



# The Four Seasons Tapestries at Hatfield House

Michael Bath

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- Michael Bath explores and challenges previous assumptions about the date, subject matter and iconography of Hatfield House's prized *Four Seasons* tapestries

Acknowledged as one of the most important sets of early English tapestries, the *Four Seasons* set at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, raise many scholarly questions surrounding the design, production and uses of woven tapestry in sixteenth and early-seventeenth century England. Although their main subjects have long been known to copy a set of prints by Maarten de Vos, the 170 emblems with Latin inscriptions that fill their borders have never been fully described, or even listed, in the existing literature and it is only Professor Bath's identification of sources for more than 100 of these in Renaissance emblem books which now allows us not only to understand exactly what these emblems represent and what they mean, but also to draw some conclusions about the design process of early tapestries and the deeply embedded status of emblems in early-modern British culture.