The Conversion of the Proconsul (Acts 13: 6-12)

The Raphael tapestry cartoons are designs for tapestries and were commissioned from Raphael by Pope Leo X (1513-21) in 1515. The tapestries were intended to hang in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, built by one of Leo's predecessors Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84). The Chapel was primarily intended for the use of the Pope and the Papal chapel, the body of clergy and laity immediately surrounding him. The decoration of the chapel under Sixtus dealt largely with the theme of the Pope's authority. The tapestries continued this theme, illustrating scenes from the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul who were seen as the founders of the Christian Church, and the sources of the Pope's authority and power. They had in addition woven borders showing scenes from Leo's life, also designed by Raphael: the cartoons for these have not survived.

In this cartoon Paul strikes blind the Jewish sorcerer Elymas who has tried to prevent him and Peter from converting the proconsul Sergius Paulus to Christianity. Witnessing this, the proconsul comes to believe in the Lord. The story illustrates Paul's mission to convert the Gentiles, while Peter's is to convert the Jews.

For further information on the Raphael Tapestry Cartoons please see the V&A website under : Collections, Paintings & Drawings, Paintings & Drawings Features, Raphael Cartoons.

Descriptive line
Raphael Cartoon The Conversion of the Proconsul (Acts 13: 6-12)

Physical description
Cartoon for a tapestry

Dimensions
Height: 320 cm, Width: 390 cm

Museum number
ROYAL LOANS.8

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1069355/the-conversion-of-the-proconsul-cartoon-for-a-raphael/