

THROUGH THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE: STIGAND, THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE *HISTORIA ANGLORUM*

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Who commissioned the Bayeux Tapestry and why? The question remains open after a considerable body of innovative new writing on the subject during the last decade has given grounds for a major re-evaluation of the Tapestry. Two ideas in particular demand fuller investigation: first, that the Tapestry is an independent, pro-English, source, artistically the first major fusion of Anglo-Norman-Scandinavian iconography and linguistically influenced by both English and French, and secondly, that it was produced as early as 1068 x 1070, since it precedes the Norman vilification of Harold that arose as a response to the various revolts that began in May 1068.¹ Despite the ingenuity of attempts to demonstrate the contrary intention from the curious figures appearing in the borders, the fact is that not a single pejorative is ever attached to Harold in the *tituli* of the work.² Recent detailed studies of the depictions of Harold show him to have been represented with honour even in the tightest of corners.³ The Tapestry therefore certainly predates the systematic assault on Harold as a perjured usurper, and thus a tyrant whose reign was thereby nullified, which was the legal case fashioned by Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury and subsequently presented at Rome, as demonstrated nearly twenty years ago by George Garnett. A similar assault was made on the prelacy and memory of Lanfranc's predecessor Stigand, who had controversially been appointed whilst the archbishop ousted in 1052 still lived.⁴ A more longstanding tendency to date the Tapestry to 1070 x 1082,

¹ See the contributions by François Neveux, Pierre Bouet, Maylis Baylé and Barbara English in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, ed. P. Bouet, B. Levy and F. Neveux, Caen 2004; E. C. Pastan and S. White, 'Problematizing Patronage: Odo of Bayeux and the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations*, ed. M. K. Foys, K. Overbey and D. Terkla, Woodbridge 2009, 1–24; C. R. Hart, 'The Bayeux Tapestry and Schools of Illumination at Canterbury', *ANS* 22, 2000, 117–68; R. Gameson, 'The Origin, Art and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. R. Gameson, Woodbridge 1997, 157–210; I. Short, 'The Language of the Bayeux Tapestry Inscriptions', *ANS* 23, 2001, 267–8. Sincere apologies to all those whose work cannot be mentioned in so short an essay. I am very grateful to Professor Miguel Alarcão of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa for an invitation to talk about the Bayeux Tapestry in 2007, which is where this paper started life. My thanks also to David Bates for his comments on an earlier draft.

² Gameson, 'Origin, Art and Message', 202: 'What nuances and innuendos a Norman viewer may have seen in all this, and whatever sardonic comments some beholders may have perceived in the borders, Harold is depicted (like Oedipus) as a good man who did a bad deed and paid the price.' Cf. S. A. Brown, 'Cognate Imagery: the Bear, Harold, and the Bayeux Tapestry', in *Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. G. R. Owen-Crocker, Woodbridge 2005, 149–60; G. R. Owen-Crocker, 'The Bayeux "Tapestry": Invisible Seams and Visible Boundaries', *ASE* 31, 2002, 257–73.

³ P. Bouet, 'Is the Tapestry pro-English?', in *Embroidering the Facts*, 197–216; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry: a Critical Introduction', in *Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, 2005, 1–15.

⁴ G. Garnett, 'Coronation and Propaganda: Some Implications of the Norman Claim to the Throne of England in 1066', *TRHS*, 5th series 36, 1986, 91–116.

with Bishop Odo as the generally assumed patron, has entailed some fairly contorted attempts to understand the inter-relationships between this and contemporary or near contemporary written sources.⁵ A much earlier date for the Tapestry entails some far-reaching consequences affecting both the content and also the relationships between all the conquest sources, both English and ‘Norman’.

Key aspects of the Tapestry’s narrative must therefore be re-examined in order to clarify both its genesis and purpose and also its relationship to other works that bear witness to individual and collective responses to the events of 1066. Although ‘these accounts were not compiled to record objective fact and to preserve history; but rather to make it’, they must not be treated as propaganda.⁶ They aimed to relate, understand and explain what happened, from a variety of personal perspectives and agenda; but they are first and last historical narratives. The richness of the sources viewed in this light is paralleled only by the sources generated by the First Crusade.

The association of the Bayeux Tapestry with Canterbury and with Bishop Odo of Bayeux – who figures in some of the more striking scenes – is now so well-established that it need not be questioned, but this does not in itself require that Bishop Odo be the *patron* of the Tapestry. It is the central premise of this paper that he was the intended *beneficiary* of this extraordinary artefact which was *commissioned by an Englishman*. Once that step is taken, the Tapestry can be better understood in relation to other sources of the period, such as the *Vita Eadwardi*, *Carmen de Hastingsae Proelio*, the uninterpolated Conquest paragraphs in the account of William of Jumièges, and William of Poitiers. The process leads to a new way of looking at the evolution of the Conquest narrative. At that point it is possible to deduce the lost ending of the Tapestry (and yes, of course, it included the coronation of William).

The clues to the identification of the patron-designer are various. The most important lie in the Tapestry’s presentation of Harold as chief protagonist and a hero until his death, as well as the visual prominence of Odo bishop of Bayeux and his strong connexion to places and people named in the *tituli* of the Tapestry, the iconographic links to manuscripts of St Augustine’s abbey, Canterbury, and to Mont-St-Michel in Normandy and these abbeys’ relationship to the persons occurring in the Tapestry and its informants. Buildings sacred and secular appear at regular intervals in a narrative that is as much about closeness to contemporary centres of power and its operation as it is about the horrors of war and the consequences of sin. The allusions to the world of Classical learning, identified by art historians in references to Virgil’s Aeneid, for example, and the Tapestry materials of linen and wool, point to a clerical origin as well as an intended clerical recipient and audience. Sandy Heslop has strongly argued the former point and is convinced that the Tapestry was intended for display in or near Canterbury by Odo, a known patron of poets and writers of the so-called Loire school.⁷ Learning as exemplified there was far from unknown in England. The use of the Classics in teaching and writing can be demonstrated from the tenth-century revival onward, and it has been argued that the Anonymous recruited by Queen Edith to write the *Vita Eadwardi Regis* was himself a member of the Loire school; this text is generally acknowledged to have been complete

⁵ Eg. S. A. Brown, ‘The Bayeux Tapestry: History or Propaganda?’, in *The Anglo-Saxons, Synthesis and Achievement*, ed. J. D. Woods and D. A. E. Pelteret, Waterloo 1985, 11–25.

⁶ Gameson, ‘Origin, Art and Message’, 205.

