

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE FRAME:
AN INTEGRATED READING OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY AND ITS BORDERS

By

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ABSTRACT

For the past three centuries, historians have speculated and argued over the dating, patronage and provenance of the Bayeux Tapestry. Researchers have pondered the Latin inscriptions; reflected on the techniques of production and the use of narrative devices; mined the Tapestry for information on a number of subjects, including architectural styles, costumes, modes of navigation, nascent heraldry, and weaponry; and focused on areas of special interest, especially on scenes such as the so-called "Aelfgyva episode." Additionally, the Tapestry has been described as an epic and/or a panegyric; it has even been compared to a *chanson de geste*, a Shakespearian play, a film, and a cartoon; it has been "deconstructed," and finally turned into a "hypertext" accessible via the internet. Yet, in spite of many promises, the borders of the Bayeux Tapestry remain largely unexplored to date. This apparent neglect may be due to the difficulty one encounters when attempting to retrieve the symbolism and the meanings of the pictographs, which, even at the time of production, may have been multiple and may have depended on the cultural level, social awareness and political leanings of the beholders. The purpose of this dissertation is to acquaint the reader with a novel approach to the reading of the Bayeux Tapestry, based on the premise that the border pictographs are charged with symbolic meaning; that their meaning(s) inflect(s), reflect(s) and even alter(s) the images in the center field; and that this synergic interplay helps in the discovery, and stimulates the generation of a new understanding and integrated interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry. For my research to be comprehensive and in order to uncover and decode some of the latent symbolic meanings, it was fundamental to take into account the social, cultural and political history of eleventh-century Northwestern Europe, and to acquire an appreciable knowledge of the lives of the important individuals illustrated in the Bayeux Tapestry. It was also necessary to be aware that, since the shaping of minds and the rewriting of history was already practiced in the eleventh century, the possibility existed that the Bayeux Tapestry was more than objective history recorded on cloth, but was someone's -- perhaps the patron's -- interpretation of historical events. Thus, this dissertation takes the reader on a journey inside and outside the frame to achieve an integrated reading of the Bayeux Tapestry and its borders.

Examiners:

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INTRODUCTION

On 14 October 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, bastard son of Duke Robert, won the battle of Hastings, earning the distinguished title of “the Conqueror.” William’s daring invasion and subsequent victory changed forever the course of history for England and France. The events leading to and surrounding this historical episode were documented in writings by near contemporary and later chroniclers.¹ They were also recorded in the narrative stitched painstakingly on eight separate pieces of linen of varied lengths, sewn together to form a long (approx. 70 m.) and narrow (approx. 0.50m) embroidered cloth.² Known to the Canons of the Bayeux Cathedral as *The Conquest Hanging*,³ this long and narrow embroidery on linen was given various names since its rediscovery in the early eighteenth century: *Duke William’s little Canvas*,⁴ *la Grande Telle du Conquest d’Angleterre*,⁵ *la toile de St. Jean*,⁶ and *le tapis* or *la broderie de la Reine Mathilde*. However, it is universally known today as *la tapisserie de Bayeux*, or the *Bayeux Tapestry*.⁷ Excluding the area where “the border in one piece is not at the same height as that of the adjoining piece,” the joints in the linen were sewn so expertly that only the most thorough examination of the Tapestry reveals the seams.⁸ Aside from a few areas where the central narrative encroaches on the borders, the embroidery is divided horizontally into three distinct parts: the narration in the center field, one border above, and one below.

No record of the Tapestry’s existence is found prior to a brief mention in the 1476 Inventory of the Bayeux Cathedral Treasury.⁹ However, the lack of written documents did not impede researchers. In fact, two comprehensive annotated bibliographies were published in the latter part of the twentieth century in order to keep track of the vast amount of literature produced since the rediscovery of the Bayeux Tapestry.¹⁰ For the past three centuries, researchers speculated and argued over the dating, patronage, provenance, contents and forms of the Tapestry. They have pondered the Latin inscriptions that “include both Anglo-Saxon and French usages;”¹¹ they have reflected on the techniques of production and the use of narrative devices in the central strip;¹² they have mined the Tapestry for information on a number of subjects, such as architectural styles,¹³ costumes,¹⁴ modes of navigation,¹⁵ nascent heraldry,¹⁶ and

evolution in weaponry;¹⁷ and they have focused on areas of special interest, especially on scenes such as the so-called “Aelfgyva episode.”¹⁸

However, during my examination of past scholarship, which I summarize below, I discovered that in spite of the few sparks of interest shown in early works and of the expressed desire of several twentieth-century art historians, a comprehensive study of the borders of the Bayeux Tapestry is still lacking.¹⁹ My goal is to fill this lacuna.

Because of the amount of material that I needed to cover, a scene by scene examination of the borders seemed the most appropriate way to approach my analysis, keeping in mind that, just as it is impossible to effect a comprehensive reading of the Bayeux Tapestry by analyzing only the main field, it is just as impossible to read the borders meaningfully without incorporating a developed description of the central narrative and an explanation of the inscriptions.

Faced with the question of determining a method that would best suit my analysis of the Tapestry borders, I adopted Michael Baxandall’s points of view that “every evolved explanation of a picture includes or implies an elaborate description of that picture” and that “a description is the mediating object of explanation.”²⁰ Thus, as a first step, I based my analysis of the Tapestry borders on a detailed description, taking into account the influences exerted by the political, social, economic, and cultural history of the late eleventh century on/by the person who commissioned the Tapestry, on the physical elements represented therein, i.e., the placements, postures/positions, and gestures/ movements of figures and inanimate objects, and on the contemporary observers. However, no matter how “evolved” a description may be, and how much it may explain the contents of the Tapestry borders, it is not sufficient to answer pertinent questions regarding their possible significance and the role(s) that they may have played in an overall understanding of the Tapestry.

Researchers have already explored extensively and exhaustively the questions of who produced the Tapestry, when, where, for whom and why; and their positions are summarized below. In order to achieve a comprehensive study of the borders, I must re-evaluate the questions of “for whom” and “why.” Indeed, psychologists and philosophers have long considered the need to answer the question “why” as one of the primary needs of the human psyche. Baxandall summarizes this inclination, positing that “...a

disposition toward causal inference seems to penetrate our thought and language too deeply to be excised, at least without doing oneself quite a disabling mischief.²¹

This process of cause and effect is also reflected in Ludmilla Jordanova's foundational statement regarding any historical research that "the motives for leaving a permanent trace [in this case, a Tapestry] are hugely diverse, and [that] it is one of the historian's tasks to reconstruct them in so far as this is possible."²² Because of the lack of written evidence, in the case of the Tapestry and its borders, the search for motives is not limited to the patron's goal(s); rather it evolves from the only piece of tangible evidence, i.e., the Tapestry, from contemporary history and from the culture which produced the artifact, in so far as they can be recovered. Accordingly, I paid particular attention to Baxandall's argument "that historical objects may be explained by treating them as solutions to problems in situations, and by reconstructing a rational relationship between these three," and that when we are analyzing historical artifacts:

What we are going to be dealing in are relations – relations of problems to solutions, of both to circumstances, of our conceptualized constructs to a picture covered by a description, and of a description to a picture.²³

As mentioned above, in the case of the Tapestry and its borders, the process of cause and effect, which is the foundational support for any relationship, is surrounded by many vagaries, the most ponderous being the lack of certainty regarding the patron's identity and the purpose for which the Tapestry was commissioned and produced. Because of these uncertainties, I propose to achieve a reading, and, in some cases, readings, of the borders following what Baxandall terms the "patterns of intention," or "intentionality" which underlies the production of any art object, remembering that the concept of "intentionality" does not establish a direct causal relationship between patron and artifact, i.e., the patron's state of mind (which cannot be retrieved) when the decision to produce the Tapestry was made. On the contrary, it is the mental construct that I generated through my observation and study of this artifact, i.e., the Tapestry, which underlies the relationship of the Tapestry to its environment, i.e., to the eleventh-century culture that produced it, to the set of historical events that surrounded its production, and to its reception by a select public, in so far as they can be determined.²⁴

Accordingly, in pursuing my goal, I found pertinent Jonathan Alexander's question: "why should not we aim to read medieval imagery in the same sort of way in

terms of role models, social practices, and an encoded value system of social mores?”²⁵ In answer, I studied late eleventh-century culture and found various elements that may have affected the production and the “reading” of the Tapestry -- with particular emphasis on its borders.

As a first step, I took into account that a *participant*, i.e., a late eleventh-century beholder, did not “see” or “read” the Tapestry in a manner similar to an *observer*, i.e., a twenty-first century viewer. As Baxandall points out, “the [eleventh-century] *participant* understands and knows his culture with an immediacy and spontaneity the [twenty-first century] *observer* does not share.”²⁶ Additionally, an *observer* does not possess the same “visual experience and skill,” nor the same “conceptual structures,” as a *participant*, which affects the way the Tapestry and its borders were read and understood then and now.²⁷ In late eleventh-century Western Europe, the *participants* who viewed, read, and/or “heard” a performance of the Tapestry and its borders were part of a select group close to the center of power.

I also strove to read the Tapestry as an historical artifact that may have been designed not only to entertain this select group of courtiers, knights, their families and households, but most likely to aid them to remember particular events that occurred prior to the Conquest of England and during the battle of Hastings. Since the communication of ideas is not neutral, I considered that elements of the Tapestry and its borders may have been used as tools to influence an audience to choose an alternative solution or solutions to the socio-cultural, economic and political upheaval that resulted from William’s Conquest of England in 1066. In this context, while I do not agree with Suzanne Lewis’ claim that the propaganda was “en bloc” pro-William, I explored her argument that “...the Bayeux Tapestry can be seen as an elaborate staging of visual propaganda, unique in its own day...,” concentrating my investigation on the role that the borders may have played in this scheme.²⁸

Intrigued by Lewis’ argument, I searched the Tapestry and its borders and found elements of the imagery which may have been used to shape people’s memories of the events that led to the Conquest of England and the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Although confirmation of the Tapestry’s role as a propaganda device remains elusive, I found written evidence that the shaping of minds and the rewriting of history was already

practiced in the early eleventh century. The Bavarian monk, Arnold of Regensburg, expressed his views candidly, stating that:

Not only is it proper for the new things to change the old ones, but even if the old ones are disordered, they should be entirely thrown away, or if, however, they conform to the proper order of things but are of little use, they should be buried with reverence.²⁹

Arnold's writings attest to the fact that even in the traditional society of the eleventh century, those in a position of power or who aspired to such positions, like William and/or Odo, were not averse to manipulating events in an effort to enforce their program(s) and shape collective memory to their benefit. However, Arnold fails to indicate the rate of success enjoyed by such endeavors.

As a result, I was left to wonder about the kind and amount of influence that the Tapestry may have exerted on contemporary viewers. Indeed, whoever may have intended to use the Tapestry to impart a particular political conviction may have discovered, to his chagrin, that any attempt to manipulate collective memory to one's advantage was an exercise fraught with uncertainties. As Mary Carruthers mentions in *The Craft of Thought*, "Creating an object for remembering -- even using means that every *memoria* handbook says should be forcefully and vigorously memorable -- doesn't guarantee that it will play a particular role in people's memories."³⁰ In the best of cases, the people destined to view the Tapestry belonged to the same group of leaders and courtiers as the patron. Accordingly, when they viewed the Tapestry, the *participants* shared a limited commonality, "a common store of *res memorabiles*," which enabled them to establish relationships similar to those that the patron intended.³¹ Mary Carruthers points out that one needs to be "properly clued in" to a particular set of remembered associations in order to recognize the intended meaning of an image.³² The difficulty I faced, when exploring the borders of the Tapestry without contemporary written evidence pertaining directly to it, was to rely on the "general condition of rational human action, which I posit[ed] in the course of arranging my circumstantial facts."³³ Indeed, as an early twenty-first century researcher, I did not possess the same "visual experience and skill," nor the same "conceptual structures," as Baxandall's *participant*, nor did I "share" in what Mary Carruthers' terms the "web of a community or

commonality” and the “common store of *res memorabiles*” of late eleventh-century beholders.

