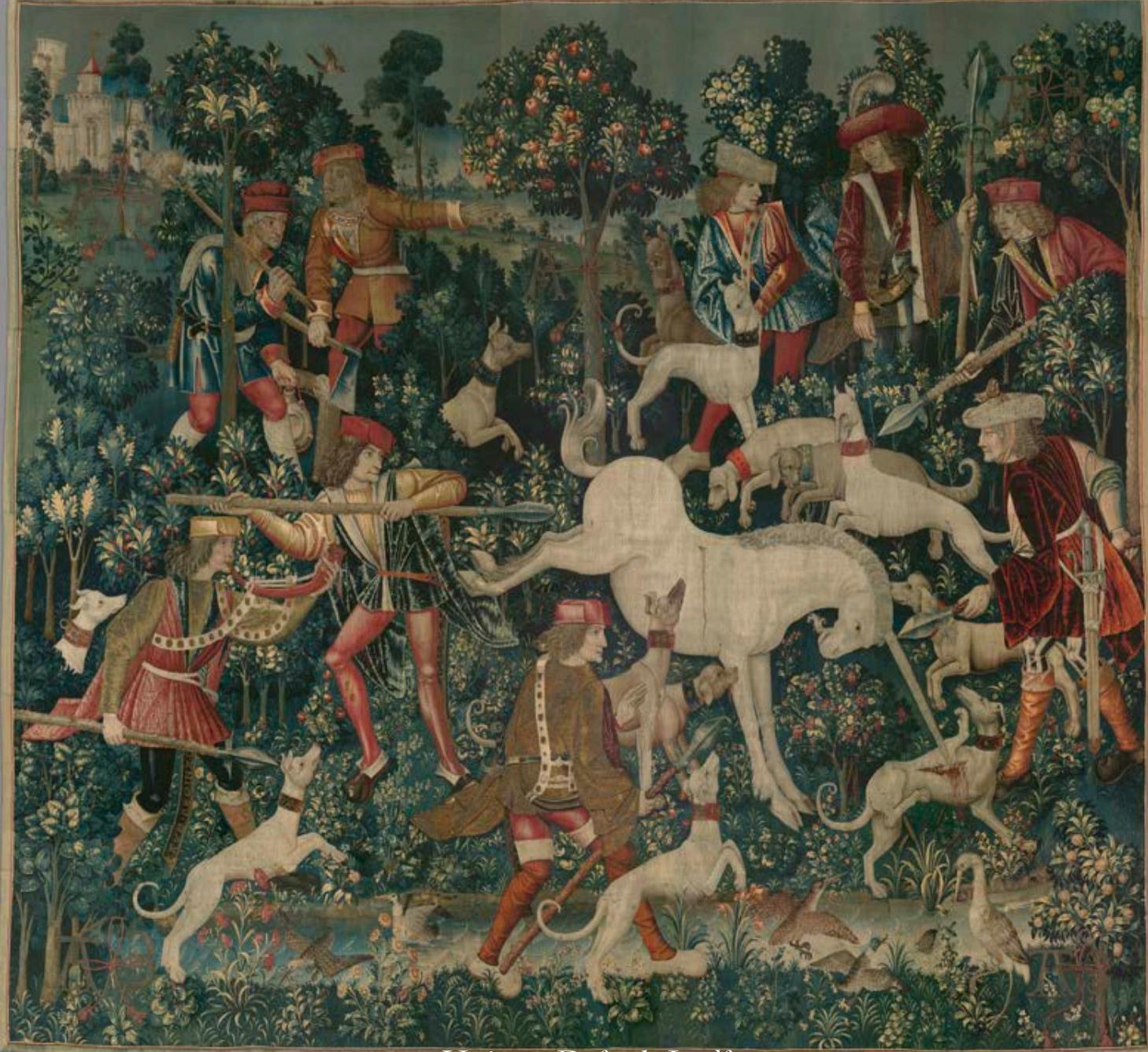


*Unicorn is  
Found*





*Unicorn Leaps across a Stream*

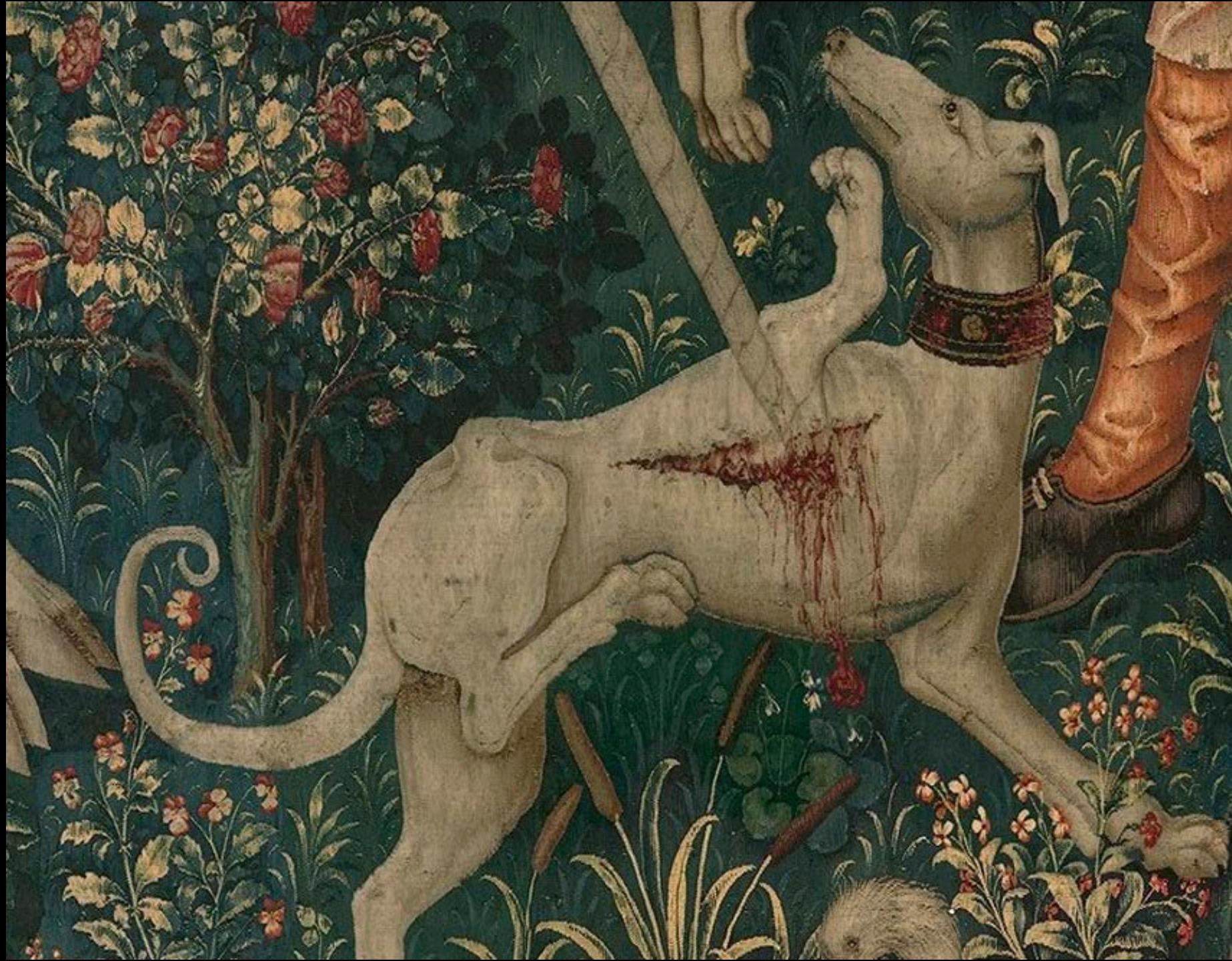


