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Stylistic Variation and Roman Influence in the Bayeux Tapestry

By Gale R. Owen-Crocker, University of Manchester

Introduction

It is generally assumed that the Bayeux Tapestry is to be read as a continuous, historical narrative and that it is the work of a single artist, consistently executed. The subject-matter is largely heroic: it deals with kingship and battle, oath and betrayal; it includes scenes of courage and carnage, a rallying eve-of-battle speech and two grand feasts; its chief actors are men of the ruling class, supported by their attendants and knights. The visual effect of the frieze (a point not previously, as far as I know, observed by scholars) exhibits, in general, a rhythmic alternation of the horizontal and the vertical: scenes of motion, in which long-bodied horses and dogs, ships, even King Edward's funeral cortège, are juxtaposed with static scenes where the protagonists confront one another, or where the forward impetus of the frieze is stopped by a building, a tree, or a hill.

However, there are a number of places in the Tapestry where the graphics of the main register are different in both subject matter and style. The men pictured at these points are workers, engaged in practical, mundane (distinctly non-heroic) tasks. They are depicted in a stiff, stylised manner, yet the drawing is not incompetent and individual "stage props," such as tools and foodstuffs, which occur in plenty here, are executed with striking attention to detail. Whereas the Tapestry in general is serious in tone,¹ in three instances the areas under discussion show clownish behaviour which is probably intended to be humorous. At some points in these sections the images are uncharacteristically spread out and in another rather

¹ Though arguably it sometimes displays a subtle wit – often by interplay between the border and the main register; for examples, see Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Squawk talk: commentary by birds in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Anglo-Saxon England* 34 (2005): 237-254.

compressed; the layout is crude; there seem to be some attempts at perspective, naively realised; and the buildings or trees, which elsewhere act as divisions between scenes, are sometimes omitted entirely, botched or incorporated into the main action.

In this paper the following sections of the Tapestry and their probable sources will be analysed in detail: Scene 35 (DW 35-36),² felling trees and building ships for the Norman invasion; Scenes 40-43 (DW 45-48), pillaging, preparation of food and serving of the Norman feast at Hastings; Scenes 45-47 (DW 49-51), constructing Hastings Castle and arson, alternating with Duke William interacting with a messenger and a groom. Individual figures from adjacent scenes will be included in the discussion; and Scenes 43-44 (DW 48), the Hastings feast and the council of Norman brothers which follows it, which I consider to be pivotal images in the overall Tapestry design, will be examined.

Building on parallels identified in 1976 by Otto Werckmeister between the Bayeux Tapestry and Trajan's Column, and to a lesser extent the Column of Marcus Aurelius, in Rome,³ I will suggest that the majority of episodes depicted in these portions of the Tapestry can be traced to the influence of the Roman sculptures. Not only are figures directly modelled on specific images as Werckmeister proposed, I will suggest further that there are cases where the Tapestry artist absorbs and reinterprets ideas suggested by the columns. Sometimes the Anglo-Norman artist completes a scene by drawing on other models – specifically on pictures from manuscripts in the library of St. Augustine's, Canterbury – but it appears that the inspiration for the composition of episodes in these areas of the Tapestry came, directly or indirectly, from Roman sculpture.

² The scene numbers here refer to those that have been written on the cloth in an early modern hand, and it is the scene divisions that are central to my argument. For those referencing David Wilson's edition, which does not use the scene numbers, I will add his plate numbers in parentheses.

³ O. K. Werkmeister, "The Political Ideology of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Studi Medievali*, 3rd ser, 17 (1976): 535-595 and plates at 539.

I will also consider whether the identified differences in style and the Roman models behind these areas of the Tapestry could be attributable to a different hand at work on the cartoon; and if so, whether there could have been reason to insert some additional scenes at a late stage in the design of the Tapestry, and hence to employ an additional artist to make hasty changes.

Sketches from Rome?

Trajan's Column, a 138 foot (42 metre) marble pillar was erected in Trajan's Forum, Rome, in A.D. 113, commemorating Emperor Trajan's two wars against the Dacians.⁴ This triumphal monument, and also the slightly smaller imitation of it, the Column of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 180),⁵ which commemorates Emperor Marcus Aurelius's campaigns against Germans and Sarmatians, bear sculpted accounts of Roman military victories, arranged as spiral strips round the cylindrical pillars, running from left to right, bottom to top. Significant similarities between the columns and the Bayeux Tapestry have been recognised since the eighteenth century.⁶ All three consist of continuous friezes depicting what was, at the time of construction, recent history, in the form of long, narrow pictorial registers. On both columns and Tapestry, the narrative is divided into perceptible "scenes" bounded by trees and buildings. The resemblance of the columns to the vividly embroidered Tapestry is more striking when one appreciates that the now monochrome marble was originally painted. However, the eleventh-century Tapestry is starker, since it shows little spatial awareness and rarely depicts background, whereas the scenes of the columns are crowded with tiers of

⁴ Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, *Die Trajanssäule: ein römisches kunstwerk zu begin der Spätantike* (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1926); and Florea Bobu Florescu, *Die Trajanssäule: Grundfragen und Tafeln* (Bukarest: Akademie-Verlag and Bonn: Rudolf Habelt Verlag, 1969). The scenes on Trajan's column are conventionally identified by Roman numerals, which are the same in both the reproductions; www.aviewoncities.com/rome/trajanscolumn.htm.

⁵ Eugen Petersen, Alfred Von Domaszewski, and Guglielmo Calderini, eds., *Die-Marcus-säule auf piazza Colonna in rom*, 3 vols. (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1896). The scenes are again identified by Roman numerals.

⁶ Werkmeister, 536-537, and notes 9, 10.

protagonists and space-filling structures and observers. Although the sculptors do not use perspective systematically – figures are not carved smaller to indicate distance from the viewer – they do show some awareness of it: buildings are often shown in diminished size as background, and architectural structures are typically depicted in two-point perspective, viewed from a corner. The Bayeux Tapestry, as is typical of medieval art, generally does not show awareness of perspective, rather arranging figures of similar size in overlapping groups. However there are some places in the Tapestry where relative size of images, or the placing of a second tier in the upper part of the frieze, indicates distance, betraying the influence of classical art.⁷ Though not confined to the areas discussed here, such attempts at perspective are particularly recurrent in these sections.

Today it is impossible to identify much detail on the Roman columns with the naked eye from ground level, since they are so high, and the paint, gilding and attachments which once brought the images to life are now gone. They have endured nearly 2,000 years of weather and the recent pollution of a modern city environment. The Marcus Aurelius Column, on a tall plinth and with some areas badly deteriorated, is, to my own myopic eye, hardly distinguishable.⁸ Trajan's Column, viewed from the modern street, Via dei Fori Imperiali, which is about level with the top of the plinth, is slightly more visible. However, the situation may have been different when they were half their present age. Moreover, Trajan's Column, at least, may have been more accessible in the eleventh century since, according to Werckmeister, the upper windows of two flanking library buildings⁹ and the

⁷ See Peter Lasko, "The Bayeux Tapestry and the Representation of Space," in *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives. A Memorial Tribute to C. R. Dodwell*, eds. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 26-39; see especially pages 29-31.

⁸ The Marcus Aurelius Column, currently a more famous landmark than Trajan's Column, stands in what is now the Piazza Colonna in Rome. There was originally a Temple to the deified emperor nearby, but I have no information about how the scenes might have been viewed in the eleventh century.

<http://www.aviewoncities.com/rome/columnofmarcusaurelius.htm>.

⁹ The library buildings, one for Greek, the other for Latin, texts were part of the original Forum construction and apparently existed until some time in the eleventh century; Werkmeister, 543; <http://cheiron.mcmaster.ca/~trajan/>.

roof (and perhaps a bell tower) of the adjacent tenth-century church of San Nicola a Columna could have provided viewing points, at least of the bottom third of it.

Werckmeister suggested that the Bayeux artist had observed Trajan's Column first hand and remembered details of it. That a Norman or English traveller had seen it is quite possible since there was constant traffic of senior ecclesiastics, and their entourages, to and from Rome. In particular, Bishop Odo, brother of William the Conqueror and a favourite candidate of modern scholars for the role of patron of the Tapestry, is known to have visited Rome and owned property there. His ambition to be elected Pope may have entailed the long-term presence of influential lobbyists. It is therefore entirely plausible that the Column was observed and recorded in detail by a medieval visitor who transmitted both an overall impression of the narrative frieze and some individual details to the designer of the Tapestry, who was probably located in Canterbury. The observant traveller was not necessarily himself "the Bayeux artist." The naturalistic Roman images are interpreted in the Tapestry in ways that are stylised, naïve and sometimes erroneous, and the examples I discuss here stand out stylistically from the rest of the Tapestry.¹⁰ One could posit various scenarios, including the untrained hand of the Roman traveller being transmitted through the Bayeux artist, or a subordinate Bayeux artist grappling with models in an unfamiliar style. Though Werckmeister specifically rejected the idea of a "sketchbook,"¹¹ I would not. The concept of a sketch or preliminary cartoon is not confined to modern times, and there is no reason to suppose that

¹⁰ I have not included in my present discussion Werckmeister's comparison of Scene 17, the crossing of the River Couesnon with its perilous quicksands, to Trajan's Column Scene XXXI (Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 17; Florescu, plates XXII-XXIII) where Dacians sink into the marsh (Werckmeister, 539), and Scene XXVI (Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 15; Florescu, plate XX) a river crossing, since I do not observe stylistic variation in the Tapestry at this point. There is certainly a similarity in general subject matter; and the perspective use of Mont-Saint-Michel in the background suggests Antique influence, though the detail of the Mont is not paralleled on the Column.

¹¹ "It would hardly be consistent with our view of painting in the eleventh century to assume that an artist went out to sketch the Column of Trajan, as did the artists of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. He would have carefully studied the column, and he would have thought about the meaning of the spiral reliefs, but the actual designing of the Tapestry he did in his atelier, on the basis of the pictorial traditions available to him, adding from the column a number of details which he could draw from memory..."; Werckmeister, 547.

the Bayeux Tapestry designs existed solely in the final context of the embroidery which has survived until the present day. There is evidence that medieval artists made drawings on wax tablets, and there are geometric designs sketched out on blank areas in surviving manuscripts.¹² The Tapestry contains so many echoes, both specific and general, of Trajan's Column and at least one of the Column of Marcus Aurelius, that drawings of Roman artworks¹³ transmitted on spare pages of a traveller's book, eventually lodged in the library at Canterbury, seem at least a possible source.