There is little doubt that the concepts of orality and symbolism played an extensive role in the imagery of the Tapestry and its borders. Already in the ninth century, Walahfridus Strabo declared that “*pictura est quaedam litteratura illitterato.*”³⁴ In 1025, the synod of Arras elaborated on the need to educate those who could not read the written word.³⁵ In the twelfth century, Honorius of Autun reiterated the injunction given by the synod of Arras when he wrote that images were to be considered “*laicorum litteratura .*” The quality and value of images were readily acknowledged in the near contemporary writings of Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Winchester (1085-1117). In his *Disputatio Judei et Christiani*, Gilbert’s Christian interlocutor gives the following answer to a questioning Jew: “Just as letters are shapes and symbols of spoken words, pictures exist as representations and symbols of writing.”³⁶ In the case of the Tapestry, the words of the inscriptions act as a text within the “text” provided by the images and the pictographs. These written words were probably used as a point of entry when “reading” the Tapestry, leading to further audible or silent elaborations on the part of the observers, and to an analysis of the other signs, in this case, the images. As a result, the Tapestry is both performative and non-performative. Originally, the Tapestry was destined for public, albeit a select public, viewing by a mostly illiterate or at best semi-literate audience. Most viewers, like William the Conqueror, were illiterate and needed assistance to capture the meaning of the written words in the inscriptions. Thus, it is possible that the *participants* were meant to experience the Tapestry, first through a *trouvère*’s performance, then through their own reading aided by aural and visual memorization of the Tapestry’s contents. As Richard Brilliant comments:

Such assistance might well have come to them through the mediation of a speaker or singer, a *jongleur* or interlocutor who could help the inattentive, the unobservant, the faint-eyed, or the ignorant to discover the wondrous history spread out before their eyes.³⁷

Richard Brilliant’s inattentive, unobservant, faint-eyed, or ignorant may have been part of an audience that did not share the same *res memorabiles*, part of the fringe of individuals that were not close to the center of power and were not “clued in.” In this case, the *jongleur* or *trouvère* may have been the link, now lost, of common

understanding between the patron, the artifact and the viewer. It is also possible that Brilliant underestimated the power of an individual's "visual memory," memorization, and mnemonic devices in an era when memory was the normally accepted, reliable, and relied upon form of record keeping and source of knowledge, and when a "general mistrust of text" existed.³⁸ Influenced by the literate/non-performative culture prevalent today, Brilliant superimposes on late eleventh-century beholders, the failure of late twentieth/early twenty-first century observers "to pick up the visual cues or to hold the texture of the narrative in their visual memory." Brilliant's position in this regard reminds us once more to be particularly careful not to impart twenty-first century "visual experience and skill," and "conceptual structures" on late eleventh-century *participants*.³⁹

As in any medieval text and image, every component of the Tapestry must have been carefully chosen to enhance the process of memorization of certain ideas which are represented as factual in the Tapestry. According to the medieval conceptualization of memory, images were considered to be 'memorial hooks' and 'cues', acquired through the processes of *lectio* – the oral phase of reading, and *meditatio* -- the silent phase during which a person ruminates and digests the information and commits it to memory through what was believed then to be the two gates of memory: the eye and the ear.⁴⁰

For example, some clues, such as the Anglo-Saxon spellings of a few names, may have been imbedded in the Tapestry to reveal to the literate in the audience its English provenance.⁴¹ Or, taking Scene 43 as an example, Odo, represented at the head of the table, blessing the meal for William's companions, was perhaps meant to bring to the mind of the reader/viewer a similar depiction of Christ at the Last Supper.⁴² Such similarities may have been beneficial and even effective in conflating Odo with Christ in the mind of the readers/viewers at a time when Odo's ambition was leading him to explore his potential access to the papacy, the pope being the Vicar of Christ on earth.

In my quest for any elements relevant to my research, I studied the culture of the late eleventh-century society which was still mostly oral/performative, and steeped in symbolism, and in which belief in *le merveilleux* was part of ordinary life. Medieval people considered material images as symbols of the immaterial, spread layer upon layer on the physical world.⁴³ Additionally, from the continuing comments gleaned from textual evidence, I considered that the Tapestry and its various parts -- images in the central narrative, inscriptions, and pictographs in both borders -- were meant to be read

as a “text.”⁴⁴ Observation of the individual frames shows that they are akin to punctuation marks; that the arrangements of the figures within the individual frames emulate the arrangements of words in a phrase; and that the correct placement of the pictographs or groups of pictographs, defined by frames, are comparable to the syntax of a text in which the location of words or signs on a page guides and enhances the comprehension of the whole text. In summary, as a twenty-first century beholder, I may compare the Tapestry and its borders to a well-composed text in which the semantics, i.e., the words that accurately express the writer’s thought, together with the type of language that can best influence an audience, are used; and in which syntax and semantics result in pragmatics, i.e., the expression of ideas in a way that is unique yet conducive to understanding and remembering.

Other elements and concerns originating in medieval culture may have informed and influenced the gaze of the onlooker. Indeed, another important factor of late eleventh-century culture was the Christian religion that permeated all levels of society. In *De divisione naturae*, one of the most influential thinkers of the early medieval period, Johannes Scotus Eriugena (c. 810-877), clearly expresses the impossibility of a Godless world in the following words: “*universitatem dico Deum et creaturam.*”⁴⁵ Relying mistakenly on the twentieth-century concept of separation of church and state to explain a late eleventh-century artifact, researchers, such as C.R. Dodwell, Charles Gibbs-Smith, and, lately, Carola Hicks, insist on the secular nature of the Tapestry. Thus, their position is misleading.⁴⁶ N.P. Brooks and H.E. Walker responded to C. R. Dodwell, mentioning that “his argument implies a clear contrast between secular and ecclesiastical ethic that cannot be said to have existed in the essentially pre-Gregorian world of Odo of Bayeux.”⁴⁷ In spite of Brooks’ and Walker’s refutation of C. R. Dodwell’s position, Carola Hicks argues for “the determinedly secular nature of the Tapestry in an age of otherwise almost exclusively religious art...,” once again forgetting that the concept of a division between church and state was meaningless to a medieval audience.⁴⁸ Reviewing this important issue, Wolfgang Grape posits that “in the early Middle Ages the sacred and the secular were conjoined in ways that we find hard to imagine today.”⁴⁹ One only has to look at the number of “secular” and even downright risqué carvings on the exteriors and even the interiors of churches to realize that a strict distinction between

secular and religious was foreign to the eleventh-century mind. In fact, the two were so tightly intertwined in daily life as to render a division unthinkable.

First, with regards to the relationship of the Tapestry to late eleventh-century culture, I found it impossible to deny that while the Tapestry represents secular events, it is the product of a society deeply ingrained with religious thought and steeped in religious iconography. Accordingly, I accepted the argument that the Bayeux Tapestry is akin to an epic *chanson de geste*. However, I posit that while its narrative is secular in content, its imagery is strewn with religious iconographical cues which were assumably familiar to a medieval observer. For example, the three-petal fleurons or fleur-de-lis which are placed at frequent and regular intervals, mostly but not exclusively in the upper border, were probably included to remind the reader/viewer that the events depicted in the Tapestry were part of God's plan -- the three petals in the fleuron, or fleur-de-lis, symbolizing the Trinity, i.e., God in Three Persons. As another example, the shape of the table and the meal presided by Odo in Scene 43, remind the observer of iconographic elements used in contemporary representations of the Last Supper found in manuscripts and in carvings.

Secondly, I considered the past scholarship on the Tapestry's patronage, dating and provenance. The lack of certainty concerning the patron's identity, seems an insurmountable impediment to research. Historically, besides the usual allocation of the Tapestry's patronage to Queen Mathilda, study of the literature on the Bayeux Tapestry unveils some original attributions. In one example, Wilhelm Tavernier ascribes the patronage to Turol, whom he identifies as Turolodus of Envermeu, the successor of Bishop Odo to the Bayeux See.⁵⁰ Currently, except for one dissenting voice, tentatively identifying Eustace, Count of Boulogne, as the patron, specialists agree with many of the early researchers and credit Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and William the Conqueror's half-brother, with commissioning the Tapestry. Perhaps following in H.E.J. Cowdrey's footsteps, Simone Bertrand goes so far as to posit that, "It is almost certain that it was Odo who ordered and even directed the making of the Tapestry."⁵¹

Concerning the date of production, after a protracted wavering between an early date before the end of the eleventh century, and a later one in the twelfth, or in a few cases, the thirteenth century,⁵² specialists are currently of the opinion that the Tapestry was made within the decade following the Norman victory at Hastings, and before 1082,

when William jailed Odo.⁵³ As to the provenance of the Tapestry, some researchers have opted for England, others for Normandy. However, to think in terms of Norman vs. Anglo-Saxon in an artistic context is a modern bias, the result of nationalistic traditions built up over many decades. Richard Gameson illustrates this point best when he states that “England and English artists had been interacting with France, Flanders and Normandy throughout the eleventh century, processes which intensified during the reign of Edward the Confessor.”⁵⁴ Presently, aside from Wolfgang Grape’s diverging opinion that the Tapestry was produced in an area to the north of Normandy, experts agree on an English provenance, probably a monastic Anglo-Saxon atelier, perhaps at Canterbury.⁵⁵ As Richard Gameson points out:

The background of the Bayeux Tapestry is self-evidently Anglo-Norman: its patron was undoubtedly Norman; its embroiderers were probably English; ...and its designer was arguably an Englishman familiar with a context where the best Anglo-Saxon and Norman pictorial art met.⁵⁶

In the state of current research, I found no reason to doubt traditional findings, such as Odo’s patronage, the dating of the Tapestry before 1082, and the English provenance of the Tapestry; yet, these three elements will continue to be the source of debate.⁵⁷

Thirdly, I studied what had been written on the Tapestry’s contents and form. As a last step, which I develop in Chapter 1, I perused the literature on the Tapestry for whatever information and reference material I could find about the borders in order to avoid duplication and redundancy. Concerning the Tapestry’s contents and form, I was aided by researchers who dedicated all or part of their writings to this very analysis. As early as 1894, using comparison as a tool, T. A. Archer pointed out similarities between the Tapestry and a *chanson de geste*.⁵⁸ This type of inquiry was reintroduced in a short study by Simone Bertrand published in 1960.⁵⁹ Expounding on Archer’s and Bertrand’s ideas, Charles R. Dodwell argued that the unfolding narrative was akin to the development of a secular *chanson de geste*, sparking further interest in viewing the Tapestry as modeled on a literary production.⁶⁰ C. R. Dodwell’s comparison of the Bayeux Tapestry to a *chanson de geste*, an established mode of expression in late-eleventh century England and France, is germane to this dissertation in terms of the form and evolution of the narrative.⁶¹ In any early *chanson de geste*, the story line revolves

usually around knights who became heroic figures through warfare with the added ingredient of a brave knight turned traitor through unfortunate circumstances. Similarly, the narrative embroidered on the Bayeux Tapestry includes the development of events that lead to a final battle scene, and a brave albeit ill-fated leader, Harold, who dies, perhaps as a result of breaking a solemn oath.⁶²

Similarities to other representative forms were also explored. Diverging somewhat from Dodwell, Eric MacLagan likened the Tapestry to a “Shakespearean play.”⁶³ The attraction exerted by film making after World War II influenced researchers, such as Michel Parrisé, to use a combination of cinematographic terminology and “traditional ‘archaeological and historical’ manner of interpreting the images” as a method to compare the characters portrayed and the development of the story in the Tapestry to the plot of a movie.⁶⁴ Following in Parrisé’s footsteps, Suzanne Lewis uses film terminology, semiotics and Foucauldian philosophy to aid in explaining the unfolding of scenes in the Tapestry.⁶⁵ Lewis also vows to “bring the most powerful insights of Barthes, Bakhtin, Genette, and Todorov, to bear in practical, demonstrable ways upon the exploration of narrative in the Bayeux Tapestry...in order to provide a more direct access to the ways in which the work both advertises and conceals its secrets.”⁶⁶ Late twentieth-century fascination with the Worldwide Web led recently to the comparison of the Tapestry to a “hypertext,” and to the seamless production of virtual Tapestries, accessible to those who are linked to the internet.⁶⁷