⁷ S. Heslop, ‘Regarding the Spectators of the Bayeux Tapestry: Bishop Odo and his Circle’, *Art History* 32/2, 2009, 223–249.

by 1068.⁸ Only three commentators to date have tried to argue for a patron other than Odo and none has found favour, rightly, because none of them comes close to resolving the many questions raised by the Tapestry as a source.⁹

Richard Koch's point that the tapestry materials – the linen associated from Egyptian times with priestly rank, and in Christian times with purity, used for making priestly vestments, for example – indicate a clerical origin, its patron therefore a religious and the embroidery executed by aristocratic nuns, is telling.¹⁰ Odo was bishop of Bayeux (c. 1059/60) and from late 1067 earl of Kent. He became a benefactor of St Augustine's, Canterbury, but had no over-arching ecclesiastical authority over churches of the archdiocese. That authority, until April 1070, nominally belonged to Archbishop Stigand, the fabulously wealthy pluralist who was the arch-politician of the late Old English state. Because of the papal anathemas his uncanonical appointment and subsequent acceptance of a pallium from an anti-pope had attracted, he tended to work through other prelates, including his northern counterpart Ealdred of York. His was an extraordinary career. Born in East Anglia into a modest Anglo-Scandinavian background, from a position as mass-priest to King Cnut (d. 1035) he went on to acquire enormous wealth and influence through a number of promotions, starting as bishop of Elmham in 1043, Winchester in 1045 and Canterbury in 1052, having loyally served each king in turn from Cnut to William I, enjoying the confidence of queens, and remaining friends also with the Godwinesons during the years between 1045 and 1053 when their relationship with King Edward was at best strained. He also enjoyed a close and co-operative working relationship with Harold's protégé, the only slightly less controversial Ealdred archbishop of York (d. 1069), whose despairing sense that the nation had been punished for its sins in October 1066 permeates the D version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which also reflects his attempts to craft the new order as a legitimate succession.¹¹ After Hastings Stigand had championed briefly the cause of Edgar Ætheling before swiftly realizing that the wisest course was the submission of the kingdom to William, as William of Poitiers tells us.¹² What Stigand feared most after William's coronation was losing his position at the heart of power. When William took senior Englishmen with him on a triumphal tour of Normandy from around 1 March to 6 December 1067, including Stigand, both to honour them and to prevent them mischief-making, Odo of Bayeux was one of two co-regents left in England, with special charge of Dover and the region of Kent, of which he was made earl in the autumn. Odo was a good and cultured bishop, but he was also a soldier and a politi-

⁸ E. Tyler, 'Fictions of Family: the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* and Vergil's *Aeneid*', *Viator* 36, 2005, 149–79; E. Tyler, 'The *Vita Eadwardi*: the Politics of Poetry at Wilton Abbey', *ANS* 34, 2012 (my thanks to her for a copy in advance of publication); E. K. Heningham, 'The Literary Unity, the Date, and the Purpose of the Lady Edith's Book: The Life of King Edward Who Rests in Westminster', *Albion* 7, 1975, 24–40.

⁹ G. Beech, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France? The Case for St Florent of Saumur*, Basingstoke 1995; C. Hicks, 'The Patronage of Queen Edith', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, ed. M. J. Lewis, G. R. Owen-Crocker and D. Terkla, Oxford 2011, 5–9; A. Bridgeford, *1066: the Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry*, London 2004. Queen Matilda has also been suggested, most recently by Michael Leete at <http://www.bayeuxtapestry.co.uk/>, accessed 18/08/2011, on the basis of Scandinavian texts. These are most unlikely to have been influential (if even written) during the timeframe of the Tapestry's creation.

¹⁰ R. M. Koch, 'Sacred Threads: the Bayeux Tapestry as a Religious Object', *Peregrinations* 2:4, http://peregrinations.kenyon.edu/vol2_3/current.html, accessed 18/08/2011.

¹¹ D. Bates, 'The Conqueror's Earliest Historians', in *Writing Medieval Biography, 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton, Woodbridge 2006, 129–41 at 130–1.

¹² M. F. Smith, 'Archbishop Stigand and the Eye of the Needle', *ANS* 16, 1994, 199–220; Poitiers, 146.

cian who enjoyed the exercise of power and its perquisite, the accrual of wealth.¹³ Both he and Stigand were patrons of monasteries to which they gave costly and beautiful artefacts. Two of a kind, such men were predestined to understand one another. It is proposed, then, to see in Archbishop Stigand the patron of the Tapestry and the genius behind the remarkable multivalency of the medium through which its message was conveyed – an historiated narrative – which ensured that neither his unswerving loyalty to Harold nor his appreciation of and flattery towards Odo would alienate other Normans and their mighty leader. A lengthy Bayeux Tapestry historiography of diametrically opposed opinions about the pro/anti Norman, pro/anti Harold/English nature of the Tapestry's message is a tribute to his success.

To explore this premise, it is proposed to reappraise aspects of the Tapestry [BT] version of certain events leading to the Norman invasion, namely the reasons for Harold's visit to the Continent in 1064; the Breton campaign; Harold's return to Edward and Edward's death; and the months of Harold's kingship. Demands of space limit the principal additional sources discussed to *Vita Eadwardi Regis* [*Vita*], commissioned by Edward's widow Edith, and *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* [*Carmen*], by Guy bishop of Amiens, both immediately post-Conquest works completed by the end of 1068;¹⁴ the Norman chronicles of William of Poitiers [Poitiers], written between 1071 and 1077, and William of Jumièges [Jumièges], the Conquest parts of which were written between 1067 and early 1070; the various versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (ASC C, giving the royalist or Mercian viewpoint, D the northern viewpoint, heavily influenced by Ealdred bishop of Worcester then archbishop of York (d. 1069), and E, the Godwinist version, written at St Augustine's Canterbury); and, from the following generation, the *Historia Novorum in Anglia* of Eadmer of Canterbury (c. 1060–c. 1126).