Werkmeister identified several specific details from Trajan's Column which he related to the Tapestry. Some of these, such as a misunderstood source for the "spade fight," seem to me to be inspired (even though we may be able to improve on them)¹⁴ while others, such as the encounter between the emperor and scouts, appear more general than specific.¹⁵ Werkmeister also usefully compared and contrasted the functions of reiterated images on Trajan's Column and the Bayeux Tapestry, identifying what he called "three kinds of topical scenes: the shipping of troops and equipment across waterways, long marches through enemy territory culminating in attacks, and works of field engineering"¹⁶ adding that despite some specific parallels "... on balance, field engineering is much less in evidence [in the Tapestry]."¹⁷ It is necessary to recognise that military activity occupies little more than a

¹² See Elizabeth Coatsworth and Michael Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 167-170. I am grateful to Dr. Coatsworth for drawing my attention to this material.

¹³ Such drawings might have included artworks now lost and could have included other media such as wall paintings.

¹⁴ I suggest a modification below.

¹⁵ Werkmeister, 539, compared this (Scene XXXVI; Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 20; Florescu, plate XXVII) with the encounter on horseback between Duke William and Vital (Scene 49), but the Roman version has many more figures and a central tree. The face-to-face image of riders and horses has been used before in the Tapestry, at Scene 13.

¹⁶ Werkmeister, 537.

¹⁷ Werkmeister, 538.

quarter of the Bayeux Tapestry,¹⁸ and that the majority of the Tapestry's action, including discussion between figures in what Werkmeister called "strategic counsel,"¹⁹ takes place in non-military contexts: palaces, churches, the roads of England and Normandy and the countryside around Hastings. Consequently "the shipping ... across waterways" and "long marches," which he identified as characteristic of both works, though important in establishing the visual rhythm of the Tapestry which I mentioned in my opening paragraph, are not all presented in the Tapestry as military operations: this is a different kind of story, concerned with the subtleties of human relationships, only presenting battle and conquest as its culmination. Similarly, in the less militaristic context of the Tapestry, there is little need of "field engineering": the only specific example is the construction of Hastings Castle. Yet at certain points, a Bayeux artist has evidently borrowed from Trajan's Column the principle that the depiction of practical, preparatory activity is appropriate subject matter. The nature of the activity is adapted, the social status of the protagonists is changed from soldiers in armour to workmen in civilian dress,²⁰ and there are evident attempts to imbue the figures with symbolic meaning and, sometimes, individualism.

Tree-felling, building and launching of ships

Description

As the Tapestry presents it, the preparation of the Norman fleet is precipitated by the news of Harold's coronation in England. The inscription (**Figure 1**)

¹⁸ Specifically, the Battle of Hastings with which the incomplete embroidery now ends (Scenes 51-58) and the earlier Brittany campaign (Scenes 16-22).

¹⁹ Werkmeister, 538.

²⁰ On the Roman sculptures it is the barbarian enemies who wear civilian dress and the men carrying out "field engineering" are Roman soldiers in military garb. In eleventh-century England and Normandy only the military elite would wear armour, and while they might have a supervisory role they are not depicted carrying out the hard labour.



Figure 1: Bayeux Tapestry Scene 35, ordering of invasion fleet. Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century by special permission of the City of Bayeux.

informs us HIC WILLELM DVX IVSSIT NAVES EDIFICARE, “here Duke William ordered ships to be built” over an image of four figures: two seated, wearing the long robes of authority, flanked by two standing figures in short garments, all enclosed by an elaborate building with towers. The standing man on the left is addressing the seated men urgently and a figure holding an adze is standing on the right. The seated figures represent William and, on the right, almost certainly, his brother Bishop Odo (the man is tonsured). The man on the left may be the third brother, Robert, or the messenger from England. The presence of the carpenter anticipates the preparation of ships that follows. **(Figure 2)**



Figure 2: Scene 35, tree-felling. Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century by special permission of the City of Bayeux.

Three men in culottes swing axes to fell trees and a fourth straddles a plank as he smooths it. The plank is supported by a forked tree-trunk. Other planks are stacked unrealistically from the fork to an adjacent tree that is being felled, and parallel lines indicate planks stacked behind the man's legs. The forked tree-trunk, which curves slightly to the left, and a tree with leafy branches, which curves over to the right, (**Figure 4**) frame two ships under construction. The "shipwrights section" was not separately numbered by the sixteenth-century hand which added numerals to the backcloth and has not, traditionally, been counted as an independent scene; but it is in fact framed by the trees and might well be considered one. The novelty that the left-hand tree is functional in the action has led to the episode being treated as a continuum with the tree-felling.

Two bearded shipwrights work on the bottom boat, with an auger and hand-axe; two other shipwrights in the upper one work with an adze and a breast-auger; and a fifth man stands between the two boats, apparently steadying the upper one. Beyond the curving leafy tree, (**Figure 5**) ships are dragged to the water by barefoot men who wade through the shallows wearing slit or tucked-up tunics. One of the men attaches the ships to a tall post.

An arcaded building, close to the water's edge, marks the scene-end, and is followed by a two-tiered procession of men, mostly wearing tunics. They carry mailcoats, swords, spears, helmets, a barrel and an animal skin and follow a cart loaded with a very large barrel, helmets and spears. It is pulled by two small male figures who are harnessed to it, preceded by a man carrying a bundle on his shoulders. The third seam of the Tapestry follows.

Sources and style

The seated figures of William and Odo, and the standing figure of Robert (or the messenger) are probably, as I have argued elsewhere, modelled on an illustration of Lot speaking to his prospective sons-in-law in the Old English illustrated *Hexateuch*, a manuscript from St. Augustine's, Canterbury.²¹ The standing figure of the carpenter is an addition to this model. Oversized in relation to the seated figures, the man's body is turned onwards towards the tree-felling and boat-building activity but his head twists backwards to receive the orders evidently emanating from Odo. This backward look has been used occasionally before in the Tapestry²² but the twisting of the body is particularly frequent in the sections under discussion here, sometimes making the figure look awkward and unrealistic, as in the case of the carpenter. The second tree-feller turns backwards, but more naturalistically, while the man who ties the ship to a post twists his arms away from his backward-facing body and his large, prominent face.

The tree-felling episode is different in style from anything that has gone before, with its figures and trees individual and separate, not overlapping. This sub-section offers one of Werckmeister's most compelling arguments for influence from Trajan's Column on the

²¹ Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Reading the Bayeux Tapestry through Canterbury Eyes," in *Anglo-Saxons. Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, eds. Simon Keynes and Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), 243-65. (See especially pages 251-252, 254.) The manuscript is London, British Library, Cotton Claudius B iv; C. R. Dodwell and P. Clemoes, *The Old English Illustrated Hexateuch*, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 18 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1974).

²² Scene 3 calling the feasters to the ship; Scene 4 seaman; Scene 31 acclaiming King Harold; Scene 32 awe at the comet; Scene 34 seaman.

Bayeux Tapestry. Although David Bernstein was not convinced by the parallel,²³ if one omits the two figures in the foreground of Trajan's Column Scene XV,²⁴ (**Figure 3**) who are supporting a yoke on their shoulders to carry a heavy log swinging on a rope, then the other three figures and the trees bear a close parallel to the tree-felling of Bayeux Scene 35.



*Figure 3: Trajan's Column Scene XV, tree felling.
Image from Lehmann-Hartleben, 1926.*

The Roman trees are tall and thin, not branching till on level with the head of the man on the left and at shoulder height of the man in the middle. The Bayeux trees at this point are also tall and spindly, unlike the thick-trunked, luxuriantly-branching trees which have acted as scene boundaries earlier in the Tapestry. The left-hand man on the Roman sculpture has his legs wide apart to steady himself and his right arm is across his body to swing an axe (now missing) above his head. Although the Bayeux artist has not depicted the weight distribution quite correctly, he has copied the wide-legged stance (adding the other leg which is behind a tree in the original) and the way in which the man's body faces back while his head faces

²³ David J. Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 95-97.

²⁴ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 11; Florescu, plate XI.

forward towards the tree. On Trajan's Column the central figure is above, in perspective behind the log carriers. The Bayeux artist has brought him down to ground level, adding legs, and bringing his hands close together, raising an axe; but the man's position, body facing forward, head looking back, right arm up, is copied from the Roman model. The third Roman figure faces forward, arms raising an axe above his head. His face is concealed by his arms. The Bayeux artist has copied his wide-legged stance, weight on the front foot, though more lightly indicated; and his man also faces forward, though his face is visible in profile. The Roman figures wear breast plates and short skirted tunics, the Bayeux figures wear culottes; but the left-hand Roman's tunic has a slightly kilted effect to his left and the other two have folds from belt to hem to their right, which might conceivably, when transmitted through an amateurish copy, have been interpreted as boundary lines for culottes. It is worth considering whether these short culottes, generally interpreted today as characteristic of Normans and of physical labourers²⁵ could have arisen from misinterpretation of a Roman model.

The style of the next sub-section, the shipwrights, is noticeably different. **(Figure 4)**

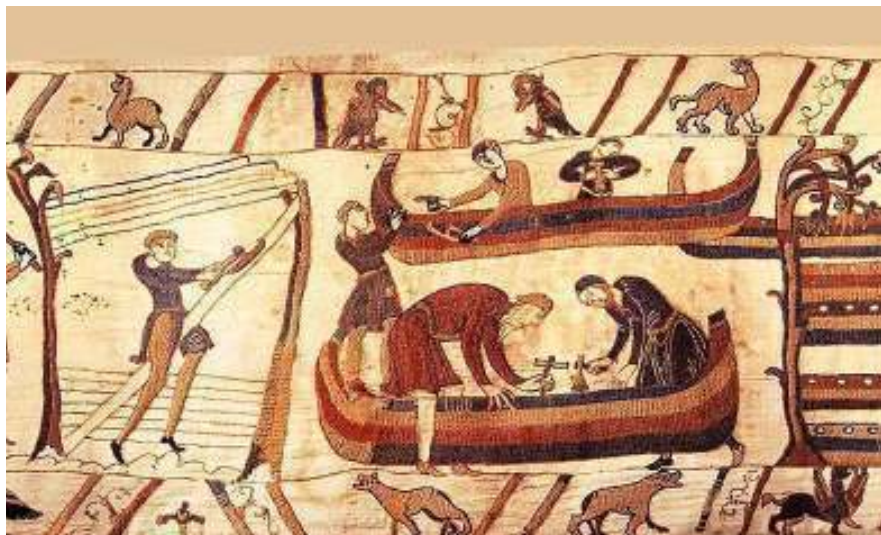


Figure 4: Scene 35, building ships. Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century by special permission of the City of Bayeux.