These latest queries are excellent exercises in demonstrating how a few twentieth and twenty-first-century observers explore the Tapestry from a post-modern point of view. These means of exploration may be useful to some as a way to decipher what is perceived as “its [the Tapestry’s] enigmatic play of surface transparency and deeply repressed secrets.”⁶⁸ However, lest we forget, Shakespearean plays, films and “hypertext” are concepts that were foreign to the culture of the late eleventh-century. Indeed, Michael Camille warns that “we must be careful not to think of the medieval margins in Postmodern terms.”⁶⁹ Again, while Suzanne Lewis attempts to achieve a “bifocal vision,” i.e. recovering “medieval ways of seeing in the post-structuralist terms of semiotics and narratology,” the borders do not play a consistent role in her exploration of the Tapestry.⁷⁰ In the latest book published to date (May 2002) on the Bayeux

Tapestry, Lucien Musset offers a compendium of the same arguments proffered by past scholars, dedicating only four pages to the borders.⁷¹

As a premise to my analysis of the Tapestry borders, I chose to consider that the Tapestry is an historical artifact commissioned by a patron at a given point in time and under a specific set of circumstances in order to fulfill a need or needs; and I set out to find the patterns of intention that underlay the relationships between these elements. Having established the parameters which govern my analysis, and keeping in mind the role that the relationships between patron, artifact, culture and observers, and the role that the “patterns of intention” play in the examination of an historical artifact, I propose to examine the borders of the Tapestry in terms of their interactive meaning and function with regard to the central narration. In order to accomplish this aim, not only the animals but also inanimate objects such as vegetal ornaments, geometrical shapes, and diagonal bars that separate animals and scenes in the borders require a thorough investigation. In addition, I strove to make a plausible assessment of the manner in which animate figures, both human and animal, and inanimate objects were represented; and to achieve a rational understanding of the reason behind their location within the various frames, both of which (manner and location) influence their symbolic content. This type of analysis also implies that I posit a symbolic meaning for the gestures performed by the participants in the narrative. Finally, I am of the opinion that the placement of each figure within a scene, and the arrangement of each scene within the overall narration are to be explored for their symbolic significance. I found all of these elements to be of the utmost importance within the context of the late eleventh century, when the written word had not superseded images as meaningful communicative signs, and when messages were relayed by the use of hand gestures, movement of the limbs, postures, position, animal allegories and inanimate metaphors. Indeed, any element, which may influence our understanding and reading of the Tapestry, and especially its borders, and the way they may have been received and read, needed to be considered in order to reach my goal of finding meaningful ways to “read” the borders of the Tapestry.

In my attempt to achieve an credible interpretation of the borders, I considered the findings derived from the examination mentioned above in conjunction with the main field and the inscriptions. At the same time, I kept in mind that the combined results of the analysis of each scene of the Tapestry are achieved through the amalgamation of

various layers of meaning and through the incorporation of the elements outlined above. I also retain, as important to my investigation, the principle that once the parts are combined anew, the original message may be altered, and other overt and latent interpretations may be retrieved. Although it would be difficult to deny that all the pictorial representations in this Tapestry, including those in the borders, are meaningful to some degree, it may be impossible to recover all meanings.

After considering the existing scholarship on the Bayeux Tapestry, one may concur with Shirley Ann Brown's statement that "much of what is written today about the Tapestry often recalls arguments and suggestions which were made long ago but which have become lost or obscured in the ensuing decades."⁷² Yet, amidst this plethora of published works, the borders are often forgotten, overlooked, only mentioned with reluctance or derision, and/or frequently dismissed as decorative only.

As mentioned earlier in the text, in an effort to avoid repetition, I reviewed the extant scholarship on the borders in Chapter 1. Accordingly, I discovered elements that I utilized as the foundation to establish relationships between the Tapestry, its borders, late eleventh-century culture and contemporary history in order to develop a better understanding of the interactive function of the borders and the main narrative. Ideally, I considered the borders of the Tapestry as an intrinsic part of the story depicted in the central narrative, and the various representations that the borders contain as significant elements added to enhance, explicate, and/or modify the main narrative and the inscriptions. I also proposed that the borders may have served to guide the viewers toward achieving a more complete reading of the story in order to keep them interested by giving just enough clues to allow them to anticipate, on a continuous basis, the events unfolding in the main narrative. In addition, I suggested that the borders may have also been used to promote an interpretation of contemporary history which may be deemed propagandistic.

In Chapter 2, I began to depict and analyze the pictographs in the borders and their relationship to the main narrative and inscriptions. As an easy way to find the area in the Tapestry that is under consideration at any point in time, I adopted the numbering system probably devised in the 1840s, which divides the Tapestry into 58 sections or scenes.⁷³ From the outset, I recognized that the Tapestry is the locus of ceaseless movements and of a cacophony of sounds, "the visual noise" of Michael Camille.⁷⁴

However, there is nothing chaotic about this series of images. Behind the apparent discordant melee lies a well-planned, well-organized set of scenes ready to reveal their “secrets” or “mystery,” to a prepared audience.⁷⁵ The fact that post-modern audiences have lost partially or wholly the ability to recapture the intended meaning(s), which, even at the time of production, may have been multiple and may have depended on the political bent of the individuals viewing the Tapestry, did not deter me from trying to decipher the pictographs in the borders and to uncover the dynamism between the borders, the inscriptions, and the main field.

In Chapter 2, Scenes 1 through 7, under the cover of appealing to the marginal side of late eleventh-century culture, which Mikhail Bakhtin terms the “carnival life” or “laughing aspect,” droll pictographs and fables found their way into the Tapestry borders.⁷⁶ With regards to the animal pictographs, I suggested that the major participants, i.e., Edward, William and Harold, may have been represented vicariously in the borders by regal animals, i.e., lions and eagles, and by anthropomorphic animals in fables (starting in Scene 7); and that through their antics, these animals may have provided an explanation of the actions of the main characters and of the events that were unfolding in the main field.

Regarding the fables, researchers such as David Bernstein, J. Bard McNulty and Daniel Terkla already noted the relationship between the narration in the main field and the fables in the borders.⁷⁷ McNulty even agrees that “the fables supply a carefully attuned commentary on the main story.”⁷⁸ Yet, these researchers failed to consider the importance of the fables’ placement towards the beginning of the Tapestry, their positions vis-à-vis the figures in the main field, and the general movement of the narrative from left to right. Through a detailed analysis of all the elements represented in Scenes 1 through 7, combined with a knowledge of contemporary history, and a reconstruction of the scenes, and taking into account not only the main field but the inscription and the pictographs in the borders, I came to the conclusion that the main theme of the epic is the struggle of two pretenders to the throne of England, i.e., Harold and William, which occurred towards the end of Edward the Confessor’s reign. Again, during my investigation of contemporary culture, I also noted that one detail, i.e., the changes in hairstyle that occur starting in Scene 7, may have been used as signifiers of underlying concerns about the legitimacy of control over a given territory.⁷⁹

A similar process of analysis and reconstruction is undertaken in the following chapters. In Chapter 3, I explored Scenes 8 through 15, i.e., Harold's capture and temporary detention by Guy de Ponthieu, and Harold's release to Guy's liege, William, Duke of Normandy. I propose that Guy's depiction in Scene 9 acts as opening bracket of a parenthetical phrase, while William's similar portrayal in Scene 12 serves to close it. The events, illustrated inside the parenthesis formed by the similar representations of the two leaders and the similar arrangement of the two scenes, are related to the exchanges that preceded Harold's release. It should be noted that, for the first time in Scene 12, William of Normandy is no longer alluded to, or perhaps displayed vicariously in animal form, but is physically present in human form. In addition, I suggest that the animals, fables and other pictographs in the borders continue to act as adjectival phrases qualifying the events portrayed in the center field.

In Chapter 3, Scenes 8 through 15, I posit that the borders continue to be used to comment on the character and personalities of the protagonists, to gloss over their hidden qualities, and/or especially, over their defects, and to remark on the actions stemming from defects in their respective psyches. Further analysis shows that the so-called Aelfgyva episode -- the last scene in this chapter -- is pivotal in setting the stage for the events occurring in the remainder of the Tapestry. McNulty's previous investigation of the scene is by far the most cogent. However, it seems that McNulty failed to take into account the surrounding elements in the borders, as well as the gestures, postures and placement of the figures in Scenes 14 and 15, depicting respectively the official meeting between Harold and William and the Aelfgyva episode. My discussion of these scenes points to the use of Scene 15 as a mnemonic cue to events that affected English history in prior to the Battle of Hastings and the Conquest of England, and as an *exemplum* of the consequences attached to making the wrong decision in matters of succession.

Chapter 4, which encompasses Scenes 16 through 23, starts with the Brittany Campaign and ends with Harold's fateful oath to William. In a manner similar to the Channel crossing, the representation of the Brittany Campaign seems to be an aside in the whole narrative, and does not appear to be essential to understanding the epic. However, a close examination of the borders, above and below Scenes 16 through 23, reveals that they are pregnant with informative tidbits qualifying the main field and requiring further explanation. Keeping this qualifying capability in mind, I gave special attention to the

changes in the second illustration of *The Fox and the Crow* below Scene 16, at the onset of the Brittany campaign. Also worthy of note, because of their symbolic meaning, are the monsters and dangerous animals introduced in the borders of Chapter 4, such as the amphisbaena above Scene 16; the strange representation of a human figure in a prone position with a snake coming out of his mouth; and the curious linkage of the human figure with animals in the lower border below Scene 17.

Scene 23, the last scene in Chapter 4, dubbed by many researchers as the most important scene in the Bayeux Tapestry, illustrates Harold's fateful oath. A thorough examination of all the elements in Scenes 16 to 22 led me to conclude that these events build up to Scene 23, in which Harold is portrayed in the process of swearing an oath to William on two sets of relics. In addition, a detailed examination of Scenes 16 through 23 and their borders sheds new light on Harold's and William's actions, conjecturing on their respective frames of mind, prior to Harold's return to England. Whoever the patron was, it seems that he used the proven method of disparaging those he considered to be potential adversaries in order to promote his own agenda.

Chapter 5 includes Scenes 24 through 34, and is delineated by the representation of two vessels: one in Scene 24, illustrating Harold's voyage back to England; and one in Scene 34 displaying the boat carrying Norman spies back to William in Normandy. These two vessels act as bracketing devices to outline the events occurring in England. I noted that the border above Scene 24 contained the second representation of *The Wolf and the Crane* and the third illustration of *The Fox and the Crow*. However, these iterations were not identical to the earlier representations. Because of their placements at this particular point in the narrative and of the position and gestures of the animal pictographs, these illustrations mark an evolution in the epic, as they offer a caustic summary of the situation in which the main protagonists (William and Harold) are finding themselves vis-à-vis each other after the oath scene. By comparing Scenes 1 and 25, I illustrate a change in the relationships between the main protagonists, namely Edward, Harold, and the invisible William, whose ominous presence is indicated through elements of *diversitas* and mocking, regal animal pictographs in the borders. My examination of the borders (Scenes 29 through 34) shows that they contain elements of evil portents associated with King Harold's brief reign.

Keeping in mind the intrinsic role that borders play in the interpretation of the Tapestry, Chapter 6 (Scenes 35 through 39) is dedicated to William's preparations to invade England and his arrival on English soil. A tonsured Odo (most probably the patron), who remains unnamed in the inscription, finally appears in Scene 35 where he is portrayed prominently, sitting next to William, as the order is given to start building the fleet. An extensive representation of the Channel crossing (Scenes 38 and 39) allows for the inclusion of a lengthy display of animal pictographs in the lower border, the upper border being filled with the boat sails. Through my analysis of the main field and borders in Scenes 35 through 39, I will suggest that the borders are used once more as a reflection and direct commentary glossing on past and future events and on the actions of the main protagonists. As an example, as McNulty already noted, the birds in the upper border above Scene 39 mimic the Norman fleet landing on English soil.⁸⁰

After disembarking at Pevensey, knights hurry towards Hastings where the preparation for battle gets under way. Chapter 7 (Scenes 40 through 47) brings the reader to the final battle and the inevitable ruin and loss of life resulting from war. The first animal pictographs in the upper border immediately above the pro-Norman forces landing in England (Scene 40), represent the fable of *The Lion's Share* with a moral similar to *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*. I posit that a profusion of combative, ferocious beasts and monsters, which may function as linking and signaling devices, may have found their way into the borders of Scenes 41 through 47, to warn the reader about the upcoming battle and about the kind of men the main protagonists are. Because the epic reached a turning point starting in Scenes 43 and 44, it seems that the patron found it expedient to portray Odo as an integral, necessary, and even indispensable part of the upcoming decisive struggle. Indeed, it seems a clever propagandistic ploy for Odo to be depicted several times toward the end of the Tapestry. Accordingly, Odo's performance and prowess would be fresh in the eyes of the handpicked viewing public.