Neither ASC nor *Vita* make specific references to Harold's visits to the Continent, though two are known, in autumn 1056 and in late spring/early summer 1064. Hence the Tapestry, produced soon after the Conquest, is the only authentic contemporary 'English' version of why Harold went abroad in 1064.¹⁵ By the likely latest date for the BT's completion, at the end of 1069, the 'Norman' version of the event was taking shape. The urtext is the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of William of Jumièges, to which the uninterpolated Conquest passages were added by early 1070, following a request by William the Conqueror made during his visit to Normandy in 1067.¹⁶ Jumièges states simply that the childless Edward had in the past sent Robert archbishop of Canterbury to William to appoint his heir. Later that offer was formalized by the sending of Harold, his greatest subject, to seal it with oaths. On the trip Harold landed in Ponthieu and was waylaid by Count Guy, from whom he was rescued by William. After a pleasant visit, including the oath, he was sent home to the king with many gifts. That is it. Poitiers, writing after the vilification

¹³ D. R. Bates, 'The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50–97)', *Speculum* 50, 1975, 1–20. Cf. F. Neveux, 'The Bayeux Tapestry as Original Source', in *Embroidering the Facts*, 179–89; idem., 'Conclusions', *ibid.*, 403–10 at 406; V. Flint, 'The Bayeux Tapestry, the Bishop and the Laity', *ibid.*, 217–33.

¹⁴ For these two, see Frank Barlow's editions and introductions; E. M. C. van Houts, 'Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman Court, 1066–1135: the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*', *JMH* 15, 1989, 39–62; G. Orlandi, 'Some Afterthoughts on the *Carmen*', in *Media Latinitas*, ed. R. I. A. Nipp *et al.*, Turnhout 1996, 117–27.

¹⁵ P. Grierson, 'A Visit of Earl Harold to Flanders in 1056', *EHR* 51, 1936, 90–7; Beech, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?*; K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'The Bretons and Normans in the non-Norman Conquest', *ANS* 13, 1991, 157–72.

¹⁶ Jumièges, I, xlv–liv.

of Harold had begun, gives a rather more developed version, intended as panegyric and *apologia* for his patron King William, alleging that the original designation had been ratified by Archbishop Stigand, Earl Godwine, Earl Leofric and Earl Siward.¹⁷ This would date it between the restoration of Godwine in 1052 and his death the following year. In 1052 Godwine's return, with a show of force, forced the unpopular Norman archbishop of Canterbury Robert of Jumièges to flee back to his monastery in Normandy, with Stigand appointed to take his place. Although there is no reason to doubt ASC D's statement that Edward was visited by William of Normandy in 1051, there is no support in any English source for the offer of the throne to William then or subsequently. It is important to remember that all the surviving sources are written with hindsight, that is, they acknowledge what had happened on Hastings field and were attempting to come to terms with it. For the English, it was particularly difficult because traumatic, and doubly so for the few surviving high-status English people trying to survive in the new order. Queen Edith's response was to commission the *Vita*, Stigand's the Bayeux Tapestry. But note also that Stigand and the grandsons of Earl Leofric, Edwin and Morcar, were all taken with William to Normandy in 1067; it is known that William attended the consecration of the new church at Jumièges during that visit, when he probably asked William of Jumièges to add a note on the conquest to his work.¹⁸ Is it possible that 'the Norman version' was influenced by conversation with the English hostages, including England's greatest *eminence grise*?¹⁹ The BT itself pays at least lip-service to this version: Harold does swear an oath – significantly, at Bayeux – but no hint is ever made as to the content of the oath.

Harold's journey dominates the opening scenes in the BT. In the first, Harold is in conversation with Edward, who is seated, crowned and holding a sceptre. Both extend a finger, each touching the other, interpreted by Ann Williams as an indication of Harold's high status and closeness to the king.²⁰ By 1064 both men must have been acutely aware of the danger confronting the country on the ageing king's death without heirs, but this scene offers no hint of a commission to offer the succession to William, such as the giving of a token. Rather, it looks like a leave-taking. Harold has either formally asked for, and received, permission from his lord to withdraw from court on some business which he has disclosed, or this business has in fact been formulated in consultation with the king. His status and importance are unquestionable. No mere earl of Wessex, the title of *dux Anglorum* accorded by the designer to Harold as he leaves the king is truly remarkable; it outranks the man simply labelled as *Willelmus Dux* and has rightly been compared in significance to the title *dux Francorum* borne by the father of the first Capetian king of France.²¹ This extraordinary title is the first significant indication that the librettist was an Englishman telling an English story in a way outwardly acceptable to the Normans. In the following scenes, Harold's *pietas*, power and attractiveness

¹⁷ Cf. Bates, 'Conqueror's Earliest Historians', 132–3.

¹⁸ Jumièges, I, 172.

¹⁹ For the suggestion of Morcar as a source for Poitiers after he was sent to Normandy following his capture at Ely in 1071, see E. M. C. van Houts, 'The Memory of 1066 in Written and Oral Tradition', *ANS* 19, 1997, 167–79 at 175.

²⁰ A. Williams, 'How to be Rich: the Presentation of Earl Harold in the Early Sections of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *New Approaches*, 66–70 at 66–7.

²¹ Shrewdly observed, as ever, by our honorand, at *ibid.*, 69–70; cf Bouet, 'Is the Tapestry pro-English?', 198.

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Figure 1: Harold, dux Anglorum, in conversation with Edward the Confessor: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – eleventh century, with special permission from the City of Bayeux.

as lord, are demonstrated in his preparations for his journey, by his visit to Bosham church, one of his family's chief manors.

Harold's absence is unremarked in contemporary English sources, though it was later alleged by Eadmer – one of whose informants was a bishop who was kinsman to Harold²² – that Harold travelled in order to seek the release of his uncle and cousin who had been sent as hostages to Normandy many years before. The hostages had been given not when Harold's father Earl Godwine rebelled against Edward in 1051 and before his exile, but upon his return, because the king did not trust him fully when he restored him and his sons to their honours. This idea is usually dismissed as implausible in view of Godwine's strength, but it has support from the Godwinist E version of the ASC, which attributes the idea to Stigand, then bishop of Winchester, the king's advisor and chaplain, and other wise men.²³ There was also the question of Edward's own kin: the fate of his nephew Walter of Mantes was probably still unknown. By that date the power of William had become unnerving to more than one of his Continental neighbours. There was every reason to be concerned as to any ambitions he was nurturing in regard to England. The *Vita* hints at a secretive information-gathering visit to the Continent by Harold; deliberately or unavoidably obscure, it possibly refers to this visit of 1064. According to Eadmer, Edward reluctantly gave his permission, but warned Harold that potentially grave consequences for the country might follow.²⁴

Harold's family was accustomed to sail from the port near Bosham to the Continent, normally to Wissant, controlled by the count of Flanders who had been an ally of Godwine and some of his family and was brother-in-law to Harold's brother Tostig. The count of Flanders was not, however, an ally of Edward, although he was currently on better terms with Edward's old friend and former brother-in-law Count Eustace of Boulogne.²⁵ The Tapestry shows the voyage, with the wind full in the sails of the ship. Nothing suggests that the ship was blown off course or shipwrecked, as alleged by next-generation chroniclers such as Eadmer and William of Malmesbury.