*Unicorn Defends Itself*







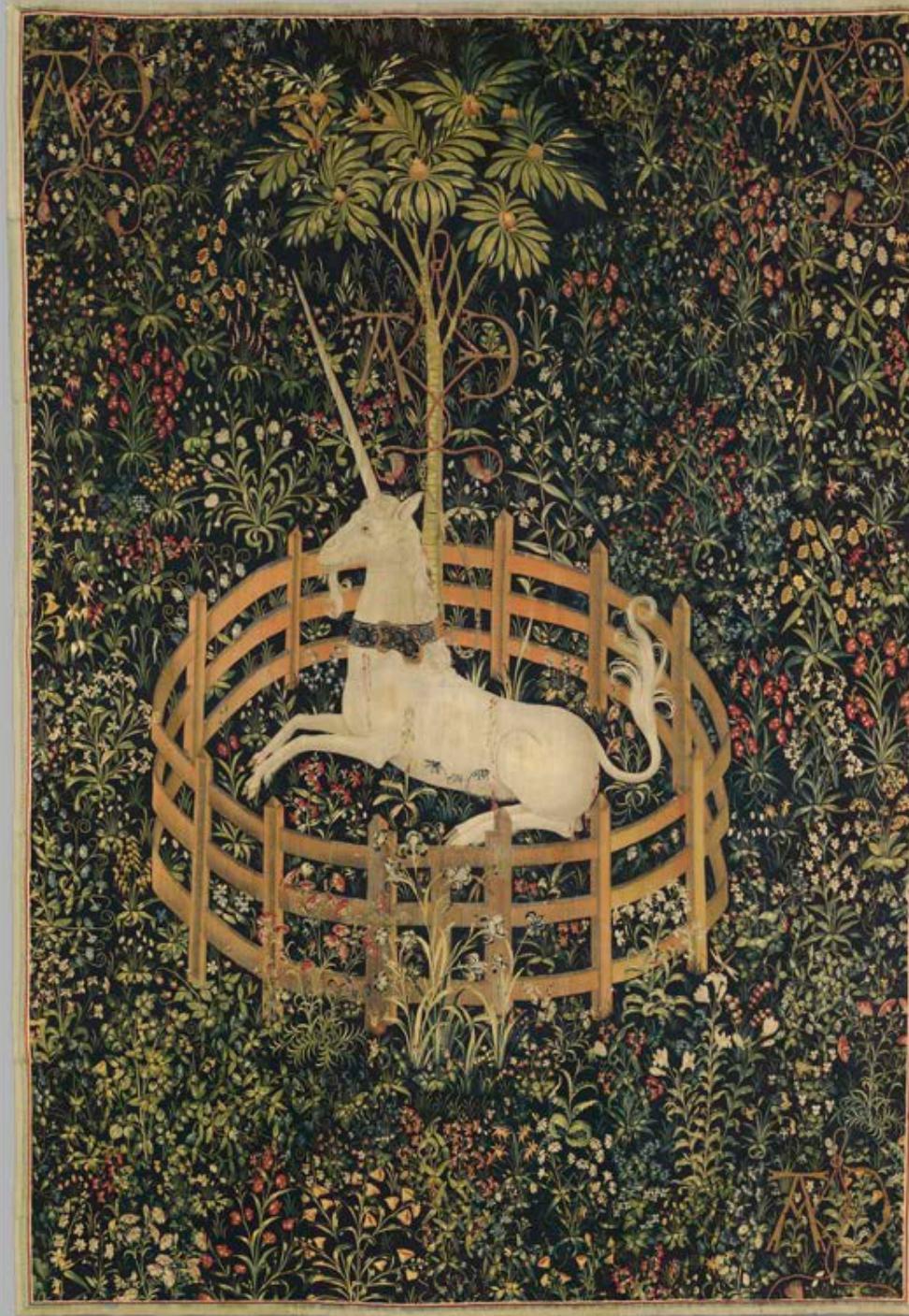


*Mystic Hunt of the Unicorn*





*Unicorn Is Killed and Brought to the Castle*









*You, or Death.*" Parade  
shield from Burgundy,  
fifteenth century.  
Tempera on wood.  
London, British Museum.