Chapter 8 (Scenes 48 through 58) portrays vividly the Battle of Hastings in which Harold's life came to a cruel end. It is the aim of my dissertation to explain that the two sets of nudes in the upper border of Scene 48 refer to the evolution of the complex relationship between William and Harold. Two fables, *The Pregnant Bitch* and *The Wolf and the Goat* (*The Goat Who Sang*), are repeated for the second time. I examine these fables in order to demonstrate their relevance to the actions occurring in the main field.

Additionally, the two peacocks below Scene 51 seem to suggest the fable of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw* above Scene 14, and probably refer to the change in William's and Harold's respective status. Similarly, the symbolism of birds illustrated above Scene 53, which birds are akin to a species of quail or partridge, seems to be part of a destructive propagandistic scheme, as it seems to allude to the flaws of William and of his chosen heir, William Rufus. Starting with Scene 52, the lower border begins to show the results of the battle raging above. Dead and dismembered bodies are strewn across the lower borders of Scenes 52 to 58, while the upper border is filled with animals who, excited by the sight, smell, and taste of battle, are engaged in unceasing movements, as animals often do in the presence of death and destruction.

Chapter 9 is the concluding chapter in which I review and compile my findings. While engaged in a holistic examination of the Tapestry, with clear emphasis on the borders, I strove to find the relationships between the physical aspects of the Bayeux Tapestry, known cultural elements, and contemporary history, in order to discover what role(s) and meaning(s) may have been "intended" for the Tapestry and especially for its borders, keeping in mind that there may have been multiple reasons for producing such an artifact. Thus, it is the aim of this dissertation to show that the borders may be read like the margins in a manuscript. In addition, by complementing the main field, the borders play an intrinsic role in the interpretation of the events depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry. It is also the aim of this dissertation to demonstrate that the Bayeux Tapestry in its entirety -- main field, inscriptions, and especially the borders -- is a multifaceted and remarkable artifact produced, perhaps, with the overt goal to entertain.

However, I also propose that there may have been another purpose for producing the Bayeux Tapestry, and that, most likely, this purpose involved shaping the collective memory of select groups of important individuals. Thus, after a careful analysis and review, and based on the circumstantial evidence provided by elements of design, their types, placements and symbolism, and by researching contemporary culture and history, it is my opinion that the Tapestry may be regarded as a clever piece of propaganda, commissioned by a man or men with an ambitious agenda who may have used the Tapestry as an instrument in their attempt to indoctrinate a select viewing public often composed of ambitious parvenus and malcontents whose place in the nascent feudal system of the late eleventh century was yet to be carved out and defined, a prospect

which often made them restless. Accordingly, it is my intention to establish the various relationships between the Tapestry and its border, the fulfillment of someone's need(s) and/or the solution to someone's problem(s) at a given point in time and under a specific set of circumstances.

¹ For the historical sources see bibliography.

² For the overall size of the Bayeux Tapestry (hereafter, BT), see Simone Bertrand, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1994): 6, approx. 70m. long by 0.50m wide; Nicholas P. Brooks and H. E. Walker, "The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1978* (1979), reprint. in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, Richard Gameson, ed. (1997): 64; Suzanne Lewis, *The Rhetoric of Power in the Bayeux Tapestry* (1999):1, "232' and approximately 20" wide" (74 m x 0.50m); Mogen Rud, *The Bayeux Tapestry and the Battle of Hastings 1066* (2002): 9; according to the latest book on the BT, Lucien Musset, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux* (2002): 19, the BT is only 64.38m. long. For physical descriptions of the BT, see esp. Simone Bertrand, "Etude sur la tapisserie de Bayeux," *Annales de Normandie*, 10 (1960): 197-206, in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 31-38; David M. Wilson, "Bayeux Tapestry," in *Dictionary of Art*, Jane Turner, gen. ed., 3 (1996): 426-27.

³ Bertrand (1994): 3.

⁴ Ibidem, 3.

⁵ Frank Rede Fowke, *The Bayeux Tapestry, a History and Description* (1913): 22.

⁶ Fowke (1913): 12.

⁷ For the French names of the BT, see Paul Robert, ed. *Dictionnaire universel des noms propres* (1974): 191; Nicolas Hallé, *Inventaire de la flore et de la faune de la tapisserie de Bayeux* (1987): 5.

⁸ For the quote, see Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 65 & n. 7.

⁹ For a complete, yet concise history of the BT, the best source is still Shirley Ann Brown, *The Bayeux Tapestry: History and Bibliography* (1988): 1-22. Other excellent sources are E. A. Freeman, "The Authority of the Bayeux Tapestry," in his *The Conquest of England: its causes and results*, 3 (1869): 563-75, reprint. in Gameson, ed. (1997): 7-15; Fowke (1913): 1-18; and Bertrand, "The History of the Tapestry," in *The Bayeux Tapestry*, Frank Stenton, ed. (1957): 88-97.

¹⁰ S. A. Brown (1988): passim; Richard Wissolik, *The Bayeux Tapestry: a critical, annotated bibliography* (1990): passim.

¹¹ For the first researchers interested in the inscriptions, see M. Lancelot, "Explication d'un monument de Guillaume le Conquérant," *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres depuis l'année MDCCVIII jusques et compris l'année MDCCXXV*, VI (1727): 739-755; Dom Bernard de Montfaucon, "La conquête de l'Angleterre par Guillaume le Bâtard, Duc de Normandie, dit le Conquérant," *Les Monumens de la monarchie françoise*, 2 (1730): 1-3; see also Bernstein (1986): 39; René Lepellet, "A Contribution to the Study of the Inscriptions in the Bayeux Tapestry: *Bagias* and *Wilgelm*," in Gameson, ed. (1997): 39-62; Gameson (1997): 173; Martin Kennedy Foy, "A Web of Linen: Image, Text and Hypertext in the Bayeux Tapestry," Unpublished Dissertation (1998): 87-155.

¹² For the techniques of production, see esp. George W. Digby, "Technique and Production," in Stenton, ed. (1957): 37-55; see also Joan Edwards, "All the King's Horses and All the King's Men," *Crewel Embroidery in England* (1975): 14-27. For narrative devices, see Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 63-92, esp. 63-65.

¹³ For the architecture, see esp. Horace J. Round, "The Castles of the Conquest," *Archaeologia*, 2/58 (1902): 313-340; W. H. St. John Hope, "English Fortresses and Castles of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," *Archaeological Journal*, 60 (1903): 72-90; T. Davies Pryce, "Earthworks of the moated type," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 62 (1906): 231-268; R. Allen Brown, "The Architecture," in Stenton, ed. (1957): 76-87; Brian Hope-Taylor, "Norman Castles," *Scientific American*, 198/3 (1958): 42-48; Urban T. Holmes, Jr., "The Houses of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Speculum*, 34 (1959): 179-183.

¹⁴ For costumes, see John L. Nevison, "The Costumes," in Stenton, ed. (1957): 70-75.

¹⁵ For shipbuilding and ships at the time of the Conquest, see Sean McGrail, "Ships, shipwrights and Seamen," in *The Viking World*, James Graham-Campbell, ed. (1980): 37-63; André Sleswyk, "The Ship of Harold Godwinson," *Mariner's Mirror*, 67 (1981): 87-91; Owain T. P. Roberts, "The Bayeux

Tapestry Sails," *Mariner's Mirror*, 67 (1981): 287-88; C. M. Gillmore, "Naval Logistics of the Cross-Channel Operation 1066," *Anglo Norman Studies*, VII (1985): 105-131.

- ¹⁶ For nascent heraldry, see Gilbert French, "On the Banners of the Bayeux Tapestry and the earliest heraldic charges," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 13 (1857): 113-130; and especially for the papal banner, see Carl Erdman, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade* (1977): 182-200.
- ¹⁷ For weaponry, see Samuel R. Meyrick, "Observations on the Body-Armour anciently worn in England," *Archaeologia*, 19 (1821): 120-145, esp. 120-128; John Collingwood Bruce, *The Bayeux Tapestry Elucidated* (1856): 96; Fowke (1913): 35, 93, 122, 125; P. Mayeur, "Correspondance à propos de la broderie de Bayeux," *Revue de l'art Chrétien*, 4/14 (1903): 203-241; Sir James Mann, "Arms and Armour," in Stenton, ed. (1957): 56-69; Wolfgang Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1994): 27-28.
- ¹⁸ For various interpretations of the Aelfgyva episode, see especially, E. A. Freeman, "The Aelfgyva of the Bayeux Tapestry," *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, its Causes and its Results*, 3 (1869): 708-711, reprint. in R. Gameson, ed (1997): 15-18; Fowke (1913): 49-57; Roger Sherman Loomis, "The Origin and Date of the Bayeux Embroidery," *Art Bulletin*, 6 (1923): 3-7; H. Prentout, "Essai d'identification des personnages inconnus de la Tapisserie de Bayeux," in R. Gameson, ed (1997): 22-25; Simone Bertrand (1966): 87; Richard D. Wissolik, "The Saxon Statement: Code in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Annuaire Medievale*, 19 (1979): 69-97, esp. 81-88; J. Bard McNulty, "The Lady Aelfgyva in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Speculum*, 55/4 (1980): 659-668; McNulty (1989): 52-58; Gerald A. Bond, *The Loving Subject. Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France* (1995): 18-41; Lewis (1999): 86-89.
- ¹⁹ See chap. 1 below for an examination of past scholarship.
- ²⁰ Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention* (1985): 1.
- ²¹ Baxandall (1985): 41.
- ²² Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (2000): 30.
- ²³ For the first quote, see Baxandall (1985): 35; for the second, *ibidem*, 15, 35-36.
- ²⁴ Baxandall (1985): 41-42.
- ²⁵ Jonathan Alexander, "Iconography and Ideology: Uncovering Social Meanings in Western Medieval Christian art," *Studies in Iconography*, 15 (1993): 1, 9.
- ²⁶ Baxandall (1985): 109.
- ²⁷ *Ibidem*, 106.
- ²⁸ For the quote, see Lewis (1999): 7; for the BT as propaganda, see Lewis, 6.
- ²⁹ For the original quote in Latin, see PL 14: 992; for its translation, see Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance- Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (1994): 7-8, and n. 18.
- ³⁰ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* (2000): 41.
- ³¹ Baxandall (1985): 109 uses the term *participant* for contemporary viewers. In the case of the BT, I have used this term for late eleventh-century viewers. For the quotes, see Carruthers (2000): 44.
- ³² Carruthers (2000): 45-46.
- ³³ Baxandall (1985): 41.
- ³⁴ Walafridus Strabo, *De rebus ecclesiasticis*, VIII, PL 114: 929.
- ³⁵ "Synodus Attrebatensis" in *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, D. Mansi, ed., 19 (1902): 454.
- ³⁶ Gilbert Crispin, "Disputatio Iudei et Christiani" (1092-93), in B. Blumenkranz, ed., *Stromata Patristica et Medievalia*, 3 (1956): 67.
- ³⁷ Richard Brilliant, "The Bayeux Tapestry: a stripped narrative for their eyes and ears," *Word and Image*, 7 (1991): 93-125, reprinted in the *Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 111-137, see esp. 119.
- ³⁸ For the first quote, see Brilliant, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 119; for the second quote, see Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History*, 8/1(1985): 26-49, esp. 27.
- ³⁹ Brilliant, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 119.
- ⁴⁰ Carruthers (1990): 221-257, esp. 222-223.
- ⁴¹ S. A. Brown (1988):33.
- ⁴² Grape (1994): 30-32, 82 n. 48.
- ⁴³ Gerhart B. Ladner. *God, Cosmos and Humankind* (1995): 260-61, 264-65.