²² I. W. Walker, *Harold the Last Anglo-Saxon King*, Stroud 1997, 95.

²³ Eadmer, *HN*, 5–6; ASC E, s.a.1052.

²⁴ *The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster*, ed. and trans. F. Barlow, Oxford 1992, cited throughout as *Vita*, 50–3; Eadmer, *HN*, 6.

²⁵ *Vita*, 36; H. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879–1160*, Leiden and Boston 2004, 69–128.

But when his party came ashore in the land of Count Guy of Ponthieu, Harold was seized – *apprehendit* – by Count Guy. This was clearly undesirable, but had it been anticipated? Bosham to Ponthieu is a somewhat oblique route if Rouen is the destination. Whilst acknowledging that there is no contemporary support for any theory of what Harold was doing – though the *Vita* hints at a top secret mission – Higham has suggested that Harold may have gone to Ponthieu hoping ‘to build up some sort of anti-Norman party among the principal powers of north-west France to include his family’s old allies in Flanders and the Counts of Ponthieu and Boulogne – whose interests certainly did not coincide with those of William as regards the English succession’.²⁶ Such a move was risky and would certainly have needed Edward’s approval. Higham convincingly suggests that Harold’s detention in Ponthieu was for his protection (in which case it may have been anticipated), the opposite of what the Norman chroniclers allege, and ‘Guy’s apparent unwillingness to release the English earl into William’s custody is at least indicative of some separate but now veiled agenda’. The conversation between Guy and Harold is indeed depicted with an intensity that might suggest the preliminary exchanges aimed at a secret accord. If Harold’s mission was related in some way to the hostages of his own and Edward’s family in William’s power, a discussion with Guy about his experience of his two years imprisonment at Bayeux following defeat by William in 1054 could have been very useful. More significantly still, Guy is then shown to take Harold eastwards to Beaurain, a considerable distance from the coast and close to the south-eastern border of the county of Boulogne, controlled by Guy’s kinsman Eustace, Edward’s ally and former brother-in-law.²⁷ En route to Normandy it certainly was not. But William’s spies had picked up the scent and Harold’s mission, whatever it was, was already unravelling. Messengers arrived from William demanding the surrender of Harold. Detached from Edward’s allies in the counties of Ponthieu and Boulogne, Harold was taken by Guy to Eu (according to Poitiers), and thence courteously and hospitably, but nonetheless under constraint, to William’s palace, probably at Rouen, in Normandy. Since neither Jumièges nor Poitiers suggest an accidental arrival at Ponthieu, yet go on to allege that Harold had to be rescued from the local count so that he could achieve his mission to William, we might a second time start to wonder whether ‘the Norman version’ of the background to Hastings was not initially formed or informed by contact with the vanquished English notables, chief among them Stigand in 1067. The contrast between the stark uninterpolated early version of Jumièges and the elaborated post-vilification text of Poitiers is important to bear in mind throughout.

If Harold’s mission had been connected in any way with the fate of his relatives and Edward’s, he must have intended a visit to William at some point. He may have hoped to do so from a position of strength following the successful outcome of his previous mission to Ponthieu and Boulogne. He had failed in the first and was now compromised in the second. Walter of Mantes and his wife had died in William’s prison, as he now probably learnt, further proof of William’s already well-documented ruthlessness. According to Eadmer, the hostages now became part of an extended act of blackmail by William, though Harold did eventually return home with one of them, his nephew Hacun. A recurring theme among the chroniclers,

²⁶ *Vita*, 50–53 (where more than one trip is probably hinted at: Harold was certainly at St-Omer in 1056); N. J. Higham, *The Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, Stroud 1997, 158–9; cf. A. F. J. van Kempen, ‘The Mercian Connection, Harold Godwinson’s Ambitions, Diplomacy and Channel-crossing, 1056–1066’, *History* 94, 2009, 2–19.

²⁷ Cf. Barlow, *Carmen*, liii.

Norman and English, is that a marriage alliance was mooted at this meeting. Some, including Eadmer, allege a double alliance: Harold's sister to a Norman noble, and a daughter of William to Harold, in return for Harold's support of William when he came to take the throne of England.²⁸ Orderic later alleged that an oath was taken by Harold at Rouen.²⁹ The obdurately mysterious scene at Rouen involving a cleric and a woman identified as Ælfgyva possibly related to this putative marriage treaty.

In the next major episode Harold accompanies William on a minatory expedition to Brittany. This episode is otherwise only mentioned in Poitiers, in a very much shorter form and in a different order of events. The BT's purpose here is clearly different from that of Poitiers. No other source mentions that the Normans entered via the bay of Mont-St-Michel, notorious for its quicksands, as they should have been well aware. Caught by the sudden withdrawal of the tide, several were rescued by the unquestionably heroic actions of Earl Harold, whose story this has been up till now and will continue to be. Amongst the observers was Bishop Odo.³⁰ It cannot be seriously suggested that the librettist is inventing any of these otherwise unrecorded scenes – the piece was clearly intended for a large and well-informed audience, so we must assume that persons connected with the events bore witness to them when BT was designed. The actual *casus belli* was an appeal by a Breton border lord, Rivallon of Dol, who had sought William's aid against Conan II of Brittany, perhaps in relation to a holding in the Norman Avranchin. First associated with William by an attestation at Domfront in 1063, his links with Mont-St-Michel went back to the time of Abbot Suppo (1033–1048), with whom he entered an agreement to protect the abbey's land at Pontorson on the Norman-Breton border in return for confraternity for himself and his family.³¹ The Breton counts, like those of Maine, had been benefactors of Mont-St-Michel from at least the tenth century, and had encouraged the abbey's sense of identity which had frequently led it into conflict with the Norman dukes.³² Conan II, shown in BT without his title of count, was the son of Alan III of Brittany (d. 1040) who was a benefactor of the abbey and a cousin and former guardian of William of Normandy.

The first action shown is the relief of the siege of Dol, from which Conan is seen to flee to his capital at Rennes. The final scene, and the first to suggest genuine bellicosity in the word *pugnant*, is a siege of Dinan, of which Conan extended the keys at the point of his lance towards William. BT goes far beyond any extant Breton evidence, which shows, however, that Rivallon and Conan did quarrel but were reconciled before Conan's death in December 1066.³³ The action at Dinan is especially puzzling – it is not so far from Dol (26 km) but is some distance from Rennes (54 km south of Dol) – and is not attested elsewhere. It suggests, like the scene in the bay of Mont-St-Michel, a local informant, but this one was no friend of Conan II.