²⁵ Earlier in the Tapestry, Normans wear longer culottes.

The lower figures are more naturalistic, and there is both foreground and background, and an attempt at perspective, albeit imperfectly managed. Both the figure straddling a plank at the end of the tree-felling section, and the bearded shipwrights in the foreground of the ship building section are, it seems to me, influenced by the depiction of Noah building the ark in the *Hexateuch*, fol. 13v.²⁶ Beards are unusual in the Tapestry as a whole, and, though their inclusion may indicate the age and experience of the shipwrights, when considered together with the very full-skirted tunics, suggest that the two figures working on the lower ship were modelled on a different source from other figures in the scene. In the *Hexateuch*, the figure labelled *Noe* has a forked beard, faces left, and straddles a plank. It seems that the Bayeux artist has taken three ideas from this single image: the rather stylised carpenter straddling a plank, which the artist has ingeniously associated with a forked tree and backed up with other planks, some unconvincingly up in the air; a bearded shipwright facing right, straddling the side of a ship; and another bearded shipwright facing left. The figure drawing is not quite correct: the right leg of the left-hand figure is outside the ship and his left apparently inside it, but his left foot incongruously appears beneath the ship. He could not straddle a ship of sufficient size to carry men and horses. The right-hand figure appears to be working inside the ship but his feet appear beneath it.

The artist has included a shallower ship containing smaller figures, at the top of the register. The upper ship, however, is longer than the lower one, negating the perspective. The presence of the man standing below and apparently steadying the upper boat as the shipwright directs him, also ruins the perspective since it makes the ship appear to be floating in the air, rather than resting on the ground in the distance. The cartoon of the upper ship has been set too high, causing one man's head to overlap the upper border of the Tapestry and the head of the other to be awkwardly tilted sideways. I have not found a model for this upper

²⁶ Genesis 6:12-22.

image, which includes a very distinctive positioning of the arms; but the attempt at perspective here, and in the depiction of the planks, just before, suggests Roman models for more than the tree-felling figures.

The ships which are being dragged to the water (**Figure 5**)

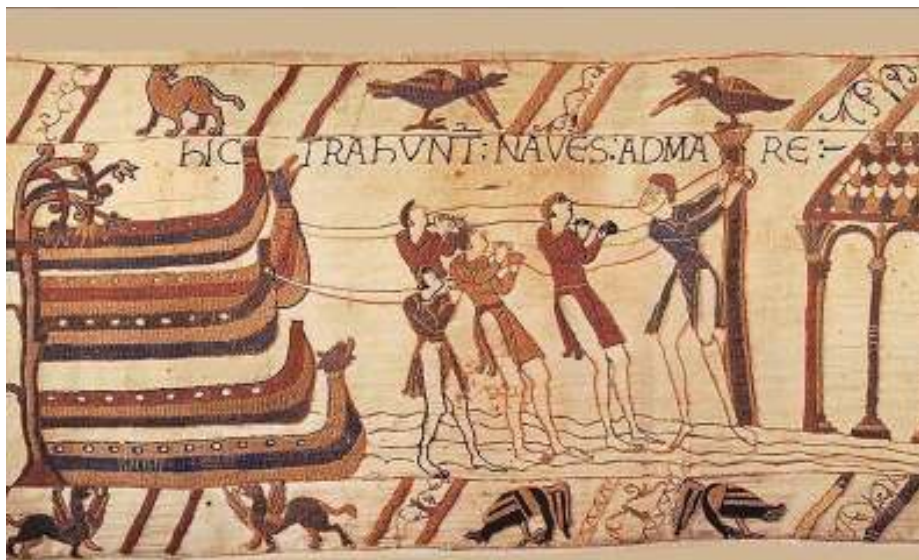


Figure 5: Scene 36, launching of ships. Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century by special permission of the City of Bayeux.

are, all but one, incompletely drawn. The sterns are omitted. This would make sense if the ships were appearing round a wall, or some other massive feature, but emerging as they do from the trunk of a thin tree which could not conceal very much, the part-ships testify to the misunderstanding of a model, probably from Roman art. The Marcus Aurelius Column, at Scene III,²⁷ has a sophisticated, almost three-dimensional, depiction of the ends of nine ships, lined up under a bridge. At Trajan's Column Scenes IV and (more clearly) XLVIII (**Figure 6**)

²⁷ Petersen et al., *Die-Marcus-säule*, vol. 2, plate 10.



Figure 6: *Trajan's Column Scene XLVIII, part-ships.*
 Image from *Lehmann-Hartleben, 1926.*

ships are moored under bridges.²⁸ They are depicted as part-ships, overlapping one another from right to left, as if each ship conceals the stern of the one beside and behind it. The Bayeux artist was probably imitating an effect of this kind.

Werckmeister compared the Bayeux arcaded building with a seaport at Trajan's Column Scenes IV and (more clearly) XLVIII where ships are under bridges;²⁹ but, other than the location, there is not a close resemblance: the Roman buildings are single arcades, one above the other, whereas the Tapestry's building is a roofed triple arcade. A more likely source is the *Harley Psalter*, which has several examples of triple arcades, either as open-sided pavilions or entrances to buildings, though I have not found a parallel as close as that demonstrated by Bernstein for Scene 11,³⁰ since the Tapestry building appears to have a pitched roof whereas the *Psalter* buildings are generally domed or rounded.

Scene 37 (DW 38), with its procession of figures carrying arms and armour, suggests classical influence since it exhibits another attempt at perspective. An upper tier of figures is

²⁸ Florescu, plate V, groups of five ships and two ships; plate XXXVII, four ships.

²⁹ Lehmann-Hartleben, plates 6, 24; Florescu, plates V, XXXVII. The latter scene is misnumbered LVIII instead of XLVIII in Florescu.

³⁰ Lehman-Hartleben, plate 18; Florescu plate XXIV. Bernstein, 44. plates 11-12, convincingly compared the building at Scene 11 with that in the *Harley Psalter*, London, British Library, MS Harley 603, fol. 1v.

correctly depicted in slightly smaller size, though not entirely successfully: three men lack legs and one carries his head at an awkward angle, like the earlier shipwright, for the same reason: he has been placed too close to the upper border.

Cartloads of military equipment appear several times on the Column of Marcus Aurelius,³¹ the contents arranged less tidily but more realistically than on the Tapestry cart, where the neatly ranked spears have tops but no bottoms. They were perhaps intended to disappear inside the cart, but in order to display the enormous barrel the artist omitted the sides of the cart, drawing in only the supporting hoops. The barrel on the Bayeux cart could have been suggested by a Roman model: barrels on carts appear on both Roman columns.³² The Roman carts, however, are always drawn by animals, either horses or oxen. The Bayeux artist has chosen to depict human beings dragging the cart, harnessed like animals, highlighting this fact with wry humour: both men have their fists under their chins, a “thinking” posture developed in the Roman theatre, originally associated with deities and philosophers, but as a comic device, employed by slaves.³³

Riders, pillagers, cooks and waiters

Description

Horsemen gallop away from their beached ships (Scene 40 [DW 44]; **Figure 7**),

³¹ Scenes XXVI, XXIX, XXXVIII, XCIII, CXI; Petersen et al., *Die-Marcus-säule*, plates 34, 36, 44, 101/2, 120.

³² Trajan’s Column Scenes LXII, Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 30; Florescu, plates XLV-XLVI. Marcus Aurelius Column, Scene XXV, Petersen et al., plate 33.

³³ See Gale R. Owen-Crocker, “The Interpretation of Gesture in the Bayeux Tapestry,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 29 (2007): 145-78, at 165 and 167, Figure 11. This is one of six gestures which I have identified in the Tapestry as originating from the Roman stage. They were recorded in an illustrated Carolingian manuscript of the plays of Terence and some of them can be found in the Old English illustrated Hexateuch and the Harley Psalter, see C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Gestures and the Roman Stage*, prepared for publication by Timothy Graham, *Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (Cambridge: University Press, 2000).



Figure 7: Scene 39, exit of horses and two riders. Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century by special permission of the City of Bayeux.

immediately after which there is a scene depicting pillage (Scene 41 [DW 45-46]; **Figures 8a-b)**





Figures 8a-8b: Scene 40-41, pillaging. Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry – 11th Century by special permission of the City of Bayeux.

followed by one showing practical actions of cooking and serving food (Scene 42 [DW 46]), shown in considerable detail. Three small buildings appear above (and by implication of perspective, behind) the pillagers. They are all rectangular, set on sills, with central, semi-circular doorways and pitched roofs and without windows, but they differ in detail: the first and third have vertical spikes at each end of the roofs; the roofs of the first and second appear to be rounded at the ends; the first is roofed with shingles or tiles, the second has oblique lines which might represent thatch; the third, rhomboid shingles; the first is walled with rhomboid shapes that suggest stone; the other two with horizontal lines that resemble planks. There are no other examples of this sort of architecture in the Tapestry. Commentators generally assume that these are English cottages.