- ⁴⁴ Lewis (1999): 10-29.
- ⁴⁵ Johannes Scotus Erigena, II, 1, PL 122: 524.
- ⁴⁶ For the tapestry as a secular object, see esp. Dodwell (1966): 227-32; Dodwell (1966): 549-60; Charles Gibbs-Smith, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1973): 3; Carola Hicks, "The Borders of the Bayeux Tapestry," *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium* (1992): 251-265, esp. 264.
- ⁴⁷ Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 70.
- ⁴⁸ For the quote, see Hicks (1992): 264.
- ⁴⁹ Grape (1994): 78-79.
- ⁵⁰ Wilhelm Tavernier, "Beiträge zur Rolansforschung," *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 37 (1911): 83-124, esp. 117-124.
- ⁵¹ H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 10 (1988): 65; Bertrand (1994): 10.
- ⁵² For the dating of the BT, see esp. David Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1985): 212; S. A. Brown (1988): 26-31; J. Bard McNulty, *The Narrative Art* (1989): 13; Lewis (1999): 2.
- ⁵³ For 1082 as the *terminus ante quem*, see David Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry* (1986): 37; Brooks and Walker (1979): 1-34, esp. 9, reprint. in Gameson, ed. (1997): 63-92, esp. 71.
- ⁵⁴ Richard Gameson, "the Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 173.
- ⁵⁵ For the provenance, see Wissolik (1979): 77-78 & n. 10; Bernstein (1986): 8-9, 37-50; S. A. Brown (1988): 33-34; see also Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 70, 73, 75-77; McNulty (1989): 12; Gameson (1997): 162-174, esp. 171; Lewis (1999): 5, 136 n. 24; Frank McLynn, *1066. The Year of the Three Battles* (1999): 236.
- ⁵⁶ Gameson (1997): 173.
- ⁵⁷ For a discussion of the Tapestry's patronage, see esp. S. A. Brown (1988): 31-33. For the latest in dissenting voices, see Andrew Bridgeford, "Was Count Eustace II of Boulogne the patron of the Bayeux Tapestry?" *Journal of Medieval History*, 25/3 (1999): 155-185.
- ⁵⁸ T. A. Archer, "The Battle of Hastings," *The English Historical Review*, 9/33 (1894): 1-41, esp. 27-29.
- ⁵⁹ Bertrand, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 31-38, esp. 32.
- ⁶⁰ For the BT as a *chanson de geste*, see esp. C. R. Dodwell, "Epic of the Conquest," *The Observer* (1965): 12-22; C. R. Dodwell, "A Brief Note on the Secular Aspects of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 68 (1966): 227-232; C. R. Dodwell, "The Bayeux Tapestry and the French Secular Epic," *The Burlington Magazine*, CVIII/764 (1966): 549-560; see also George Henderson, *Early Medieval* (1972): 168-178; O.K. Werkmeister, "The Political Ideology of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Studi Medievali*, 17/2 (1976): 535-595; S. A. Brown, "The Bayeux Tapestry and the *Song of Roland*," *Olifant*, 6/3 & 4 (1979): 339-350.
- ⁶¹ Dodwell (1966): 227-232; Dodwell, (1966): 549-560, esp. 559; Lewis (1999): 21.
- ⁶² Dodwell (1966): 553.
- ⁶³ MacLagan, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1949): 7.
- ⁶⁴ For parallels between the BT and film, see esp. Anatole Jakovsky, "Encore quelques mots en marge de la Tapisserie de Bayeux," *L'Age Nouveau*, 21 (1947) 24-27; Marie-Thérèse Poncet, "La Broderie de Bayeux," *Etude comparative des illustrations du moyen-âge et des dessins animés* (1952): 65-89; "The Bayeux Tapestry," *Journal of the Society of Cinematologists*, 7 (Winter 1967-68): 29-35; Anne Prah-Pérochon, "Le film animé de la tapisserie de Bayeux," *Stanford French Review*, 1/3 (1977): 339-365; Christian Fabre, "Un film sur la conquête de Guillaume le Conquérant," *La Renaissance du Bessin* (30 Sept 1980/10 Feb 1981): 20 page series; Michel Parisse, *La tapisserie de Bayeux: Un documentaire du XIe siècle* (1983): 50. For the quote, see S. A. Brown (1988): 43.
- ⁶⁵ Lewis (1999): 2-3, 36, 43, 53-54, 75-76, 78, 112, 146 n. 9.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 7-9.
- ⁶⁷ The Tapestry is the subject of several sites and of one dissertation with its own site that relates it to the World Wide Web, see Foys (1998): *passim*.
- ⁶⁸ Lewis (1999): 7.
- ⁶⁹ Michael Camille, *Images on the Edge – The Margins of Medieval Art* (1992): 10.
- ⁷⁰ Lewis (1999): 2.
- ⁷¹ Musset (2002): 72-75, esp. 74.

⁷² S. A. Brown (1988): ix.

⁷³ For the numbering system, see McNulty (1989): viii; Musset (2002): 18, posits a date “à la fin du XVIIIe siècle ou au début du XIXe siècle,” for the origin of this numbering system, which is still in use.

⁷⁴ Camille (1992): 12.

⁷⁵ For the Tapestry’s “secrets,” see Lewis (1999): 8; and for its “mystery,” see Bernstein (1986): passim.

⁷⁶ M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (1965): 96.

⁷⁷ Bernstein (1986): 128-135; McNulty (1989): 27-35; Daniel Terkla, “Cut on the Norman bias: fabulous borders and visual glosses on the Bayeux Tapestry,” *Word & Image*, 11/3 (1995): 264-290.

⁷⁸ McNulty (1989): 27.

⁷⁹ For changes in hairstyles, see esp. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art* (1982): 222; Foys (1998): 484. For their significance in contemporary culture, see Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, John France, ed. and trans. (1989): 164 -67, and 254-99, esp. 290-91; Geary (1994): 3.

⁸⁰ McNulty (1989): 121.

CHAPTER I

THE BORDERS OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

AND

PAST SCHOLARSHIP

Scholars may have to avail themselves of texts to gain entry to unfamiliar subjects or to reconstruct the contexts in which works of art once made sense. But they must also know when to let go of their texts and approach images on their own terms that would have been familiar to their creators.¹

Brendan Cassidy
“Introduction: Iconography, Texts and Audiences”
Iconography at the Crossroads

I. THE BORDERS

I. 1. Vertical Borders

A first review of the Tapestry shows that it has only one partial vertical border at the beginning, which is probably a nineteenth-century restoration.² If it ever existed, the other vertical border at the end of the Tapestry is no longer extant. In addition, each thematic unit located in the main narrative is isolated from its neighbors by an architectural structure such as a tower, or by some type of device, like stylized plants or trees. The use of such elements is not unusual in medieval manuscripts and wall paintings. Additionally, the trees with their interwoven branches and varicolored trunks and limbs are examined for their potential symbolic significance within the context of the scenes that they delineate.³

I. 2. Horizontal Borders

A perusal of the Tapestry reveals that an upper and a lower horizontal border, uneven because of loss or repair, and not always contiguous, frame the main narrative. In the borders, diagonal bars, sometimes arranged to form a trapezoidal shape containing a three-petal *fleuron*, and sometimes doubled with a stylized scroll of plant life in between, are utilized to separate the imagery into single or paired animals, or various

sized groups of animal and human figures often referred to, in the literature on the Tapestry, as fables and “genre scenes”.

These separating elements differ from one border to the other. In the lower border, double diagonal bars separate most animal pictographs or fables. “Vs” and inverted “Vs,” in which are placed three-petal *fleurons* or fancier fleur-de-lis, are introduced in Scene 13. In the upper border, three-petal *fleurons* or fancier fleur-de-lis, sometimes similar to crosses, or other fanciful designs are inserted in “Vs” and inverted “Vs,” of Scenes 1 through 27. Three-petal *fleurons* and fleur-de-lis may have been used in the Tapestry to indicate God’s power over earthly events and to remind the viewer that whatever happens “all power comes from God.”⁴ If the patron was indeed Bishop Odo of Bayeux, a man who despite his shortcomings was scrupulous when it came to the representation of his faith and to the affairs of the Church, the incorporation of three-petal *fleurons* or fleur-de-lis in the Tapestry design may be more easily explained, since this particular element was used to signify God’s continued presence in the depicted events.⁵ Lest twenty-first century readers forget, the majority of medieval readers/viewers believed in a God-created universe and in the teleological development of history. Corrupted representations of the fleur-de-lis, which occur in various areas of the Tapestry, may have been intentional since variations and distortions in depictions probably carried supplemental symbolic meanings which are examined below.

In this and the following chapters, pictographs in the borders are analyzed individually, before they are linked to other pictographs and/or to figures and/or inanimate objects in either border. Finally, they are read concurrently with the main narrative and the inscriptions in order to achieve a holistic reading, and to illustrate the synergic process that takes place between figures and words in the main field and elements in the margins.

The borders are filled with a few human figures, but mostly with animal pictographs and vegetal life forms. The animals inhabiting the borders are varied in type and shape. From a stylistic point of view, it is probable that not only manuscript illuminations, but also decorative designs found on various cloths of Sassanian, Byzantine or Islamic origins, mostly made of silk, and used to line reliquaries or to wrap the bones of saints, were the primary sources of inspiration, or even the proximate models, for some of the geometric designs and animals.⁶ However, as W. Brundson

Yapp indicated, for some well-known animals, “the artist was probably drawing from what he had seen.”⁷

Despite some difficulty in identifying a few of the animals, one must recognize the originality and great variety employed to depict them.⁸ Some of these animals are static, reminding the observer of later heraldic illustrations; others are engaged in various actions. In the richly imaginative world of the early Middle Ages, where the material (physical) was but a reflection of the immaterial (spiritual), the “merveilleux” imbued every aspect of life, and animals often assumed anthropic characteristics. Medieval imagination regarding the comportment of animals found support in various early texts, such as the *Physiologus*, based on the writings of Aristotle, Pliny and Solinus, and in Christian texts, such as the Bible. Inspiration for the behavior of the animals illustrated in the Tapestry is to be found also in the writings of Isidore of Seville (c. 570-636) and Rabannus Maurus (776-856) whose work exerted a major influence on the medieval understanding of the natural world. These authors considered the animals not for themselves, but for what they symbolized. For them, animals were concepts, and the fauna was transformed into a system of ideas.⁹

Additionally, short stories with a moral ending, known as fables, part of the Greco-Roman heritage, were known in late eleventh-century Europe.¹⁰ In these tales, animals were the “porte-parole,” literally, “bearers of the spoken word.” As such, they were allowed to express with impunity the hidden and/or the forbidden that their human counterparts were fearful to divulge in plain language and images because of possible retribution on the part of those in power. In the case of the Tapestry, the fables afforded Odo, the acknowledged patron, a formidable tool to censure without fear the actions of the main protagonists.

II. PAST SCHOLARSHIP

Past scholarship on the meaning of the borders of the Bayeux Tapestry, or lack thereof, is relatively scanty. Researchers who speculated on the borders' importance failed to examine the Tapestry systematically for a possible connection between the pictographs of animate and inanimate objects in the framing borders, the inscriptions, and the historical epic in the center. Additionally, in spite of various promises, opinions regarding the manner in which the borders were used and their overall meaning, vis-à-vis

the central narrative, remain divided in modern writings. In order to come to terms with existing research, to avoid redundancy, and to lay the foundation for a thorough analysis, I dedicated this chapter to a review of past scholarship on the borders. A perusal of the existing data reveals the lack of a comprehensive work on the images in the borders and their possible interactions with the main narrative. Thus far, researchers seem to have been reluctant to undertake such a long and, perhaps, tedious work. As a result, they focused mainly on the decorative aspect of the borders, on the sources for the depiction of animals, on the fables and on the so-called “genre scenes,” choosing at random the elements that piqued their interest. A detailed review of the extant scholarship betrays the need for a systematic and unbiased -- i.e., without a pro-Norman or a pro-English prejudice -- analysis of the Tapestry, its inscriptions and its borders from beginning to end in terms of their interactive meaning and function. A complete analysis is necessary if one hopes to unveil the Tapestry’s “hidden secrets,” and what the patron and designer(s) may have “intended” to offer to the eyes and ears of a medieval audience, insofar as it can be retrieved.¹¹ In order to facilitate this review, a chronological approach is used, keeping in mind that most researchers interested in the borders are mainly interested in the fables, and take little notice of the other framing elements.