We may dwell at this point on the potential informants of the BT's librettist. The body of evidence suggesting that the principal location of the Tapestry's design and

²⁸ Eadmer, *HN*, 7–8; Poitiers, 156–7; Jumièges, II, 262–3.

²⁹ M. Chibnall, 'Orderic Vitalis and the Bayeux Tapestry', in *Embroidering the Past*, 127–34.

³⁰ For Odo, cf. Neveux, 'Tapestry as Original Source', 175–9; Heslop, 'Regarding the Spectators of the Bayeux Tapestry', 224–5.

³¹ *Regesta*, Bates, 269; *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel (Avranches, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms 210)*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, Donington 2006, App. II.4.

³² For the background and literature for this section, see *Cartulary Mont-Saint-Michel*, App. III, 216–30; Beech, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?*, *passim*; Poitiers, 70–1.

³³ Keats-Rohan, 'Bretons and Normans', 219–21.

execution was St Augustine's abbey, Canterbury, is impressive. Art historians far better qualified than I have made the case very cogently, pointing out that the shared iconography, common among communities with lively scriptoria, leads primarily to Mont-St-Michel, which had achieved the status of leading artistic centre from the late-tenth to mid-eleventh century.³⁴ It has been noted before that Odo bishop of Bayeux, commonly assumed to have been the patron/commissioner of the Tapestry, had good relations with St Augustine's.³⁵ He was remembered as a benefactor and *confrater* in the abbey's necrology, which was produced by 1100. Pastan and White go further and point to other significant entries: those of King Edward, King Harold 'and our many brothers who died with him', King William, Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, Wadard *miles* of St Augustine, and Vital, *frater* of St Augustine, all of them named in BT, the last two being tenants of Odo and St Augustine's after 1066; the figure named Turolde also belongs to this group. More contentious are the occurrence of a Eustace, and five Ælfgývas. This, they argue, locates the perspective of the Tapestry within the context of the place where it was made, rather than in the specifically Norman perspective of its supposed patron Bishop Odo. They omit the equally important entries of Queen Emma (5 March) and Earl Godwine (15 April).³⁶

Monastic necrologies are extremely important witnesses to the history of an abbey. They include the names of people who are special to the community in some way – and by the same token, they exclude those who are not. The later a necrology, the more difficult it becomes to argue the significance of an omission, but in the case of St Augustine's, and the obituaries of Christ Church, all early, the significance of the inclusion of Stigand in the former and his absence in the latter is considerable.³⁷ Equally noteworthy is the omission of Queen Edith from the necrology of St Augustine's, and the more eloquent still omission of Archbishop Lanfranc. His relationship with the monks after the death of Abbot Scolland in 1087 did irremediable harm to that community.³⁸

Pastan and White make the reasonable assumption, as have Gameson and others, that the Mont-St-Michel influences on the art at St Augustine's and in the Tapestry were linked to the appointment of the Mont's treasurer and scribe Scolland as St Augustine's abbot from 1070 (consecrated only in 1072). All accept Odo as patron. But if Bouet is right to re-date the Tapestry to 1069 we have a problem. So can we resolve this problem and account for both the English perspective and also the Tapestry's unique episodes at Mont-St-Michel and in Brittany, requiring as they do a source close to the events and with local knowledge?

Only one of the named figures in the Tapestry has not yet been mentioned. It has been conjectured to represent Count Eustace of Boulogne, who, despite all Edward's efforts, eventually threw in his lot with William and fought at Hastings. More recently however, this attribution has been questioned and the very much more convincing suggestion has been made that the figure in question is William's other (constantly under-estimated) half-brother, Robert count of Mortain, who is

³⁴ Eg. J. J. G. Alexander, *Norman Illumination at Mont St Michel 966–1100*, Oxford 1970; Pastan and White, 'Problematizing Patronage'.

³⁵ See note 13.

³⁶ Pastan and White, 'Problematizing Patronage', 17–24; London, BL MS Cotton Vitellius C.xii, fols. 122r, 123v.

³⁷ R. Fleming, 'Christchurch's Sisters and Brothers: Canterbury Obituary Lists', in *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Commemoration of L. T. Bethel*, ed. M. A. Meyer, London 1993, 115–53.

³⁸ See the articles by Ann Williams and Emma Cownie in *St Augustine's of Canterbury*, ed. R. Gem, English Heritage, Canterbury 1997.

named elsewhere in the Tapestry, again in the company of his brothers William and Odo; a contrast with Harold and his two brothers is doubtless intended.³⁹ Robert was count of an area that immediately bordered upon Brittany. Several lords from north-east Brittany were already in his *mouvance* by 1066. Some followed him to England. The grant to Mont-St-Michel made by 'King' Edward in exile in 1033 is unlikely to have been effective, but one of its provisions, a grant of Marazion in Cornwall, was the basis for the later abbey priory of St Michael's Mount. Part of the abbey's success in establishing itself there, in 1131, was at least one grant by Robert count of Mortain, though the charters in their surviving form are problematic. The later cartulary of St Michael's Mount also alleged that a grant had been made by Count Brien of Brittany.⁴⁰ He was one of several sons of Count Eudo, uncle and one-time rival of Conan II, who joined William in or before 1066. Brien certainly fought at Hastings, as perhaps did his brother Alan Rufus. There is clear evidence from the Suffolk portion of Little Domesday that Count Brien was the *antecessor* of Robert of Mortain for his lands there.⁴¹ We know from ASC D that Brien was in the south-west in 1068 when he fought back an invasion by the sons of Harold. He also attested a charter of William in 1069, probably at Easter in Exeter, together with Archbishop Stigand and Count Robert, but is unheard of thereafter.⁴² Most likely he was wounded or became ill at that time and returned to Brittany, upon which his holdings were granted to Robert. As son of Count Eudo, he could well have been the anti-Conan informant of the Tapestry's version of the Breton campaign. The Dinan episode is perhaps based on an attack by his own family unrelated to the main Norman campaign. Alternatively, as Neveux has suggested, it may be that the campaign was influenced more by the Norman desire to make allies of the family of Count Eudo than support for Rivallon of Dol.⁴³ The likelihood that Brien was a benefactor of Mont-St-Michel is confirmed by the occurrence of his obit on 14 February in its martyrology-necrology, the one reserved for those with a special form of fraternity with the abbey; King Edward (5 January) occurs there also.⁴⁴

As to Scolland, whose case for involvement with the design and execution of the Tapestry has seemed so compelling on artistic grounds, we can only point to a Mont tradition that on hearing of William's success, Abbot Ranulf at once ordered six ships to be sent at the abbey's expense to escort the victorious duke to Normandy in 1067. Sent with them were several of his finest monks, who were to assist Odo during his regency in William's absence.⁴⁵ Four of them later received abbeys,

³⁹ D. Spear, 'Robert of Mortain and the Bayeux Tapestry', *New Approaches*, 75–80; D. Hill, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: the Establishment of a Text', in *Embroidering the Facts*, 383–99 at 397–9; B. Levy, 'Trifunctionality and Epic Patterning', *ibid.*, 327–46 at 322–3.