Armoured figures on horseback, one of them captioned HIC EST VVADARD, “here is Wadard,” oversee the collection of animals. A small figure, perhaps a child, grasps a sheep by its horn and holds on to a man who swings an axe, apparently intent on butchering the animal, though his gaze is upwards, perhaps directed towards an awkwardly-drawn bull with bent legs. This animal may be intended to be lying down, but upright; or it may be on its

side, already dead. One man carries an unidentifiable burden, depicted as concentric circles over the top of his head and across his neck, another hoists a pig on his shoulders, while a third leads a pony with panniers. Ostensibly the sheep, bull and pig are ingredients for the feast which follows, but it is notable that the food being prepared for the feast will not consist of large joints. The field kitchen is processing whole small animals or fowls, and indeterminate items: round and oval shapes might possibly indicate bread, rhomboid shapes could be meat or vegetable, though possibly these items were shaped and coloured for their pleasing variety rather than realism. In a further inconsistency, the items on the table at the forthcoming feast will be fishes and round loaves, iconic in Christian terms,³⁴ different both from what has been plundered and what has been cooked. The pillaging scene may be interpreted on two levels, which may reflect both Norman patronage and English execution of the Tapestry. Depending on the audience's/designer's point of view, it may contribute to glorifying the Normans, or to condemning them: in terms of immediate continuity it relates to the feasting of the Norman elite, but in anticipation of the forthcoming conquest it may be intended to demonstrate that the invading army, fed at the expense of the local community, was already oppressing the English population.

Two figures attend a cooking pot suspended over a fire on a brazier and a third cook uses long-handled tongs to lift hot food from the top of a square oven, mounted on legs over a ground-level fire. A disembodied tray of meats on spits occupies an area near the upper border over the cooking pot. One spit carries three small items, another a small, whole creature, the rest indeterminate shapes. Two men deliver food on spits to a man at a makeshift sideboard constructed from shields and a hurdle. They stand in front of a building

³⁴ Loaves and fishes relate to Christ's feeding of the 5,000 with loaves and fishes, Mark 6: 38-44 (as four thousand, Mark 8: 5-9) and also functioned as an iconographical device in depictions of the Last Supper; N. P. Brooks and H. E. Walker, N. P. Brooks, and H. E. Walker, "The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 63-92, at 75. Originally published in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies* 1 (1978): 1-34 and 191-9.

represented by a tower with a window, an area of tiled roof marking a storey with a rounded top; by a second tower, without much detail; and between them what looks like a horizontal beam topped by a domed roof. The presence of the building is perhaps meant to signify that the sideboard and feasting table were located indoors, and in crossing in front of the towers the waiters are perhaps meant to be entering the interior space. The artist does not handle it well: whereas elsewhere in the Tapestry actors are framed by buildings, in this case a tower disappears into the waiter's head. The elaborate style of the building is incongruous in relation to the field kitchen outside, and the necessity for building fortifications, soon to be depicted. Though small and incomplete, this building echoes the architecture of the royal palaces of Edward and Harold and is inappropriate in this place.

The spits in the hands of the first of the *ministri* and the right hand of the second are loaded with indeterminate foods: the colouring suggests a single item on each stick. However, the two spits in the second server's left hand each contains a complete small animal or a fowl. The recipient also holds a bowl with a spit sticking out of it. A man behind holds a tall jar with a domed lid, and there are more vessels – a smaller bowl mounted on a foot, and a small cup -- on the first shield. The second shield holds a round loaf and a knife. There are also unidentifiable objects on both shields. Behind the “sideboard” are two other attendants. One blows a horn, presumably to announce the meal, to the evident indignation of his companion who turns his head sharply towards the horn-blower. The effect is comical in a slapstick sort of way. The focus on a horn is also, as I have previously suggested,³⁵ a back-reference to the Bosham feast (Scene 3, DW 3-4), when one of Harold's party drank from the wide mouth of a decorated horn; the physical reversal of the horn – the servant at

³⁵ Gale R. Owen-Crocker, “Telling a Tale: Narrative Techniques in the Bayeux Tapestry and the Old English Epic *Beowulf*,” in *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives. A Memorial Tribute to C. R. Dodwell*, eds. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 40-59, at 53.

Hastings puts the narrow end to his mouth – and thus its transformation from prized drinking vessel to noisy instrument, is humorous.

Sources and style

I suggest that much of the pillaging scene was inspired by Roman art. However, in this case the images were not direct copies, as the figures in the tree-felling scene seem to have been, and they derive from contexts with subject matter quite different from that of the Tapestry.

The stone walls of the first cottage are not typical of Anglo-Saxon domestic architecture of the humbler kind and the crude but recognisable attempt at perspective is not characteristic of medieval art at all. It may be no coincidence that the depiction of small houses with pitched roofs at the top of the pictorial register occurs in the opening scenes of both Trajan's Column (Scenes I, III)³⁶ and the column of Marcus Aurelius. The Trajan buildings, which are on the bank of the River Danube, form a background to river workers arranging cargo in boats.³⁷ The point of similarity lies in the attempt to use domestic architecture to convey perspective. The Roman buildings are depicted in a much more sophisticated manner, and undeniably differ from the naïve Tapestry houses in several ways: the sculptured houses are at three quarter angles so that gable ends as well as pitched roofs are visible; they are set within stockades and they have window and (mostly) square door openings rather than the round-headed doorways of the Tapestry.³⁸ However, there are some similarities of detail. The Trajan houses and the first house of the Marcus Aurelius Column

³⁶ Lehmann-Hartleben, plates 5, 6; Florescu, plates I, III.

³⁷ I am grateful to my husband, Richard Crocker, for suggesting a similarity in the use of houses on the columns to the Tapestry, while observing them from street level.

³⁸ Round-headed openings do in fact appear on the column, at Scene XXXIII (Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 18, Florescu, plate XXIV) on tiny buildings in the distant background, beyond a wall. However the openings are multiple and I would not suggest them as a model.

(Scene I)³⁹ are composed of large stone blocks, a possible model for the first house of the Tapestry. This and the next Marcus Aurelius house are roofed with slates, perhaps a model for the third house of the Tapestry. The third Marcus Aurelius house is within a fence of horizontal posts with a round headed doorway and open door, a parallel to the round-headed openings of the Tapestry; the house itself is built of thin, close-set, vertical posts and the roof is depicted the same way, but in two thicknesses that might represent thatch, which appears to be the roofing material on the second Tapestry house. The spikes projecting from two of the Tapestry houses may reflect the building technique of watch towers adjacent on the bank of the Danube, near the beginning of Trajan's Column.⁴⁰

The animals brought in from the foraging expedition on the Tapestry are a bull, a curly-horned sheep and a pig. It seems likely that the Bayeux artist took inspiration from the appearance of these animals as sacrificial victims on Roman sculptures. Sacrificial processions were a popular theme on second-century sculptures;⁴¹ they included attendants carrying the instruments of execution and other stock ingredients such as musicians. Extant examples include the *Lustratio* ("purification") panel of the Arch of Constantine, with a bull, a sheep and a pig,⁴² Scene XXX of the Marcus Aurelius Column,⁴³ where there are a bull and a sheep, and two scenes on Trajan's Column, IX⁴⁴ and LIII⁴⁵ which have a bull, a sheep and a pig in procession.

³⁹ Petersen *et al.*, plate 5. There are more little buildings to the right but the surface of the sculpture is deteriorated at this point.

⁴⁰ Scene I (Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 5; Florescu, plate II).

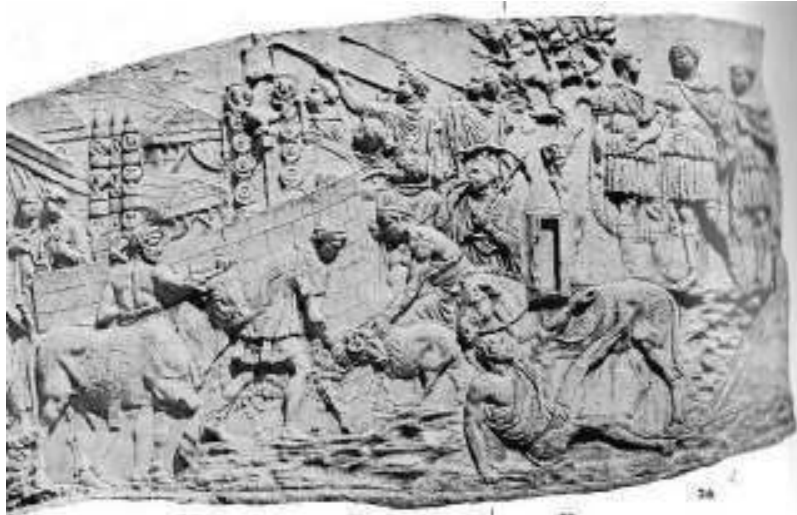
⁴¹ Inez Scott Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs of Marcus Aurelius* (New York: Archaeological Trust of America, 1967), 22, 37.

⁴² Ryberg, *Panel Reliefs*, plate XXVII.

⁴³ Petersen *et al.*, plates 38-9.

⁴⁴ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 8; Florescu plate VIII.

⁴⁵ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 20; Florescu plate X.



*Figure 9: Trajan's Column Scene IX.
Image from Florescu.*

It is unlikely to be a coincidence that in the former of these, **(Figure 9)** which lies well within the range that Werckmeister postulated as being visible in the eleventh century (the first six spirals) a pony with a round pannier appears to the right of the scene, just as it does in the Bayeux Tapestry, depicted with similar stance and mane. The Bayeux version omits the background architecture, standards, trumpeters and tree, though it retains the concept of “background,” moving the bull to middle range and including small houses. The composition of the Bayeux scene is different from the Roman. The bull and sheep on the Tapestry face left, the bull is unattended, the sheep is being held by the horn and butchered; whereas at Trajan's Column Scene IX, men are driving the bull and sheep from left to right towards the end of a wall and the sheep is touched on the neck, not the horn. The pig⁴⁶ moves right to left, going round the wall. This animal therefore faces the same way as the Bayeux animal, but the latter is being carried by a man. The Bayeux pony is similar to the Roman one, but the tack is different and as the Tapestry pony is being led, its reins are

⁴⁶ The animal is not instantly recognisable (to me) as a pig since its head is hidden by the wall and its tail by the herder's body, though the legs are carefully sculpted and others might be more confident in identifying it. However, I name it by analogy with Scene LIII where the curly tail and distinctive pig shape are clear, and the Arch of Constantine. I do not suggest Scene LIII as a direct model for the Tapestry as it is higher up the Column.

forward, not lying on its neck. The Bayeux artist removes the Roman animal handlers and onlookers, replacing the former with differently posed figures. What we see here, therefore, is the transmission of an idea, but not the copying of a model, though its subject matter – sacrifice – may have been seen as an ironic analogy for the Norman depredations on English farms.