II. 1. Early Research on the Borders

II. 1.1. The Eighteenth Century

During a session of the Royal Academy in Paris, Antoine Lancelot (1675-1740) presented images, known as the Foucault drawings -- after the name of the person who had them made -- of an unknown monument believed to depict the battle of Hastings and the events that led to it.¹² In a series of published findings that followed his address, Lancelot mentions the presence in the borders of birds, fantastic animals, monsters and fighting ferocious beasts, of genre scenes, such as plowing and harrowing, of hunting expeditions, and of fables, such as *The Crane and the Wolf* and *The Lion’s Share*.¹³ After relating his observations, Lancelot states only that he regards the borders as fanciful and uninformative, proclaiming:

Je n’ai pas cru qu’il fallût s’arrêter à ces différentes idées, qui n’estant dues la plupart qu’à l’imagination de l’ouvrier, peuvent estre regardées comme peu instructives.¹⁴

The Benedictine monk and avid researcher, Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741), also a member of the *Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, was intrigued by these drawings to the point that he had them copied. Additionally, he made inquiries in an effort to discover the original work of art behind the drawings.¹⁵ When he wrote the following line, Montfaucon was under the impression that the original was a painting with borders that were akin to those usually found in a Tapestry:

Au haut et au bas de la peinture le peintre s'est diverti à faire des lions, des aigles, des chiens, des monstres, des chasseurs, des fleurs, et tout ce que le caprice lui a suggéré, et qu'on voit souvent dans les bords des tapisseries. En un endroit il met la fable de corbeau et du renard... En un endroit il met ...un homme qui laboure, et un autre qui sème. Ces ornements règnent sur toute la bordure d'en haut et d'en bas jusqu'à la fin.¹⁶

Montfaucon's search was rewarded, thanks to the prior of the Benedictines of St. Vigor at Bayeux, and he was soon to discover that the original was a Tapestry kept in the treasury of the Bayeux cathedral. However, as shown above in his own writings, like Lancelot, Montfaucon regarded the borders as decorative only.

The discovery of the original Tapestry sparked interest across the channel. In 1767, Smart Lethieullier wrote the first English article on the Tapestry, included as an appendix to Andrew Ducarel's *Anglo-Norman Antiquities Considered in a Tour through Part of Normandy*. Like Lancelot, and Montfaucon, neither Ducarel nor Lethieullier elaborated on the borders, preferring to dismiss them as ornamental, "having nothing to do with the history," except towards the end, when the lower border is "filled with dead bodies."¹⁷

II. 1.2. The Nineteenth Century and the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, researchers argued back and forth over the borders' significance or lack thereof, with a preponderance of them deciding to view the borders simply in terms of their ornamental value. Many reasons were invoked to arrive at such a conclusion. For example, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Thomas Amyot went as far as denying the presence of fables, positing without an adequate foundation that, "il était clairement démontré que ces fables n'étaient point connues de l'Europe occidentale avant la première croisade."¹⁸ Yet, Amyot's contemporary, Thomas Frognall Dibdin, noted that "both at top and at bottom of the principal subject, there is a running allegorical ornament (... a part of the border in the

Tapestry is a representation of subjects from Aesop's fables); of which I will not incur the presumption to suppose myself a successful interpreter."¹⁹ It is unfortunate that Dibdin felt inadequate to pursue his inquiries.

Nevertheless, such differing views illustrate the opposition that was latent in the early years, and continues to exist between proponents of meaningful vs. meaningless borders. To further illustrate this point, notwithstanding Amyot's obdurate blindness to the obvious, some scenes, especially the so-called "obscénités" featuring the male and female nudes, generated comments from nineteenth-century connoisseurs. In 1824, Abbé Gervais de la Rue dared to ask, "est'il bien vrai que les obscénités qu'on voit sur la tapisserie soient étrangères, et par cela même absolument déplacées dans le tableau de la conquête?"²⁰ Writing in 1856, J. Collingwood Bruce equated these so-called "obscénités" to the "distressing immoralities which too often attend the march of armies."²¹ Despite their limitations, the type of questions asked by Gervais de la Rue was opening the door unwittingly to new queries on the possible significance of the figures in the borders.

In 1875, a similar inquisitiveness led Frank Rede Fowke to allude to the possible connection between events in the main narrative and elements in the upper and lower borders. Thus, in his explanation of the Aelfgyva episode, Fowke wondered if the dragon illustrated in the lower border, "which is breathing forth its fury in angry flames," is not the dragon of Wessex "standing for the enraged Harold."²² Fowke's inquiring mind also led him to suggest an unlikely connection between the conjoined fishes and the Chinese symbol of conjugal fidelity. If such significance could "be traced to Medieval Normandy we might suspect a subtle sarcasm at the expense of Aelfgyva."²³ Unfortunately, the depiction of the joined fishes is located far from the Aelfgyva episode. In addition, it would be difficult to prove that Medieval Normans were familiar with Chinese allegories, or that their usage was so widespread as to be incorporated in a Tapestry of western origins. Fowke proposed other shrewd observations. In one instance, he associated the Norman standard bearers departing to fight the English, and the predatory animal in the upper border, presumably a wolf, watching a grazing ass from behind a bush.²⁴ Fowke only intimates at the possible relationship between the narrative in the center and the elements in the borders; but his probing was seminal, and inaugurated a trend in research

that stretched the imagination of the viewer and took into account the presence in the Tapestry of symbolic elements, hitherto unobserved, ignored or denied.

Ignoring Amyot's rejection, most researchers, including Fowke, agreed that fables were part of the border imagery. However, they noted the presence of fables without further comments. Neither M. Lancelot (1729), Bernard de Montfaucon (1730), Gervais de la Rue (1824), P.C.F. Daunou (1826), J. Collingwood Bruce (1856), Edward J. Lowell (1887), nor Joseph Jacobs (1889) -- to name only a few of the early Tapestry specialists -- attached any value to the fables and other representations in the border beyond that of a *divertissement*.²⁵ They dismissed the fables with words similar to those of Albert Marignan: "je crois inutile d'insister sur les quelques fables d'Ésope représentées par notre artiste."²⁶

Specialists continued to argue for and against the very existence of fables in the Tapestry. However, in 1875, Edward Freeman turned the problem around, stating that:

For my part I should reverse the argument. I have that confidence in the Tapestry that I accept the figures wrought in its border as proof that the Fables were known in Normandy and England in the eleventh century.²⁷

In the same manner, the presence of single and paired animals in the borders was brushed over, often with comments similar to Helen Churchill Candee's amusing mention of the "active little beasts that make a running accompaniment to the tale they adorn."²⁸

In spite of this apparent neglect, as already mentioned above, not all researchers were blind to the possible meaning of the borders. In 1914, in a *Guide to the Bayeux Tapestry* published by the Victoria and Albert Museum, Cecil Smith attempted to steer research towards finding a purpose for the borders by suggesting that:

The borders that run above and below well repay study. They not only make an admirable framework for the main narrative, but have an object of their own in keeping up a kind of running commentary on the events portrayed within their boundaries.²⁹

However, like others before him, Smith failed to investigate his own suggestion further. All the same, his remarks are proof that the borders continued to intrigue the researcher and to arouse questions in the minds of the observers. In the same year, Wilhelm Tavernier proposed some personal interpretations of the part of the border which depicts men engaged in agricultural tasks. In his attempt to find meaning, Tavernier stretches

the imagination of the viewer with the unfounded proposal that the men are part of Turolde's estate, and that they work his land. Tavernier goes so far as to propose that the man directly below the name *TUROLDE* in the main narrative is the father of the one in the border below him!³⁰

II. 2. Recent Research on the Borders

II. 2.1. The Twentieth Century - 1925 to 1980

It was not until 1929 that Jeanne Abraham and A. Létienne published the first article specifically dedicated to an interpretive study of the Tapestry borders. After pondering briefly the known historical scenes in the center, and describing the borders summarily, these two researchers were interested to find the origin for the type and style of the animals, figures and "genre scenes" represented therein. In a second thrust, Abraham and Létienne questioned the interaction between the borders and the main narrative, wondering, "Y a-t-il quelque rapport entre les sujets figurés dans les bordures et les scènes historiques de la Tapisserie?" Answering negatively that "l'examen que nous avons fait de toutes ces figurines nous a amenés à une conclusion négative..." they cautiously concluded that "à deux exceptions près, il n'y a pas de rapport entre les scènes historiques et les figurines des bordures."³¹ Interestingly enough, while they recovered and explained eight fables, until recently their work received little notice from the art historical community.³² Credit went instead to Hélène Chefneux. In "Les fables dans la tapisserie de Bayeux," published in 1934, Hélène Chefneux proposed that the Tapestry contained nine fables, five, which are identical to Abraham's and Létienne's, the others being variations.³³ However, the bulk of Chefneux's research revolved around an attempt to trace the nine fables back to their origins, wondering "quel texte pouvait donc hanter l'artiste, alors qu'il dessinait ces fables?"³⁴ Although Chefneux explained the content of each fable, she did not point out the morals that were attached to them originally, perhaps failing to see that the fables, created in another age, could still be treated as satirical commentaries written to censure with impunity the main epic illustrating the actions of the rich and powerful.³⁵

Five years after Chefneux's publication, in *Influences antiques dans l'art du Moyen Âge français*, Jean Adhémar interpreted "les petites images de la frise" as satirical representations underlining "la ruse du duc normand."³⁶ In the same year, Léon

Herrmann announced in a short article, “Apologues and anecdotes dans la tapisserie de Bayeux,” that he expected to increase the number of fables from nine to twenty nine.³⁷ In a later, enlarged text, published as *Les fables antiques de la broderie de Bayeux*, in 1964, Herrmann brings the number of fables to a whopping forty-two! However, a close scrutiny of the borders reveals Herrmann’s propensity to misread and to over-read the animal imagery.³⁸ As a result, he considers the fable of the *Fox and the Crow* -- which is repeated three times -- to be three different fables, two of which are rather obscure, and fails to show a relationship to the imagery.³⁹ Perhaps because Herrmann overindulged in his search for fables in the Tapestry borders, or perhaps because he published his findings when research on symbolism was relegated to “behind the scenes,” and the emphasis was placed on style and form, rather than content, the immediate reaction of a potentially overwhelmed art historical community was summarized succinctly by Adolph Goldschmidt who, in 1947, wrote that “the fables are an ornamental accompaniment on the upper and lower border, and have no relationship to the historical narrative.”⁴⁰

Ten years later, Francis Wormald was still arguing that “in the Bayeux Tapestry these fables serve a purely decorative purpose and cannot be related to the main scenes.” However, Wormald also noted “a number of genre scenes...derived from calendar illustrations,” and the “purely decorative” and “mildly erotic figures... below Aelfgyva and the Clerk” that “foreshadow ornaments found in the initials of Romanesque MSS.”⁴¹

Writing in 1966, C. R. Dodwell argues with more ambivalence. On the one hand, Dodwell proposed that some of the contents of the borders should be considered examples of “the ‘editorial aside,’ used not only to anticipate a particular event but also the whole motivation of the plot.”⁴² In order to clarify his statement, Dodwell adds that “in fact, the very ‘editorial aside’ device of the *chanson* tradition is here used to foretell the theme so dear to the epic poets – the theme of treachery and betrayal.”⁴³ On the other hand, he considers “that some of the borders of the Tapestry contain purely decorative figures.”⁴⁴ In spite of their promising statements, neither Adhémar, nor Dodwell pursued their respective course of inquiry.