⁴⁰ *Cartulary Mont-Saint-Michel*, nos. 10–12 and App. Iii, pp. 213–14; K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Le Rôle des Bretons dans la Politique de la Colonisation Normande', *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne* 73, 1996, 181–215 at lxxiv, 186–7; eadem, 'Bretons and Normans', 160–1; B. Golding, 'Robert of Mortain', *ANS* 13, 1990, 119–44.

⁴¹ LDB, 291a–b: *DB Suffolk*, 2.

⁴² *Regesta*, Bates, 138; cf. 254.

⁴³ F. Neveux, 'L'Expédition de Guillaume le Bâtard en Bretagne (vers 1064)', in *Le Pouvoir et la Foi au Moyen Âge en Bretagne et dans l'Europe de l'Ouest*, ed. J. Quaghebeur and S. Soleil, Rennes 2010, 619–37. I explore this further in 'L'expédition de Guillaume, duc de Normandie, et du comte Harold en Bretagne (1064): le témoignage de la tapisserie de Bayeux et des chroniqueurs anglo-normands', forthcoming in *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne* (2013).

⁴⁴ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Testimonies of the Living Dead: the Martyrology-Necrology and Necrology in the Chapter Book of Mont-Saint-Michel (Avranches, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 214)', in *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context*, ed. D. Rollason *et al.*, Woodbridge 2004, 165–90.

⁴⁵ Alexander, *Norman Illumination*, 17; Avranches, Bibl. d'Avranches MS 213, fol. 178v.

including Scolland, who, indeed, between 1070 and his death in 1087, established himself as one of the most influential abbots in the country. The link between Mont-St-Michel, one of the oldest and most prestigious monasteries in north-west France, and England can be traced back to the tenth century. Scolland is not in himself a necessary link in the BT causal chain; but involvement with its design and his later appointment to St Augustine's might nonetheless have been effects.

In the third major episode, Harold returns to England to report the failure of his mission to Edward. His depiction in the Tapestry is certainly not of the confident and self-assured earl we saw in the first scene. As Williams points out, however, 'both king and earl are accompanied by axe-bearing attendants, and though it has been argued that the king is reprimanding the earl, the balance of the scene implies a more equal relationship'.⁴⁶ Harold is dejected, rather than abject. It was awareness of peril that had led to the mission developed by the ageing and childless Edward and Harold in 1064, the failure of which only deepened the gravity of the succession crisis threatening the country. The only remaining option among the fast-diminishing Cerdicings was Edgar Ætheling who was simply too young to undertake the task of preserving the country, now certainly known to be under threat from Normandy. Baxter's excellent rehearsal of the options in relation to English politics in the period misses the point when it concludes that Edward's attitude, characterized as a capricious playing off of one candidate against another, was an act of folly that brought disaster upon the country.⁴⁷ The situation was constantly changing, as one dynastic option after another was closed down. In the last analysis perhaps the greatest change was the king's personal progression from hostility to Godwine to his much closer reliance upon Harold, and possibly also Tostig. Edward, counselled by Archbishop Stigand, may well have already decided that Harold – *subregulus*, as John of Worcester called him, *dux Anglorum* according to BT – was the ideal successor. His earlier experience of the English horror of the prospect of civil war – evidenced by their refusal to support Edward with a show of force when Godwine and his sons returned from exile in 1052 – may have influenced his decision to leave his designation until the last minute.⁴⁸ Fate, as usual, was to force his hand.

ASC in its various versions has far more to say about Harold and Tostig as leaders in the years after 1055 than it does about Edward. Although the *Vita* sought to portray Edward as a vigorous man who spent his time in hunting, he was a man well advanced in years and cannot have expected to live many more. The work was commissioned and heavily influenced by his widow Edith, Harold's sister, and was her way of coming to terms with the personal tragedy of her barrenness, which led to the succession crisis, with the destruction of all her remaining brothers at Hastings, and the ruin of her country. It was also an apology for her father Earl Godwine, a man who achieved greatness under King Cnut and managed to maintain it until his own death in 1053, despite what were undeniably strained relations with his son-in-law. Edith was also conscious that she was partly responsible for the real calamity that led to the undoing of the country, the revolt of the Northumbrians against Tostig, following years of abuses culminating in the murder of Gospatric at court on 28 December 1064 on the orders, it was said, of the queen, a charge of which she tried to exonerate herself through the *Vita*. Tostig was with the king at Britford, Wilts, when the news came. Councils were held at Northampton

⁴⁶ Williams, 'How to be Rich', 67.

⁴⁷ S. Baxter, 'Edward the Confessor and the Succession', in *Edward the Confessor the Man and the Legend*, ed. R. Mortimer, Woodbridge 2000, 77–119.

⁴⁸ ASC C, s.a.1052.

and Oxford at which Harold tried to mediate. According to ASC C, ‘Earl Harold was there, and wanted to work their reconciliation if he could, but he could not’. Deserted by all, Tostig was forced into exile. This was the last thing Harold and Edward needed. The unity of the Godwinsson brothers, their close working relationship, had made Harold the obvious candidate to succeed Edward since at least his defeat of Gryffydd in 1063.⁴⁹ Now Tostig went into an embittered exile to Flanders, where his father-in-law put him in command of the garrison of Saint-Omer and from whence he made contact with Harald Hardrada. Unsurprisingly and surely not unexpectedly, this dealt a death-blow to the aged king. He lived long enough to see his church of St Peter’s Westminster consecrated, but died on 5 January 1066.