For the sheep's handlers, and the manner of grasping the animal, the artist may have borrowed from an illustration in the Old English *Hexateuch*, fol. 29v, which shows a calf being held, butchered and cooked for Abraham's (spiritual) visitors. The narrative moves from right to left of the manuscript scene. At the right a man holds the calf with both hands by its pointed horns while a smaller figure swings an axe; in the middle, a man has decapitated the calf and on the left a man tends a cooking pot over a fire. A very similar cooking pot will appear in the Bayeux Tapestry in the field kitchen immediately to the right of the pony.

Though the stylised folds of skin on the Tapestry bull's neck may be found, albeit more naturalistically, on some of the Roman sculptures, in general attitude the Tapestry beast is very different from the realistic carvings, and almost certainly has its source in a manuscript drawing.⁴⁷ The artist may have copied the image direct, or he may have imitated and reversed the earlier appearance of a bull in the lower border at Scene 7, where its bent legs make it appear to be running, along with a goat, sheep(?) and lion, in pursuit of a deer, illustrating Aesop's fable of the lion hunt. The pillaging figure carrying a burden, who stands

⁴⁷ C. R. Hart suggests that the bulls here and at Scene 7 derive from the figure of *Taurus* on a planisphere in the astrological manuscript London, British Library, Harley 647, fol. 21v, a ninth-century Carolingian manuscript which was in the library of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, by the tenth century. However, the *Taurus* image shows only the front end of the animal and Hart adds "The back halves of the bulls are due to the Tapestry artist, the end-result being most odd-looking beasts which do not fit in well with their surroundings"; Cyril Hart, "The Cicero-Aratea and the Bayeux Tapestry," in Gale R. Owen-Crocker, ed., *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 161-78, at 166. However, there would have been other models for bulls readily available, in the emblems of St. Luke depicted in Gospel Books and compilations drawing on the gospels. The same awkwardness caused by having to adapt a "bust"-type model to a full-length figure can be seen in the ninth-century Book of Cerne, Cambridge, University Library MS Ll.1.10, fol. 21v; Michelle P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage and Power in Ninth-Century England* (London, Toronto, and Buffalo: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1996), 185, plate 1a.

between the bull and the man with a pig, is, as established by Francis Wormald,⁴⁸ modelled on the figure of *Labor* in London, British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra C viii, fol. 30, a Canterbury manuscript of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*.⁴⁹

While some of the cooking and “sideboard” images appear to be freely composed, it is tempting to suggest that the blowing of the instrument, which provokes the rather clownish humour, may have been inspired by the musicians traditionally accompanying Roman sacrificial processions, which the Bayeux artist had exploited for the adjacent pillaging episode. Trajan's Column Scene IX includes trumpeters, and the Column of Marcus Aurelius Scene XXX a curved horn.

The foraging episode appears to be composite: images of Roman domestic buildings and of what appears to be a Roman sacrificial procession are combined with images from three Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, all interspersed with two armed figures on horseback; these and other details may be the artist's own compositions. While it is uncertain how much of the context of the Roman carvings was understood by the Bayeux artist, it is likely, as I have argued elsewhere, that the images in manuscript sources were very well understood, and unequivocally associated with their narrative context, by the artist and anyone else who knew the St. Augustine's, Canterbury, library well. There may, therefore, be a certain irony in the borrowing of Abraham's reception of honoured guests for the preparation of the invaders' feast; while the figure with the unidentifiable burden, taken from the image of *Labor* in a Canterbury manuscript of Prudentius, may have been included by an English artist as implicit criticism of the Norman pillagers: *Labor* in the *Psychomachia* is an associate of *Avaritia*,

⁴⁸ Francis Wormald, “Style and Design,” in Frank Stenton, ed., *The Bayeux Tapestry* (New York: Phaidon, 1957; 2nd ed., London: Phaidon, 1965), 25-36 at 32.

⁴⁹ Thomas H. Ohlgren, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration: Photographs of Sixteen Manuscripts with Descriptions and Index* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 516, plate 15.44.

“Greed.” To the artist who used this model, and any of his colleagues who knew it well, the Normans, then, are being seen as greedy ravagers.

Here, as in the tree-felling scene, the individual images are spread so that there is a noticeable amount of empty space, bare linen backcloth, between them. There is a lack of scene dividers: the trees and buildings which have previously punctuated the frieze as boundaries marking changes of time and place, journey and destination, are absent. The section is presented as a continuum from invasion through pillaging, cooking, serving and (at Scene 43) feasting. The only architectural structure in this part of the Tapestry – the two thin towers bridged by a beam and domed roof – does not act as a boundary dividing the main register since the two waiters (labelled *MINISTRI*) step in front of, and across, it to pass the food from the field kitchen to the servers at the makeshift sideboard. It does, however, serve to separate sections of the caption, coming between *ET hIC MINISTRAVERVNT* with *MINISTRI* below, and *hIC FECERVNT PRANDIVM*. Other inscriptions over the pillaging and cooking scenes are separated by the little houses and the tray of meats on spits which abut, and in one case overlap, the upper border of the frieze: [two houses] *HIC EST VVADARD* [one house] *hIC COQVITVR CARO* [meats].

Proportions are inconsistent. The lack of a scene divider results in the small figure leading a smaller pony being adjacent to a pair of much larger men attending a cooking pot. The collection of foods on spits pokes out of a tray, placed, like the three small houses which are spaced along the scene, beneath the upper border and occupying about the same area as any one of them. This tray of meats is incongruously hanging in the air, unattached to anyone or anything. Nowhere else in the Tapestry is there such a disembodied detail.⁵⁰

The first of the Tapestry’s nine sections of linen had made careful distinction between the figures of English and foreigners. The English wore tunics, and had bobbed hair and

⁵⁰ The unconvincing and unrealistic treatment of planks in Scene 35 is worth comparing.

moustaches, the French and Normans culottes and hair shaved at the back of the neck which sometimes flopped menacingly at the forehead. The costume is less consistent in subsequent sections and by the time the invaders cross the channel the Norman hairstyle is appearing only rarely.

In the pillaging/food preparation scenes, figures are stiff and rather awkward.

Arguably the basic lines of the garments could be taken as either culottes or tunics, and in one instance the embroiderers have chosen to fill in the area between the legs making a tunic⁵¹ but otherwise have left it bare, creating culottes. The garment borders which have generally been marked by horizontal stem-stitched lines or zones of contrasting colour are mostly missing here, and the colour contrast of belt and collar which is common throughout the Tapestry is frequently omitted. The hair is perched on top of the head, sometimes cut above the ears, sometimes below, but it is neither the long bob of earlier Englishmen (cut below the ears), nor the severe crop of earlier foreigners (shaved to above the ears).

There are a number of errors and idiosyncrasies in both the graphic details and the embroidery of this section. The first two horses overlap slightly, in keeping with the Tapestry's usual "grouping" of images, but the precise manifestation of the device has been misunderstood here (**Figure 7**): the blue-black stallion emerges from behind a ship, then its front legs overlies the brown stallion and its rider which are in the foreground, as if it is, absurdly, jumping over the other horse.⁵² The now-green (originally blue)⁵³ horse is badly proportioned, with an impossibly deep body and short front legs. The mail of the first three

⁵¹ The first server in front of the building.

⁵² For a successful use of a similar alignment of horses see Scene 13, where a small part of the back of Harold's horse, the end of the tail and a little bit of a back leg is obscured by the horse behind, but a front leg is similarly foregrounded in relation to the leg of Guy's horse which precedes in the procession (Harold is the figure moustached, with hawk, on a brown stallion; Guy is the figure with a hawk on a blue/black mare/mule).

⁵³ The original colour is shown in Stothard's watercolor (1821) consulted in Martin K. Foys, *The Bayeux Tapestry Digital Edition* (Leicester: Scholarly Digital Editions, 2003). The fading of the original blue is discussed in Isabelle Bédard and Béatrice Girault-Kurtzeman, "The Technical Study of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, eds. Pierre Bouet, Brian Levy and François Neveux (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2004), 83-109, at 91 and discussed at 92, plate 14.

riders (counting from the left) is depicted, neatly enough, by a diamond pattern; that of the following two, including the figure captioned “Wadard” with small circles or near-circular shapes. **(Figure 8b)** The embroidery of the individual rings of mail is neatly executed, but their inconsistent shapes and the spaces between them give an impression of carelessness to the depiction, which is probably to be attributed to the artist rather than the needleworkers.⁵⁴ However, both the mail suits depicted in circles show changes of colour, which suggest that more than one embroiderer worked on the figures, in the case of “Wadard” probably operating from opposite sides of the cloth.⁵⁵ The differences in colour might reflect a disregard for continuity, or a hiatus in the production such as a local shortage of embroidery thread of the right colour. Either scenario implies a disruption in the usual professionalism of the Tapestry’s workmanship.

This scene is the only one where linen thread is used occasionally for embroidery. It can be seen in the depiction of concentric rings around the head of a man in the pillaging scene.⁵⁶ Again this scene is found to exhibit a difference in embroidery practice from elsewhere in the Tapestry, in this case perhaps either because the artisans had not been instructed that only wool was to be used for embroidery, or because they wished to convey

⁵⁴ The depiction of chain mail in the Tapestry so far has not settled down to the consistency it will show in the Battle of Hastings sequences, where large rings are uniformly depicted. Chain mail up to this point has largely been in squares, with William at the surrender of Dinan being depicted in diamonds and some figures or parts of figures in tightly packed, small circles. The small circles are probably a more realistic rendering of actual mail rings; the large ones are a satisfactory artistic device for the purposes of the Tapestry, but would not translate into effective protection.

⁵⁵ Study of Wilson’s color facsimile (David M. Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1985], plates 44-5) suggests that variations in colour of the diamond pattern chain mail may be the result of repairs. Many of the threads used in the nineteenth-century restoration of the embroidery have subsequently faded; Brigitte Oger, “The Bayeux Tapestry: results of the scientific tests (1982-3),” in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, eds. Bouet *et al*, 117-23, at 121; Bédât and Girault-Kurtzeman, “Technical study,” 103. The variations in colour of the diamonds are not shown in either Montfaucon’s engravings (1729-30) or Stothard’s watercolours; if the stitching was incomplete when they copied the images, they reconstructed it.