II. 2.2. The Last Twenty Years of the Twentieth Century to the Present

Opinions regarding the manner in which the borders were used and their overall meaning, vis-à-vis the central epic, remain divided in modern writings. In the preface to *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry* (1986), David Bernstein showed a great interest in

forms and in the framing border as a qualitative unit bearing its own meaning, interfering with and penetrating the main narrative, as well as separating and segregating border actions from epic schemes.⁴⁵ Bernstein also acknowledged that “while there is ample precedent in Anglo-Saxon art for the use of the frame to add to a composition’s meaning, the Bayeux Tapestry is unique in the number of differing roles bordering figures are allowed to play.”⁴⁶ He also announced that “...without an understanding of the interdependence of its three main visual components – images in the main field, words in the inscriptions, and figures in marginal zones – it is little wonder that parts of the narrative remain baffling.”⁴⁷ From such a resounding start, one might expect a complete resolution of the problems raised by the interpretation of the borders. However, Bernstein quickly added that “the hundreds of animals who border the Tapestry’s narrative,... deserve a more systematic analysis than the scope of this work can possibly provide.”⁴⁸ He then proceeded to devote only a little space to solve the problems he outlined earlier. Additionally, he expressed a renewed interest in border images “as extensions of the narrative,” communicating “what is left unstated in the inscriptions above.”⁴⁹ He also toyed with the “possibility that animals in the margins might be correlated by their placement and disposition with characters within the story.”⁵⁰

In spite of his good intentions, Bernstein developed only a few examples. He explored the meaning of the zigzag pattern on garments and especially on the diagonals used to separate marginal elements or scenes from one another. He further bestowed a special significance on the strategic placement of these patterns, recognizing them as specific Norman identifiers.⁵¹ He also delved into the meaning of “the lions with wings,” associating them with William’s cause.⁵² He then proceeded to investigate three of the most easily recognizable fables, but not in the order in which they are represented.⁵³

As will be demonstrated below, by ignoring the order in which the fables are illustrated in the Tapestry, and the arrangement of the figures in the short fable narratives, Bernstein arrived at indeterminate findings and remains ambivalent when he explains the fables. He chose to interpret the fables as having a purely satirical meaning, and as reflecting a world where success goes to anti-heroes.⁵⁴ As a result, Bernstein failed to fully acknowledge the didactic role of warning devices that moralized fables customarily played. While Bernstein whets our appetite, and raises our expectations, the overall

contents of the Tapestry borders are only perfunctorily examined.⁵⁵ He does mention, however, that he hopes someone will attempt to identify all the animals, and try to relate to the main narrative, episodes, such as the fables, in which animals seem to be performing a role.⁵⁶

Perhaps in partial response to Bernstein's wishes, Nicolas Hallé inventoried the fauna and flora of the Tapestry, publishing his findings in 1987 in *Inventaire de la flore et de la faune de la tapisserie de Bayeux*.⁵⁷ However, not being an art historian, Hallé was not used to the manner in which early medieval animals are depicted. As a result, his analysis was technical and not always exact, and should be considered only as an aid to perform a closer identification of the animals portrayed in the Tapestry. While Hallé achieved his classification, he failed to address the symbolic, latent meaning of the border representations, or the conjoined influences of the fables, the main narrative and the inscriptions.

In the same year, using the Bayeux Tapestry as an example, W. Brundson Yapp published a lengthy article dedicated to animals in medieval art. Admitting candidly that he had not seen the Tapestry except in various reproductions available in 1987, Yapp proceeded to examine the animals. As Yapp mentioned, "none of the previous writers on the Tapestry has dealt with the animals except incidentally."⁵⁸ However, Yapp's "dealing with the animals" depicted in the borders and main field of the Tapestry was limited to comparing them with earlier representations, discussing amongst other subjects the breeds of dog that existed in the Middle Ages, the characteristics of horses, a specific type of tail peculiar to predators in the Tapestry, which Yapp named the "Bayeux tail," and, more generally, the different species of animals, the provenance of the fables illustrated in the borders, and the merits of various ploughs vis-à-vis the one in the so-called "genre scenes."⁵⁹ While Yapp's ponderous analysis of the Tapestry fauna is intriguing to some degree, he was only concerned with the origins, style, and types of animals represented. Yapp was not interested in discovering if the animal pictographs and the fables had any bearing on the central narrative.

Cautious about accepting Bernstein's premise of meaningful and interactive borders, the foremost specialist on the Bayeux Tapestry, Shirley Ann Brown, stated that the basic problem of meaningful vs. meaningless borders remains to be solved:

The question which must first be addressed is whether or not there is any direct connection, either iconographic or in design, between the text, the figures in the top and bottom margins, and the images in the central band. There is not yet any consensus of opinion on this point.⁶⁰

In the same year, H. E. J. Cowdrey suggested that “marginal comment may sometimes be specifically relevant to the interpretation of the main story.”⁶¹ However, after devoting only a few sentences to the development of this idea, Cowdrey immediately contradicted himself by adding without specificity that, “many of the figures, and some of the fables, in the margins simply provide decoration and animation; it would be perverse to claim that they do more.”⁶² A year later in 1989, J. Bard McNulty attempted to respond fully to Bernstein’s challenge, and solve Shirley Ann Brown’s dilemma. He proposed to recognize “the ways in which all elements – the borders as well as the main panels – have been woven into the meanings of the story as a whole,” and “to read [the Tapestry] as a whole, borders and main panels together.”⁶³ However, McNulty fell short of his stated purpose. His desire to retain a “tenable middle ground,” led him to argue that “the two extreme positions – of totally meaningless borders and of totally meaning-charged borders – must be abandoned.”⁶⁴ While McNulty proposed by far the most comprehensive analysis of the interactions between borders and main narrative, he picked and chose the parts that seemed more interesting to him, with complete disregard for the flow of the narrative, oblivious to the possible effect that random selection of scenes may have on the interpretation of the story. Indeed, Daniel Terkla pinpointed the major problem associated with McNulty’s analysis when he remarked that, while McNulty wrote “the most complete book on the subject of the Tapestry narrative intratextuality, he gives a number of the fables short shrift, glossing over the more problematic ones.”⁶⁵

In “The Borders of the Bayeux Tapestry” (1992), Carola Hicks offered a rebuttal to Bernstein’s and McNulty’s arguments, suggesting that “the borders are decorative and that it is not part of their function to contribute to the message of the central text,”⁶⁶ while adding that fables “relate to each other rather than to the central portion of the Tapestry.”⁶⁷ Additionally, Hicks was of the opinion that the representation of a string of fables under Scenes 4 through 8 was “experimental,” and was abandoned because they were more difficult to embroider than paired animals.⁶⁸ Hicks’ position was not new. She only reiterated Abbé de la Rue’s suggestion that:

...chaque fable est un fait qui demande du détail, tandis qu'il était plus court et expéditif de laisser à la volonté des brodeurs de substituer des monstres et d'autres objets que leur imagination leur suggérait.⁶⁹

Both Abbé de la Rue's and Hicks' arguments ignored an important part of medieval culture, i.e., its symbolism. Hicks failed to acknowledge that, thanks to symbolism, a whole set of ideas and concepts, inexpressible either verbally or in writing, may be conveyed to the reader.⁷⁰

Thus, Hicks' conclusions did not convince Daniel Terkla, who argued that these representations of animal and human figures function similarly to the glosses found in contemporary manuscripts. Additionally, Terkla pointed out that "each group of marginal images demonstrates, via its interaction with the main panel narrative, the permeability of the Tapestry's inscribed borders and the need for an inclusive reading."⁷¹ Yet, the very title of Terkla's article suggests that the author was determined from the start to establish a Norman relationship with each element of the Tapestry he discussed.⁷² This biased departure contaminated his whole argument and led to results that were partial to an interpretation aimed at justifying William's position at any cost, which is not what the Tapestry does nor probably was meant to do.

In 1994, the pendulum swung once more in favor of borders as ornamental only. In the only book widely available at the bookstore of the Bayeux exhibit -- perhaps because the author argues for a Norman origin of the Tapestry -- Wolfgang Grape declared that:

Despite the effort that some commentators have lavished on the subject, none has succeeded in demonstrating any relevance to the pictorial narrative of the Tapestry; and others have confined themselves to factual listings of the fables.⁷³

Grape based his conclusion that the fables and central narrative are not related, on two shaky premises: first, on Francis Wormald's unexplained statement that "in the Bayeux Tapestry these fables serve a purely decorative purpose and cannot be related to the main scenes;" and secondly, on the fact that the fables cannot be meaningful because some of them are repeated below "totally different historical episodes."

Since 1994, the Bayeux Tapestry has been the subject of three other scholarly works: Martin K. Foys' 1998 unpublished dissertation, "A Web of Linen: Image, Text and Hypertext in the Bayeux Tapestry," which is a useful compendium of extant

research; Suzanne Lewis' innovative and insightful short volume, *The Rhetoric of Power in the Bayeux Tapestry* published in late 1999; and, most recently (2002), Lucien Musset's thorough recapitulation of old scholarship. Unfortunately, Foys lets modern and post-modern thinking interfere with his investigation, which biases his understanding of the way the Tapestry was read and may have been understood by contemporary observers.⁷⁴ Modern and post-modern ways of interpreting the past lead Foys to refute McNulty's interpretation of the interaction between elements in the border, and the epic in the center, claiming that "it is doubtful that it was much discovered by contemporary audiences."⁷⁵ Such conclusions, which underestimate the acumen of medieval viewers, are not tenable. While it is doubtful that medieval thinking was monolithic, it is also doubtful that the burgeoning feudalistic tendencies of the Norman ruling class and the powerful hold of the Church would have allowed for the expression of acute variances in thought and beliefs. In her recently published work, Suzanne Lewis is one of the first researchers to acknowledge that the Tapestry may have been used as a propagandistic tool.

Thus, in the case of the Tapestry, which was an object manufactured under the guidance of a patron, most probably Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux, who, like his powerful contemporaries, had an agenda to fulfill, it is reasonable to accept that those who were meant to view the Tapestry, "initially...only a small circle of men and women," were not left to view it without guidance.⁷⁶ On the contrary, in the mostly illiterate society of the eleventh century, it is probable that the Tapestry was first "read" aloud, interpreted, and performed for the audience by persons who were prepared to conduct such a task in a way suitable to the patron. As Richard Brilliant suggests, "perhaps it is at this conjunction of seeing, reading, speaking, and listening that the Bayeux Tapestry would have come most quickly to life, its vivid imagery actualised by performance."⁷⁷

Suzanne Lewis is also one of the first researchers to admit that gestures play a role in the reader's understanding of the Bayeux Tapestry. Lewis argues that "gestures in medieval art are not organically related to the action of the figures; they are used as signposts, guiding the viewer and helping him or her to grasp the significance of the story."⁷⁸ However, as this dissertation demonstrates, there is ample evidence that not only the gestures, but also the posture and the placement of individual figures may have a definite *raison d'être* besides being used as signposts, and that they are part of the

“language without words” examined fastidiously by François Garnier and, most recently, by Jean-Claude Schmitt, who declares, “les gestes dévoilent au dehors les secrets mouvements de l’âme, cachée à l’intérieur de la personne.”⁷⁹ Gestures, postures and placements of the figures form an intrinsic part of the overall *modus operandi* of communication in the late eleventh century.

In addition, Lewis’ inconsistencies, and her ambivalence with regard to the form and content of the narrative at the center of the Bayeux Tapestry, makes it hard to pinpoint her position vis-à-vis the relevance of the border imagery to the main narrative. Admittedly following in Hicks’ footsteps, Lewis denies any relationship between the fables and the central narrative, stating that “the Aesopian tales are dispersed randomly along the length of the Tapestry, mainly but not entirely in the lower border;” only to alter her position, when she mentions in the next line, that “their random distribution and repetition suggest an intentional alignment with episodes or characters in the central narrative.”⁸⁰ Lewis regards the fables as “subversive in favor of the Norman cause,” and as “a strategy of propaganda leading to the conversion of shifting loyalties in the years of transition following 1066,” again leaning toward a Norman bias.⁸¹ Like Terkla, Lewis aims to demonstrate that, for the “biased but unsuspecting viewer,” the fables are “transgressive subtexts [that] function as a deceptive but effective strategy to win English audiences over to Norman rule.”⁸² Lewis’ avowed purpose taints her results by trying to demonstrate that the Bayeux Tapestry confronts the contemporary post-Conquest viewer with a “test of ability and loyalty.”⁸³ However, Lewis brings up a vital point when she states her desire to “explore how the monumental visual narrative draws the viewer into a carefully constructed web of indeterminacy in which the past can be re-created and transformed.”⁸⁴ Indeed, at the most critical moments in the central narrative of the Tapestry, such as the first scene representing king Edward and Harold, the scene of the first formal encounter between William and Harold, or the scene where the comet appears in the sky over the newly crowned Harold, intruding elements with equivocal meanings are inserted in an effort, perhaps, to shield the patron for his audacity by giving the audience what appears to be an alternate explication.