The death scene of Edward in BT is often compared to the description in the *Vita*, which says that three men were present at the king’s deathbed, Harold, Stigand and Robert fitzWymarc, his staller and distant kinsman. Also present was his weeping wife Edith, warming his feet. Just before his death, Edward nominated Harold as his heir. The *Vita* also alleges that shortly before he died Edward had a disturbing vision of impending doom, dismissed as the ravings of a dying man by Archbishop Stigand. The *Vita*’s author has himself acknowledged that Edward’s state of mind had deteriorated sharply since the exile of Tostig, so his attitude to Stigand here is striking and significant, given Stigand’s long and loyal service to Godwine’s family and the king, acknowledged elsewhere in the work. Although the author shows the king and queen as concerned about the state of the English church, with its two controversial archbishops, it is clear that Edward relied heavily on both and on Stigand in particular.⁵⁰ Stigand was well aware of his uncanonical position and was very prudent in the exercise of his archiepiscopal functions. He was careful not to compromise the consecration of either Harold or William, who were both crowned by Ealdred.⁵¹ Rich beyond the dreams of avarice, he was above all a faithful royal servant who maintained a well-deserved place at the centre of government over an extraordinarily long time. He had achieved the impossible in being a loyal servant both to Godwine and his sons and also to Edward, who had loathed Godwine. Stigand had, however, failed to prevent Godwine and his sons’ brief exile in 1051–2, and the humiliating dismissal of Edward’s wife, Godwine’s daughter Edith – which may be what provokes the hostility to Stigand of the *Vita*’s author, devoted to Edith as he was, at this point. The *Vita*’s wording has also led to speculation that this deathbed nomination was merely a caretaking operation pending the arrival of William. BT is clear-cut. Harold was designated by the dying king, and acclaimed king by the witan immediately after Edward’s death. Fundamentally important is the evidence of the ASC. None of the three versions was in any doubt that the accession of Harold was lawful and had indeed been Edward’s wish. As Ann Williams points out, C, the version frequently hostile to the Godwinssons, ‘includes a eulogy of Harold in its commemorative verse on Edward as “a noble earl who all the time had loyally followed his lord’s commands with words and deeds, neglecting nothing that met the needs of the people’s king”’. Harold was a popular choice for the kingship.⁵²

Barbara English has suggested that Harold’s coronation, our fourth episode, need

⁴⁹ ASC D and E, *s.a.* 1063.

⁵⁰ *Vita*, 52–4, 66–73, 82–3, 116–25.

⁵¹ John of Worcester, II, 598–601; on the day of Edward’s funeral Harold *subregulus* was consecrated by Archbishop Ealdred, who also crowned William owing to Stigand’s lack of a pallium (ASC D and E, *s.a.* 1066).

⁵² A. Williams, *Kingship and Government in pre-Conquest England c. 500–c1066*, Basingstoke 1999, 148.

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Figure 2: Harold in majesty: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – eleventh century, with special permission from the City of Bayeux.

not have been on 6 January, though ASC agrees that Harold's election was ratified by then. In any event, she demonstrates that the so-called 'coronation scene' in the Tapestry shows Harold in majesty, already a fully consecrated king.⁵³ It may represent an Easter (8 April) crown-wearing after his return from a campaign in the north, the date suggested by the close proximity of the appearance of Haley's comet (24 April) to this scene.⁵⁴ The importance of this scene cannot be overstated. As English points out, this is an image based on Ottonian imperial iconography. Both Harold and his chief advisor Archbishop Stigand stare fully and frankly into the eyes of the spectator. Stigand's controversial appointment as archbishop, which meant that in 1066 he lacked a valid pallium and tended to attest as 'bishop', was no bar to the immensely important role he played at the courts of a succession of kings, from Cnut up to and including William the Conqueror.⁵⁵ This is not a Norman-derived slur on the validity of Harold's coronation by an uncanonical archbishop. The deliberate coupling of the king in his pomp with his archbishop and leading man is a striking central focus of the whole work – whatever may or may not have been lost at either end – and it derives from an English perspective. Truly, a picture is worth a thousand words.

The impending disaster is foretold by the comet. The narrative from this point is broadly that of all the sources. Harold fought and lost, his two brothers by his side, his downfall brought about by the judgement of God upon the sinful English nation, as outlined in ASC D. There is no explicit evidence that BT took the standard line.⁵⁶ Both BT and *Vita* acknowledge that Harold swore an oath, but do not link it

⁵³ B. English, 'The Coronation of Harold in the Bayeux Tapestry', in *Embroidering the Facts*, 347–82.

⁵⁴ Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 182.

⁵⁵ Smith, 'Archbishop Stigand', 199–204.

⁵⁶ Bouet, 'Is the Tapestry pro-English', 205–6.

directly to the succession.⁵⁷ *Carmen*, Poitiers and Jumièges all allege that Harold swore to uphold Edward's previous nomination of William, even though they have to deal with two problems, that Harold could not give what was not his to give, and that Edward's dying nomination had been not of William but Harold. Jumièges, the earliest text of 'the Norman version', says that the English were punished for the death of Edward's brother Alfred in 1036, a murder in which Earl Godwine had been implicated. This issue had been discussed in Normandy for many years and first occurs in a text written *c.* 1053.⁵⁸ Poitiers, post-vilification, alleges punishment for Harold's perjury. This explanation of William's victory was devised fairly soon after the events of late 1066, though it only entered post-Conquest English writing in the next generation. Another early version of it is found in the *Carmen*, whose author, whilst vilifying Harold, is also strangely sympathetic towards him. The author is not a Norman, but the uncle of Count Eustace of Boulogne, former brother-in-law of Edward and enemy of Earl Godwine. His overblown poetic effusion was most likely written to win back favour for Eustace who returned to the Continent before 8 April 1067 and soon afterwards quarrelled with William, leading to a temporary loss of his new English estates, though he was restored to favour by 1077. It was written between Eustace's eclipse and that of Stigand in April 1070. Poitiers knew the text and did not care for it: he replaces *Carmen*'s portrayal of the heroics of Count Eustace and Hugh of Ponthieu in the battle with his own account of Eustace as a coward.⁵⁹

Poitiers is a particularly interesting witness. The Conqueror's official panegyrist and apologist, his writing, and its treatment of the barebones outline of Jumièges, reflects the seismic shift in the Norman attitude to Harold after 1070. As Ralph Davis suggested some years ago, Poitiers was very likely associated with Odo of Bayeux in some way, and was connected to him in Canterbury. He speaks of him in glowing terms and says that Norman and Breton alike were happy to submit to him.⁶⁰ The Breton reference is odd without the context of BT and its informants, since it was Odo's brother Robert of Mortain who was linked to the Bretons. His text gives every sign of being familiar with the completed BT, even though it follows the post-Stigand Lanfranc line in telling the conquest story.⁶¹ The two-stage 'Norman version' of how William became king is striking. Pre-1070, Jumièges describes the Normans as setting out for London, crossing the Thames at Wallingford and pitching camp there. Continuing their march on London, the Londoners realized the game was up and submitted to William, who was elected by English and Normans alike and crowned. The fuller account, post-1070, in Poitiers shows the men of Canterbury immediately surrendering to William, though Stigand remained with

⁵⁷ The *Vita*'s reference, 80–1, to oaths may in fact relate solely to the outlawry of Tostig.