⁵⁶ Isabelle Bédât and Béatrice Girault-Kurtzeman, “The Technical Study of the Bayeux Tapestry,” in Bouet, 83-109, at 90-1. The undyed linen can be seen between the red and green rings and between the green rings in Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, plate 45. The authors mention that linen is also used in this scene for hands, face and garment folds but they do not illustrate these; I note that there are white threads for the face and garment folds on the adjacent figure (holding the pig) and on the hand of a waiter at the sideboard made of shields, but I cannot confirm that these are the instances the authors observed.

the solidity of the object by filling in the spaces between the coloured rings, but lacked the embroidery wool they needed (perhaps undyed wool which is found occasionally in the Tapestry at other points). In the model for this figure, the *Psychomachia's Labor*, the concentric circles, though prominent, pass behind the figure's neck. Wormald suggested (not entirely convincingly) that *Labor's* burden represents "a large boulder"; there is certainly a possibility that the circles depict the outline of a solid object behind his head. The Tapestry pillager, however, carries a burden represented by concentric circles which pass in front of his neck and cut into his left shoulder. Since they pass in front of the body, and the bearer's face shows through the gap in the middle, in the Tapestry the rings cannot represent a solid object. They could only be a coil or hoop. The artist may have deliberately changed the model, or he may have misunderstood it; or this may be another case of poor transmission between artist and embroiderers.

It is tempting to interpret some of these oddities as the manifestation of an artist who was not experienced in transferring a cartoon to linen. If the blue-black stallion was drawn first, so its forelegs showed through the line drawing of the brown stallion; and if the rings were drawn before their bearer, so that they appeared to cross his neck rather than disappear behind it, the embroiderers, following their cartoon, would perpetuate the errors. There seem to have been weaknesses in both parts of the workshop: the green horse is badly drawn and the inconsistencies of embroidery threads indicate problems with the needlework.

The feast and council

Description

The makeshift sideboard, behind which the servers stand, is juxtaposed to the semi-circular table at which the feasters sit. This in turn is adjacent to a simple building with wooden posts and a pointed, shingled gable, under which three figures, labelled ODO

EP[ISCOPUS]S, WILLELM and ROTBERT⁵⁷ occupy a cushioned seat. The early modern hand which numbered the scenes on the backcloth counted the two images as a single scene (43), placing the numerals over the end of the sideboard, while considering the council of brothers, which flanks the feast on the right, balancing the sideboard, a separate scene (44), numbered centrally over the building where the brothers sit. This scene labelling is logical in view of the fact that the serving from the sideboard and the feasting presumably took place at the same time, and the council followed later, but is not entirely satisfactory. The lack of boundary markers means that three static groups are juxtaposed, uniquely in the Tapestry; arguably these images could be treated as comprising a single scene. Alternatively, the trestles of the sideboard, the feast table and the supporting post of the building might be seen as scene dividers and the three images as separate scenes. However, the pointing finger of one of the diners appears to invoke the first section of caption above Scene 44, ODO EP[ISCOPU]S, while looking back at the ecclesiastic who blesses the bread, implicitly identifying him as Bishop Odo.

Sources and style

The feast scene and the depiction of the three brothers which complete this triple focus offer some of the Tapestry's most complex and sophisticated use of models from manuscripts known to have been in the library of St. Augustine's, Canterbury. The feast at Hastings, with its semi-circular table, is, as has long been recognised, copied from a scene of the Last Supper in the *St. Augustine Gospels* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 286, fol. 125r);⁵⁸ while the waiter at the front of the table, with his two-cornered napkin and open

⁵⁷ That is, William, duke of Normandy, and his younger half-brothers Odo, bishop of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain.

⁵⁸ Laura Hibbard Loomis, "The table of the Last Supper in religious and secular iconography," *Art Studies* 5 (1927): 71-90; Brooks and Walker, 74-76.

hand supporting a large bowl, is probably taken from the Old English *Hexateuch*, fol 57v.⁵⁹ As the final meal before a decisive battle, the Hastings feast is indeed a Last Supper, and as such, the model is an appropriate source for the artist to copy. Ostensibly the feast inherits something of the sanctity of the original, with the bishop blessing the bread, in imitation of Christ, supplemented by the images of symmetrically arranged feasters whose hands lead the viewer's eye to the loaves and fishes on the table, the food of Christ's miracle. However, the orderly figures of the Augustine Gospels disciples are here replaced by feasters who point and lounge over the table⁶⁰ in a manner which is at best, ill-mannered, at worst dissolute. While the placing of Bishop Odo in the position occupied by Christ in illustration of the Gospels might appear a compliment to the bishop, his disorderly table companions make the scene a parody rather than a pious imitation of the biblical Last Supper. The presentation of Odo presiding over such a feast while imitating Christ may be seen as distasteful, critical. The waiter, who to judge from his tunic is English,⁶¹ is not modelled on some anonymous servant, but on the captive Joseph. The context of the borrowing is that he is waiting on Potiphar's wife, who will shortly have him thrown into prison. If we "read" the *Hexateuch* text this scene illustrates, the man who waits upon the Norman feasters is a foreign captive; and one who cannot expect any favours from his masters.

In the overall design of the Tapestry, this Last Supper at Hastings parallels the Last Supper eaten by Harold on the eve of his departure for France (Scene 3; DW 3-4), which, like Christ's last supper in the Gospels, takes place in an upper room. As I have argued previously, I believe that in the original layout of the frieze, these two supper scenes would

⁵⁹ Genesis 39:1-6. The resemblance between the two figures, their bowls and napkins was demonstrated in C.R. Dodwell, "L'Originalité iconographique de plusieurs illustrations anglo-saxonnes de l'ancien testament," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 14 (1971): 319-328 at plate VIII, figs. 21-22, albeit in the context of a different argument that both *Hexateuch* and Tapestry were depicting contemporary equipment.

⁶⁰ The pointing fingers of the two outer figures clearly indicate a loaf and fish; but another man points out of the picture, turning his body away from the table; another has his hand over a loaf; and another rests his arm on the table, overlapping his neighbour.

⁶¹ Though his hair is very short, a device used earlier in the Tapestry to indicate Normans.

have been set opposite one another.⁶² The two Last Suppers are key markers in the Tapestry's parallelism, which involves Harold's cross-Channel journey and (mis)adventures as both precipitating and prefiguring William's cross-Channel invasion and successful conquest of England. The imagery of the Last Supper, together with the loaves and fishes, was intended to suggest spiritual justification for the Normans who were ostensibly honoured by the Tapestry; but it seems to me, the artist subtly undermines the feasters with subversive motifs.

The council scene which follows, and is visually linked to, the Hastings feast scene, is also a complex amalgam of images from manuscript art. The building under which the brothers sit, beneath a triangular tiled or shingled roof supported by two posts, is an adaptation of an authority image which occurs several times in the *Harley Psalter*, itself a copy of a Carolingian manuscript utilizing architecture ultimately classical.⁶³ Although the pillars and roof are here presented in isolation, they originate from entrances to buildings: the triangular shape is derived from the pediment which supports the roof of a Greek temple; and the bases and capitals of the supporting posts testify to an ancestry of stone Doric columns. The branching at the top of the supporting posts suggests that they are wood, characteristic of Anglo-Saxon secular building techniques, though this may be misleading: it is possible that the detail is a misunderstanding of the acanthus capitals of Corinthian columns such as those shown in the *Harley Psalter*, fol. 1v.⁶⁴ The figures of Odo and William wear long cloaks fastened with central brooches, over robes augmented by what look like short aprons in contrasting colours, apparently an adaptation of the tiered costume worn by Pharaoh and his

⁶² Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Brothers, Rivals and the Geometry of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, 109-123, at pp. 115-6 developing a "structural pattern" discussed in Owen-Crocker, "Telling a Tale," 52-3.

⁶³ David J. Bernstein, 42-3, plates 9, 10, makes a comparison with the *Utrecht Psalter* (Utrecht, MS Universiteitsbibliotheek 32, Script. Eccl. 484) fol. 32v, but there are a number of eleventh-century examples in the *Harley Psalter*, a Canterbury copy of the *Utrecht Psalter* (which was used elsewhere by the Bayeux "artist"); for example fols. 6r, 22v, 53v, 58r, see Ohlgren, *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration*, Item 2.

⁶⁴ Ohlgren, *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration*, 2.2:148.

councillors sitting in judgement in the *Hexateuch*, fol. 59r.⁶⁵ The figure of Robert, with his horizontal sword, is copied from a corrupt king in the *Harley Psalter*, fol. 7v. Arguably, to anyone who was acquainted with the manuscripts, these borrowings would suggest that William and his brothers were corrupt tyrants.⁶⁶

The selection and blending of images from manuscript models produces a subtle and complex imagery in the Hastings feast and council episodes. Many of the details chosen are symbolic (as in the loaves and fishes) or at least suggestive (as in the choice of architectural setting). Moreover, these images are part of a structural interlocking of scenes which plays a part in the overall design of the Tapestry, which is a web of prolepsis and echo, parallel and antithesis. The feast, as I have stated, is one of a pair of contrasting Last Suppers. The council scene balances the scene of the decision to prepare a fleet (Scene 35; **Figure 1**) thus enclosing the preparation for, and execution of, the invasion. It also relates thematically and visually to the scenes where Edward, seated, speaks with Harold (Scenes 1, 25 [DW 1, 28]), and to the discussion which takes place between Harold and William (Scene 14 [DW 16-17]). The feast scene and the council scene, therefore, are, it would seem, very carefully designed and placed. It appears to me that they are central to the structural design of the narrative hanging.

In style this key section exhibits a mixture of the disordered and the detailed. The depiction of the feasters departs from the neat overlapping of its model, the *St. Augustine Gospels*, a device used elsewhere in the Tapestry also. If, as modern commentators have tended to assume, the man on the bishop's right is his brother, Duke William, this is not indicated by physical prominence; although his arm is slightly in front of the bishop's, he is eclipsed by the arm of the bearded man with a shoulder brooch, who drinks from a large bowl

⁶⁵ See Dodwell and Clemoes, *Hexateuch*. The copying is selective; the Bayeux artist omits headgear and Pharoah's staff.

⁶⁶ This scene is discussed in more detail in Owen-Crocker, "Reading the Bayeux Tapestry through Canterbury Eyes," 254-255.

while propping himself on the table. The table is untidy and crowded compared with the *Augustine Gospels* table. There are not just loaves and fishes, but bowls, both round-bottomed and with feet, and a jar on a base; a long curved knife and a short straight one. The embroiderers have used at least seven colours for the items on the table and the tiny eyes and mouths of the fish are embroidered in contrasting colours. The folds in the waiter's napkin are embroidered with loving care; however, by accident or design, the cartoon is set low down so that the waiter's foot dips into the border. The style of the council scene is also a little awkward. The brothers sit on a disembodied seat – it has no legs, unlike other thrones in the Tapestry which are often rather grand, sometimes made in the shape of stylized beasts. Robert's horizontal sword overlaps the next figure in the sequence, lessening its effect.

Constructing Hastings Castle, military orders, arson and preparing to exit Hastings

Description

The council scene is followed by a second section involving physical labour. Again figures in authority direct labourers: this time the instructions are not given by riders but by two standing figures, dressed in tunics and cloaks, holding spears with pennants. The situation is clarified by the caption: *ISTE IVSSIT VT FODERE TVR CASTELLVM AT HESTENGA*, “This [man] has commanded that a castle should be thrown up at Hastings.” The first standing figure addresses men holding spades and shovels; one looks back at him with the same ungainly movement as the carpenter in Scene 35 and the man disturbed by the horn in Scene 43. Again the effect is slightly amusing – perhaps the workman resents the orders. Two more labourers hit each other over the head with spades, the tools crossing each other like a parody of the modern abbreviation for the word “Battle,” in ironic anticipation of the conflict which will follow, when weapons will be deadly and consequences mortal.

The second authority figure oversees five workers energetically constructing the castle at Hastings. One wields a pick and one a spade while three shovel earth upwards to create the mound, which is shown above and behind them. The soil is rendered by dark embroidered circles on the shovels. One such lump falls from the shovel of a workman who is looking upwards and appears unaware of it. It bounces off the head of the workman below, who has what might be interpreted as a pained expression. This is a further example of the human clumsiness which this artist introduces, evidently as comic relief.

A tower acts as a scene divider and indicator of interior space. A figure with a pennant, on an elevated seat with footstool, is evidently indoors, though the messenger he faces stands on a ground line, indicating that he is arriving from outside. The caption HIC NVNTIATVM EST WILLELMO DE HAROLD, “here news about Harold is brought to William,” makes it clear that the seated figure is the Duke, though he now wears a knee-length garment rather than the long gowns of the council scenes. The seated figure and the messenger before him (Scene 46 [DW 50]) are much larger than the figures on their immediate left and right (a digger and an arsonist). There is no scene-divider after the messenger other than the spear he holds in his hand, which stretches from top to bottom of the main register, so that the first arsonist is directly juxtaposed to the messenger and the difference in their proportions is noticeable. However, both arsonists are unusually tall in relation to the house they fire and the victims who flee from it (Scene 47 [DW 50-51]). The left-hand arsonist reaches the second storey of the house they are firing, while his companion, a larger and particularly ill-proportioned figure, reaches the roof. Both have slightly unusual costumes, what look like slit tunics revealing other tunics beneath, the latter decorated with transverse bands. The space beneath the burning building is occupied by two smaller figures. One is identifiable by her headdress and long gown as female. Her left hand is raised; with her right hand she grips the wrist of a shorter figure in masculine dress, evidently a child,

who she is leading from the burning building. The disproportionate size of the Scene 50 arsonists in relation to the building and the fugitives effectively conveys the menace of the attackers and the vulnerability of the woman and child leaving from the ground level of the building, who are depicted on a much smaller scale. However, such extreme disproportion within an image is not typical of the Tapestry as a whole.

There is a slight gap after the arsonists, then an elaborate building with two storeys, a pitched roof and adjacent tower, which probably represents the town of Hastings rather than the fortification we have seen under construction. A large open door indicates that the following figure has exited. He stands exceptionally tall – the tallest figure in the Tapestry. He wears a chain mail garment from head to knees, close-fitting leg coverings also embroidered to depict mail, a helmet with dangling ribbons and a sword. He carries a spear with pennant, and although not identified by name, is presumed to represent William. This impressive armed figure faces a man in civilian dress leading a stallion. The scene is captioned *HIC MILITES EXIERVNT De hESTeNGA*, “here the soldiers come out of Hastings,” more suited to the massed cavalry in the next picture rather than this. A scene divider of three stylised trees is followed by bunched, overlapping riders in a compositional style familiar from the earlier part of the Tapestry.

Sources and style

Werckmeister proposed that the image of the workmen fighting with spades was “based on a misreading of a recurrent symmetrical group of castle-building soldiers on the Column,”⁶⁷ illustrating this suggestion with a photograph of Scene LXVIII⁶⁸ in which two soldiers in breastplates and tunics swing their tools on either side of a corner. The left man

⁶⁷ Werckmeister, 540 and plate IV.

⁶⁸ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 32; also Florescu, plates LIV-LV, but this is less clear because the gutter of the book interrupts the image.

holds a claw hammer – he is wielding it claw first; what the other man holds is not clear. They both swing their arms, hands together, in front of their heads, and the tool on the left swings over the man’s head. Werckmeister’s identification would be entirely convincing were it not that, occurring at the tenth spiral from the bottom, the scene is considerably higher than Werckmeister’s other Tapestry analogies, which all fall within the first six spirals. A second example of the “recurrent” image identified by him is even higher, at Scene CXVII and so even less likely to have been visible. He appears to have overlooked, however, Scene XVI,⁶⁹ which falls within the first six spirals and therefore offers a more likely model.

(Figure 10)



*Figure 10: Trajan’s Column Scene XVI.
Image from McMaster Trajan Project. Image courtesy of Peter Rockwell.*

Again two men are positioned on either side of a corner of the fortification under construction. They are evidently working together, hitting the same chisel-head, one with a hammer, the other with a mallet. Ironically, the Bayeux artist’s misunderstanding has turned cooperation into conflict!

⁶⁹ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 11; Florescu, plate XII.

It is worth noting that there are soldiers shovelling and emptying soil at Scene LVI of Trajan's Column, though this is a little higher than the other analogies I support and propose.⁷⁰ They are building a mountain road, which involves felling trees. This scene, like the lower Scene XV, already discussed, bears some resemblance to the Bayeux Tapestry tree-felling, with a similar left-hand figure and one in the background with the axe above his head, like the Tapestry's right-hand figure. In front of him are two men bending down. The left one appears to be shovelling and the other is tipping a basket of soil, indicated by small circles. The way they bend towards one another resembles the shape made by the men with pick and shovel at Bayeux Scene 49-50; there is also similarity in a figure between and behind them: in the Tapestry this man is shovelling upward to the motte of Hastings Castle. It is not clear what the Roman figure is doing, but he is turned away from the other workmen, towards the wall under construction.

The image of the fleeing woman and child is the only item which Werckmeister identified as being modelled on the Column of Marcus Aurelius (Scene XX).⁷¹ The similarity is undeniable. Not only is the subject matter the same, so are a number of details: the Tapestry figures move in the same direction as the Roman ones, the woman's raised left arm and grasp of the child are comparable, and so are the curve of the little boy's arm and the position of his legs.⁷² It is also worth noting the frequency with which the Column of Marcus Aurelius associates putting barbarians to flight with a background of arson. Although the Marcus Aurelius woman and child do not flee a burning house, arson occurs in the same

⁷⁰ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 27; Florescu, plate XLII.

⁷¹ Werkmeister, 541: "It occurs on the fourth of the twenty spirals of the Marcus Column ...still within comfortable view of the beholder on street level."

⁷² It is worth mentioning that there is also an image of an adult leading a little boy by grasping his forearm on Trajan's Column, in a scene of Dacian evacuation, Scene LXXVI (Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 36; Florescu, plate LXIV). This version is different in that the adult is male and the figures move right to left. Furthermore this scene is higher up the column than most of the recognised analogies. However, since the Marcus Aurelius Column was modelled on Trajan's, it is possible that the adult-leading-child motif was derived from the older column.

Scene, to the left,⁷³ and again at the extreme right.⁷⁴ Higher up, a building is torched at Scene XLVI⁷⁵ and at Scene CII⁷⁶ a round hut is fired and others are burning, while in front another woman shields a child, this time a little girl.

In a previous arson scene in the Tapestry (Scene 19 [DW 23], the surrender of Dinan) the men with torches were small and they ignited a fortified building from below, which, while far from realistic, is certainly more plausible in method and proportions. For Scene 47 (DW 50-1), however, the Bayeux artist has adopted what might be seen as the Roman method of committing arson, whereby a torch is applied to the roof; if the barbarian buildings were thatched, they would take fire quickly. I suggest that, although the association of arson and flight may have been suggested to the Tapestry artist by the Column of Marcus Aurelius, the direct model was not provided by this, but by Trajan's Column, where at Scene XXV⁷⁷ **(Figure 11)** Roman soldiers torch the roof of a Dacian building within a stockade. The soldiers loom disproportionately over the building from either side. Although the architecture is different from that of the Bayeux Tapestry – the Dacian buildings have plank walls and pitched roofs -- the two-storey Tapestry building might have been suggested by the juxtaposition of a larger and smaller building on the Column. The soldiers are setting fire to the roof of the taller building. The lower one is already ablaze and flames are coming out of the windows. In this Trajan's Column scene, all the human figures are larger than the buildings; but whereas the Dacian fugitives (who are out of

⁷³ Pedersen, plate 28.

⁷⁴ Pedersen, plate 29.

⁷⁵ Pedersen, plate 53.

⁷⁶ Pedersen, plate 110.

⁷⁷ Lehmann-Hartleben, plate 15; Florescu, plate XIX.



Figure 11: Trajan's Column Scene XXV.
Image from Lehmann-Hartleben, 1926.

proportion to the stockaded settlement they flee) can be interpreted in terms of foreground/background, the spatial relationship of the arsonists to the building which they touch is impossible; it is a *grotesquerie* which the Tapestry artist seized and exploited. The lower parts of the Roman arsonists are not visible, so they cannot be models for the unusual costume of the Bayeux arsonists – but it may be relevant that some of the Dacian fugitives in the same scene wear slit tunics.