⁵⁸ E. M. C. van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint-Wandrille: the *Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranni*', *ANS* 12, 1989, 233–51. See also Poitiers, 2–7. Mont-St-Michel evidence confirms the Norman concern for Edward and his brother (*Cartulary Mont-Saint-Michel*, no. 10; S. Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy', *ANS* 13, 1991, 173–206).

⁵⁹ *Carmen*, 30–4; *Poitiers*, 138–9, though more sympathetic at 184–5, which supports the idea that *Carmen* was written to assist Eustace's rehabilitation (van Houts, 'Latin Poetry'). An early writ of William was addressed to Stigand and Count Eustace (*Regesta*, Bates, 291).

⁶⁰ Poitiers, 164–7; R. H. C. Davis, 'William of Poitiers and his History of William the Conqueror', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. Wallace-Hadrill, Oxford, 1981, 71–100.

⁶¹ Davis, 93: 'If WP was a protégé of Odo of Bayeux, we would have to assume that the story he told was not so much the "Norman" story as the "Bayeux" story at a slightly different stage of its development'.

other English nobles upholding the cause of Edgar Ætheling.⁶² After an attack on London the Normans marched to Wallingford, where Stigand met them and did homage, confirming fealty with an oath. 'After this the bishops and other leading men begged him to take the crown', an addition which hints at ASC D's statement that Archbishop Ealdred and Edgar himself submitted to William at Berkhamstead. D also names Earls Edwin and Morcar, Harold's brothers-in-law, as submitting at Berkhamsted. Poitiers places their submission at Barking, after William's coronation.⁶³ As Douglas and Impey have suggested, it is most likely that this was a confusion on Poitiers's part, and that all the leading English nobles surrendered at Berkhamsted, as ASC says.⁶⁴ It is quite likely that the wily Stigand had himself initiated negotiations at the important military town of Wallingford, which did not suffer as a result of the Normans' passage, whilst keeping Edgar and the others safely in the rear at Great Berkhamsted, Herts.

The Bayeux Tapestry is Stigand's version of events, simultaneously his homage to Harold and his flattery of Odo and by extension William. In it we see the beginnings of the *Historia Anglorum*, the attempt of English historians to come to terms with defeat and weave it into the story of the English people. The ending of the Tapestry is now missing, but there is a high likelihood that Poitiers saw it and preserves it in his text. King William doubtless also saw it and he may not have liked what he saw. Indeed, his commission to Poitiers to write his *Gesta* might even have been a response to the Tapestry, and Poitiers's use of it part of the reason why the king failed to be pleased by Poitiers's efforts.⁶⁵ Stigand perhaps overreached himself with this production, the first and fatal miscalculation of his lifelong career at the heart of politics. According to William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum* he was shocked by his degradation in April 1070 and died in chains in Winchester in 1072, still complaining of his treatment. Ealdred spared himself humiliation by dying in 1069, but Poitiers lets slip that William had determined upon Stigand's removal in advance and that Lanfranc was to replace him.⁶⁶ Neveux suggests that BT upholds the traditional power of bishops temporal as well as spiritual, against the decisions of the reforming monks.⁶⁷ The successful partnership of William and Lanfranc, however, meant the days of worldly bishops of the likes of Stigand and Odo were numbered. Tension between Lanfranc and Odo surfaced early, which may have led to the removal of the Tapestry to Bayeux before Odo's arrest in 1082. BT was certainly inflammatory. Stigand drew attention to himself and his importance as loyal – the man had real qualities, it must be admitted – right-hand man to kings in the central 'crown-wearing' scene. The Tapestry's lost ending surely depicted

⁶² This tradition survived in the fifteenth-century *William Thorne's Chronicle of St Augustine's Abbey*, trans. A. H. Davis, Oxford 1935, 47–8, which showed Stigand acting in concert with Abbot Æthelsige (whose appointment he had recommended to Edward in 1061 according to ASC E).

⁶³ Poitiers, pp. 160–3.

⁶⁴ D. C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, London 1964, p. 207. E. Impey, 'London's Early Castles and the Context of Their Creation', in *The White Tower*, ed. E. Impey, London and New Haven 2008, pp. 16–19; Impey points out that there was an easy route via the Icknield Way and Akeman Street to Great Berkhamsted.

⁶⁵ Davis, 'William of Poitiers', 92, suggested that the connection with Odo might explain why Poitiers's fulsome panegyric apparently failed to find favour with William. The bulk of Poitiers's text as it survives is from a single lost manuscript copied in 1619 (*ibid.*, 71).

⁶⁶ Poitiers, 86, 160.

⁶⁷ Neveux, 'Conclusion', 406.

Stigand as leading the submission of the English at the important royal borough of Wallingford before its very last scene showing William's coronation?⁶⁸

The argument of this paper may well come as a severe shock to the sensibilities of Tapestry scholars, an over-ambitious attempt at A Theory of Everything in relation to immediate post-conquest sources. In fact, it builds on much that has already been published, and sees a more comprehensible story emerge once the key step of seeing the Bayeux Tapestry as an essentially English product, created by Stigand for, and to some extent in collaboration with, Odo of Bayeux, is taken. If it leads to a reconsideration of the evidence for the 'Norman' and the 'English' version of events in a less polarizing way, and to a more sympathetic view of both 'failed historian' William of Poitiers and Archbishop Stigand, then it will have done its job.

⁶⁸ D. Renn, 'How Big is It – and Was It?', in *New Approaches*, 52–8 at 56, suggests another telescoped 'double-decker' showing the submission before the final coronation scene. On Wallingford, where Stigand's church of Winchester held three of the parish churches as part of its estate at neighbouring Brightwell and Sotwell, see the editors' papers in *The Origins of the Borough of Wallingford*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan and D. R. Roffe, Oxford 2009.