There is just one identifiable borrowing from an Anglo-Saxon manuscript in this area of the Tapestry: the stiff-legged stallion being brought to William is, as Sarah Keefer has demonstrated, taken from the *Hexateuch*, fol. 51r, where it is the horse of Esau – the rightful heir but not the hero of the biblical story.⁷⁸ The borrowing may be significant in an artwork which ultimately celebrates the triumph of William, who claimed to be King Edward's named heir, but focuses rather more on Harold, who took the throne on the death of Edward and occupied it until he was killed by William's army.

⁷⁸ Sarah Larratt Keefer, "Body Language: A Graphic Commentary by the Horses of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Owen-Crocker, 93-108 at 101-4. Keefer also suggests (*ibid.* and in "Hwær cwom mearh? The horse in Anglo-Saxon England," *Journal of Medieval History* 22.2 [1966]: 115-34 at 130-2) that the Tapestry horse represents a stallion famously presented to William by Alfonso of Castille.

Where the pillaging section was noticeable for its empty space, this section is noticeable for its economy – three times letters of the inscription are neatly miniaturised (*Willelmo, Hastings* and *milites*), one digger overlaps the motte of Hastings Castle and the body of another is placed in front of the tower which acts as a scene divider, rather than alongside it. The castle building, depicted as an incomplete structure on a mound, is awkwardly placed, with its base about half way up the main register and its posts abutting the upper border. The caption CEASTRA is inscribed within the structure, as if there was not enough room for it anywhere else. The abrupt way in which Hastings Castle is cut off by the upper border may be a device to indicate that its construction was not yet completed; but perhaps the building had been intended to project into the border and this could not be achieved because the border had already been worked when the castle was drawn in, and there was no room for any more. Other raised, fortified structures, pictured earlier in the Tapestry (Scenes 18-19 and 22 [DW 21-3, 25] representing Dol, Rennes, Dinan and Bayeux), begin at the bottom of the main register and fill most or all of it, in two cases projecting right to the top of the upper border (Scene 19, Dinan; Scene 22, Bayeux); while the church of Mont-Saint-Michel (Scene 16 [DW 19]) – which, like Hastings Castle is placed high up in the main register -- is shown as if in the distance, the “Mont” and supporting timbers embroidered at the top of the narrative zone of the frieze and the church neatly filling the upper border.

The mail of the tall, standing figure representing William is embroidered in a combination of the small circles used for the riders in the pillaging scene and the diamonds employed on the riders who gallop from the ships. Both circles and squares/diamonds have been used earlier in the Breton campaign, but never in combination like this. We may have evidence of disagreement between embroiderers, or an attempt to make the future

conqueror's costume distinctive. The groom, like the stallion he leads, is a rather stiff figure, with an awkwardly-drawn garment, probably intended as culottes.

A different artist?

The sections of the Tapestry under consideration include different subject matter from the rest of the embroidery – workers building ships, preparing food and digging fortifications; their composition is distinctive, with no use of overlapping groups of figures, some wide spacing and some setting of figures against backgrounds, as well as other attempts at perspective. The concept of scene division, which has appeared as a fairly regular feature in the early part of the Tapestry, is here treated more loosely and sometimes abandoned. Roman sculptures are used liberally both as specific models and as sources of thematic inspiration. The artist deftly melds this classical source material with images from several different Canterbury manuscripts, creating pictures which, for the initiated, are meaningful beyond their immediate context. Although the Roman sculptures may have been drawn upon occasionally at other points in the Tapestry, and all the Canterbury manuscripts copied here were also used at other points in the design, the dense accumulation of models in these particular scenes is notable. Yet, while this assemblage of meaningful material creates images which are intellectually and politically challenging, the artist deliberately lightens the atmosphere with clownish behaviour by the labourers here introduced into the heroic narrative. It is in these parts of the Tapestry also, that tools, equipment for cooking and portorage, vessels, cutlery and foodstuffs are depicted in authentic-seeming detail. This artist is capable of an immediacy very different from the dignified but distant effect of crowns, thrones and palaces earlier in the Tapestry.

The figure-drawing is often angular and awkward. As we have seen, the artist of these sections may have sometimes misunderstood a model, or may have imperfectly

transmitted his intentions to the embroiderers. However, in the portrayal of faces the artist is versatile and sometimes sensitive. Elsewhere in the Tapestry, many of the faces are in profile, with features indicated in a minimalist way, sometimes by no more than a brow line, a dot for the eye and a line for the mouth, and there is generally little distinction between individual faces in the same scene.

Here the artist makes more of the features, using three-quarter faces more often than elsewhere in the Tapestry and even depicting the bishop at table and an anonymous waiter full-face, a device elsewhere reserved for the newly-crowned king and the archbishop of Canterbury. Our artist makes much use of the lower eyelid, and sometimes draws “cupid’s bow” mouths and dimpled chins, which makes the faces convincing. The use of colour variation for some of the features adds realism. The case of the shovellers shows some attention to both gaze and facial expression: while the man above gazes up at the motte, oblivious to the fact that he has dropped a clod of earth, the man below who is hit by it has a displeased expression, achieved by the wide eyes and down-turned line of the mouth. The face of William in his armor, is, like his graceful hands, very harmonious.

Some of the faces are inevitably clones of one another, but there is also considerable variety, especially noticeable when it is between the pairs of figures carrying out the same task. One of the men managing the cooking pot has a heavy rounded chin; one of the men fighting has a small but prominent chin. One of the arsonists is bald and has a very pointed nose; one of the servers and one of the feasters is bearded. The right-hand arsonist, like the man tethering the ships, turns a big, unattractive face to the audience. Did this artist, who has already exhibited a sense of humour, amuse himself by putting the faces of his acquaintances onto some of his figures? If so, I wonder, were those acquaintances fellow canons at St. Augustine’s, or were they men who had actually taken part in the events preceding the conquest; after all, this passage contains the identification by name of one armed rider: *hic est*

Wadard. Wadard has been plausibly identified as a tenant of Bishop Odo's in post-Conquest England, a man who received land from St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and therefore likely to be known by name at that establishment. However, the face of Wadard in the Tapestry is not particularly individualised. I am not suggesting the artist was making a portrait; only that the designer had, or pretended to have, some inside knowledge of events at this point.

I would suggest that the sections of the Tapestry discussed here, which depict mundane occupations and feature disproportioned figures, attempts at perspective, and clownish humour, were space-fillers, and that they may have been late additions to the design. They were created largely from a source which recorded impressions of Roman art, plus some manuscripts already being used for the design of the Tapestry, along with personal observation of objects and possibly of people. The explanation for the need of extra material can be found in my supposition, already published, that the whole embroidery was designed as a square, and that the two feast scenes were intended to lie opposite one another.⁷⁹ The recognition of a miscalculation in the length of the walls where the Tapestry was originally intended to hang may have necessitated the insertion of some extra subject matter to augment the agreed narrative.

We may find clues in the relative sizes of the lengths of linen and the positions of the seams which join them to make the frieze; and the likelihood that the Tapestry was made to fit a specific room, which historians of architecture (following up my claim that the Tapestry was designed as a square) have suggested was a Norman keep of square dimensions.⁸⁰ The first two lengths of linen are much longer than any of the others, the first now 13.70 metres long (something may be lost from the beginning), the second longer, 13.90. The embroidery on the first piece of linen is quite individual; it includes a series of related images in the

⁷⁹ Explained in detail in Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Brothers, Rivals and the Geometry of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, 109-123.

⁸⁰ Chris Henige, "Putting the Bayeux Tapestry in Its Place," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, 125-37.

bottom border, a device which is never repeated; and it is graphically self-contained, probably, as I have argued elsewhere, made for a measured wall and terminating at the corner of the room. The person who commissioned the woven linen, aware that the display area of the first wall was limited by the presence of a corner staircase, may have deliberately requested a similar, but slightly longer, length for the second wall, only to find that this wall was much wider than he had thought. The piece of cloth was not sufficient to complete the design for the second wall and a third, shorter piece of linen was attached, by a neat seam, passing through the depictions of King Edward's deathbed and shrouding (one above the other, Scenes 27-28 [DW 30]), and wrapped round the second corner, which I estimate occurred at Scene 36, the launching of the Norman ships. It is quite possible that the design was also found to be a bit short for the second wall, and that the Roman-derived tree-felling scene, with its stylized culottes, a backward-glancing figure and some strangely unsupported planks, was an *ad hoc* creation to fill the space. Be that as it may, the length of Tapestry between the second seam and my proposed second corner of the room is similar to the sum of the two sections which flank the important feast and Norman rulership images: the pillaging and food preparation and the building and arson episodes. Measuring on the pull-out version of the Tapestry, which is one-seventh size, that is 34 and a half inches or 87cm. Multiplied by 7, we are talking about roughly 20 feet or 6 metres.⁸¹ That would have been a considerable shortfall to make up if was discovered that the crucial feast image was going to fall too soon, and the lead-up to the fourth wall, which was to contain the climactic battle, did not fill the space. That, I suggest, is the reason why these distinctly unheroic, and sometimes humorous, images have been included. The change in plan may have presented the embroiderers with a cartoon which was not always clear and instructions which were not complete; it may have left them short of materials at one point.

⁸¹ Measuring from the horse's leg emerging from behind the boat to the end of the "sideboard" and from the standing figure with the pennant to William standing in armour.

However, if there was a change of artist I am not sure where it began and ended and if it was the only such division of labour. Although the mundane subject matter, the execution and occasional humour of the pillaging, cooking, digging and arson episodes suggests a different designer at work, the treatment of faces at the feast and the brothers' council suggests that these crucial and complex images were the work of the same hand. The same artist may have drawn the groom who is leading the horses from the ships, since he wears stiff-looking culottes, although they have a contrasting edge, which is different from those in the following scene. The part-ships abutting his back suggest another classically-based attempt at perspective. I initially excluded William's groom from my measurement, but his size and the hybridity of his garment, with the vertical lines of culottes and the flare of a tunic, suggest he may be the work of this clever but stylized hand.

A dividing clump of three trees and the massed overlapping horses of Scene 48 (DW 52) indicate a return to design principles which the artist of the pillaging and other scenes had ignored. It looks as though our artist had completed his work; but does this mean the artist of the earlier part of the Tapestry resumed here? Possibly a detailed comparison would indicate yet another hand at work. This matter is for future research. At present one can only assert that the Tapestry is not the coherent product it has been supposed.