As discussed above, modern researchers are still divided. Again, pending some momentous discovery of new evidence favoring one side over the other, they will remain divided on two main issues. The first issue is related to the function of the borders. Are

the Tapestry borders purely decorative? Or, on the contrary, do they add to, detract from, modify, or enhance the meaning of the central narrative? It seems almost inconceivable for a twenty-first century art historian to intentionally ignore symbolism and discard the symbolic mode of thinking, which makes up an important part of the medieval heritage. It also seems difficult to deny that the borders act as a gloss of the main narrative, and that the cogent visual exegesis that they offer helps redefine the action represented in the central narration, as one person has recently done.⁸⁵

The second issue is the bias of most scholars in approaching their research on the Tapestry. Researchers continue to debate the question of whether or not the Tapestry is pro-Norman or pro-Anglo-Saxon, with a recent tendency to uncover latent pro-Norman cues strewn throughout the Tapestry.⁸⁶ As Richard Gameson so aptly pointed out, “is this the right way to approach the question? Is it meaningful to try to decide whether the work is English or Norman?” In answer, Gameson suggested that such an endeavor was meaningless, and it still is.⁸⁷

III. CONCLUSION

After considering the existing scholarship on the Tapestry borders, one can outline what needs to be accomplished in order to arrive at a valid resolution of the problems raised by the Tapestry, its borders, and their combined interpretations. Ideally, in order to succeed in providing a holistic reading of the Tapestry, one has to establish that its borders are intimately linked to the story in the central narrative, and that the various representations in the borders are significant elements added to enhance, explicate, and/or modify the main narrative and the inscriptions. One also needs to keep in mind that the borders were probably conceived to guide the viewers toward achieving a more complete reading of the story, and, most importantly, to keep them interested by giving just enough clues to allow them to anticipate, on a continuous basis, the events unfolding in the main field. In other words, it is necessary to uncover and acknowledge the synergic process that is occurring in the Tapestry, as Bernstein, McNulty and Terkla already suggested but did not fully achieve. It is also important to consider that while the Tapestry may open a window on the events that occurred in the two years prior to the Battle of Hastings, and on the battle itself, the story that it provides is not history since it is de facto biased by the patron's subjectivity and his political motivation.

After a careful review of the existing scholarship and a detailed examination of the Tapestry *in situ*, to deny that all the pictorial representations in the Tapestry, including those in the borders, are meaningful to some degree, is a position that is no longer tenable. Yet, it may be impossible to recover all the meanings. Additionally, while it is doubtful that one can recover “the specific mental and visual ‘baggage’ of an eleventh-century beholder,” it is possible to glean enough of the medieval mentality through analysis of contemporary documents, works of art, and medieval symbolism, to attain a comparable level of understanding.⁸⁸ It is also important that one should try to “read” the Tapestry as a medieval person would have done, rather than pick and choose parts of the Tapestry borders that seem the most interesting and the most pregnant with meaning, or that fit a preconceived idea about what the Tapestry ought to mean, as some authors have done.⁸⁹ In examining the Tapestry and its borders, it is also imperative to consider that Norman nobles, their allies and their vassals, had some knowledge of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings, either from first hand experience, or vicariously, through the tales of the participants. It is also essential to keep in mind that they were probably the ones originally destined to see the Tapestry, since, as its large size indicates, it was made for public viewing, albeit perhaps a select public viewing, rather than for use in a private chamber.

In addition, as already stated, it is important to remember that, although it cannot be proven beyond the shadow of a doubt, Odo is widely accepted as the patron of the Bayeux Tapestry. As patron, an enterprising man like Odo would have ensured that the Tapestry presented his side of the story, highlighting his participation and more than likely, exaggerating his accomplishments. As well, it is probable that Odo was motivated by a propagandistic agenda, which may have aimed to prove that he was worthy of the ultimate prize for an eleventh-century churchman, i.e., the papacy. In addition, Odo probably aimed to demonstrate that his leadership qualities made him worthy to play a larger role in the government of England, especially after he had tasted power when he ruled England for William during his (William’s) absences.⁹⁰ While the patron makes ample use of satire, little or none is aimed at Odo. A thorough examination of the Tapestry and its borders demonstrates that, as a rule, Odo’s portrayal is not associated with elements that may have been construed as pejorative or in any way sarcastic or even comical. However, as a man who was described as “a feudal baron with benefit of

clergy,” and in his younger years as being at once “ruthless, ambitious and licentious,” Odo may not have been adverse to, and may even have encouraged the use of farcical or even caustic imagery in the portrayal of others, such as Harold and even William, in order to tarnish their characters with deprecatory innuendos.⁹¹ In this manner, Odo may have aggrandized his own accomplishments to the detriment of others, such as Harold, and especially William. Indeed, the Tapestry was probably in production when Odo became disenchanted with William’s attempts to lay his hands on the Church’s wealth first in Normandy, then in England (c. 1070). Odo may have been disappointed further when William chose Bishop Lanfranc, and not Odo, as one of his closest advisers. When the Tapestry was being made, Odo’s frustrations had probably festered and grown to the point that only military action could settle the matter. Indeed, Odo expressed his growing frustration by participating, and even fomenting revolts, the first one being against William, prior to 1082.⁹² Because of its effect on collective memory, an endeavor such as the production of the Bayeux Tapestry, which implies suppression and re-creation of actions or events through the selection of droll or even trenchant episodes, and the addition of equivocal elements, may be construed as an effort to reshape the past to the advantage of the patron (perhaps Odo) or of someone whom he supported, and to the detriment of those who stood in his way.⁹³

As a final point, the observers should be cautioned about colors and their specific meanings. In the case of the Tapestry, it is difficult to analyze the symbolism of colors, because of the apparently random way colors were used and because the Tapestry has been washed and cleaned, fading some of the colors, or perhaps even completely changing them. A close examination *in situ* shows clearly that the embroidery itself has been mended and even completely reworked in places. The new wool threads used in the repairs were undoubtedly chemically dyed, since these types of dyes were first invented and came into favor in the nineteenth century when the most extensive restoration took place, while vegetable dyes were used originally in the Middle Ages.⁹⁴ However, it may be possible to bring to the attention of the observer the implication of the choice of certain colors in specific areas of the Tapestry. For example, it is probable that symbolism is at play when a dark blue (probably originally black) color was used, or when only the outlines of objects or plants were embroidered.

The above recapitulation of the extant research on the Bayeux Tapestry exposes the need for a complete and, in so far as possible, unbiased, reading of the Tapestry including the main field, the inscriptions and the borders. As I proceed, it is my intention to read and analyze the Tapestry as an artifact which, as Suzanne Lewis points out, may be characterized as a chronicle, an epic, and a panegyric, or, perhaps more *à propos*, as J. Bard McNulty styles it, “a quest narrative in captioned pictures.”⁹⁵ I aim to illustrate that the poster-like images embroidered on the Tapestry and its borders not only reflect contemporary medieval culture, but, in the tense and perhaps hostile aftermath of the Conquest, may have served as propagandistic tools to shape the opinions of select individuals who viewed the images.⁹⁶ In this instance, the term “culture” is intended to mean the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a particular community or large group of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests. I also intend to establish that the imagery in the borders framing the central narration, co-act with the central depictions of events and the Latin inscriptions, infusing ancillary messages, appending, altering, intensifying and/or diminishing the acknowledged and accepted signification of the center field, without perverting it completely. Always remembering that nothing is meaningless in medieval images, when examining the Bayeux Tapestry and the interaction between the central narrative, the borders and the inscriptions, I will be using a multifaceted approach relying on the relationships between the object produced, i.e., the Tapestry, the culture that produced it, and the *participants* that read it or for whom it was performed. In order to organize my findings, I will rely on the common and accepted set of beliefs and rules that regulate the behavior of individuals, which Baxandall terms the “general condition of rational human action.”⁹⁷

¹ Brendan Cassidy, “Introduction: Iconography, Texts and Audiences,” *Iconography at the Crossroads*, B. Cassidy, ed. (1993): 10.

² Bertrand, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 38.

³ Grape (1994): 68.

⁴ For the quote, see François Garnier, *Le langage de l'image au moyen âge – Grammaire des gestes*, 2 (1989): 206; for the fleur-de-lis, see Garnier, 2(1989): 205-222.

⁵ For Odo, see David Bates, “The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50-1097),” *Speculum*, 1(1975): 12-17. For a few examples of similar *fleurons* and fleurs-de-lis in contemporary and near contemporary imagery, see the early twelfth-century missal used at Saint-Ouen of Rouen (Bourges, Médiathèque, MS 30, fol. 113); the tenth-century Sacramentary of Tours (Tours, Médiathèque, MS 184, fol. 2 and fol. 3); see also the twelfth-century sculpture of the Sacrifice of Abraham on a capital from Parthenay (Musée du Louvre, Paris); this list is not exhaustive.

⁶ Bernstein (1986): 88; S.A. Brown (1988): 40; Hicks (1992): 114.

- ⁷ W. Brundson Yapp, "Animals in medieval art: the Bayeux Tapestry as an example," *Journal of Medieval History*, 13/1 (March 1987): 15-75.
- ⁸ For classification of the animals, see Hallé (1987): 71, 75, 77.
- ⁹ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XII, I, 1-3, J. André, trans. (1986): 22, 26, 36-38 and 234, n. 463; also in PL 82: 423-461; Rabannus Maurus, *De universo* (also known as *De naturis rerum*) VII, 8, in PL 111: 9-614, see esp. 199-200.
- ¹⁰ For fables and their origins, see Aesop (sixth cent. BC), *Fabulae*, E. Chambry, trans. (1927): passim; Hygin (First cent. BC), *Fabulae*, H.-J. Rose, ed. (1963): passim; Phaedrus (1-69AD), *Phaedri fabulae aesiopae*, A. Brenot trans. (1969): passim; for these writers and minor ones, such as Babrios, 2nd to 3rd cent. AD, and Romulus, 5th cent., see also, L. Hervieux, *Les fabulistes latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste, jusqu'à la fin du Moyen Âge*, 5 vols (1884): passim; Avianus (end of fourth – beg. of fifth cent. AD), *Fables*, F. Gaide, trans. (1980): passim. For the fables in the BT and their origins, see J. Abraham and A. Létienne, "Les bordures de la tapisserie-broderie de Bayeux," *Normannia*, 2 (1929): 483-518; Hélène Chefneux, "Les Fables dans la tapisserie de Bayeux," *Romania*, 60 (1934): 1-35 and 153-194.
- ¹¹ Lewis (1999): 7-9.
- ¹² S. A. Brown (1988): 4; Fowke (1913): 3.
- ¹³ Lancelot, 6 (1729): 739-755, esp. 755; Lancelot, 8 (1732): 602-668, esp. 617, 620.
- ¹⁴ Lancelot, 6 (1729): 755.
- ¹⁵ S. A. Brown (1988): 6.
- ¹⁶ Montfaucon, 1 (1729): 373.
- ¹⁷ For the first part of the quote, see Andrew Ducarel, *Anglo-Norman Antiquities Considered in a Tour Through part of Normandy* (1767): Appendix 4; for the second part, see Smart Lethieullier, "A description of the Tapestry Remaining at Bayeux," article in Ducarel, *Anglo-Norman Antiquities* (1767): Appendix 1, 25.
- ¹⁸ Thomas Amyot, "Défense de l'antiquité de la tapisserie de Bayeux," in Achille Jubinal, *Les Anciennes Tapisseries Historiées*, 1 (1838): 14 -15, esp. 15.
- ¹⁹ Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *A Bibliographical, Antiquarian, and Picturesque tour in France and Germany*, 1(1829): 248.
- ²⁰ Abbé Gervais de la Rue, "Réponse aux mémoires publiés à Londres sur la Tapisserie de Bayeux," in Achille Jubinal, *Les anciennes tapisseries historiées*, 1 (1838): 20.
- ²¹ Bruce (1856): 120.
- ²² Fowke's original publication (1875) was very limited and is difficult to obtain. Thus, I am using Fowke's widely available reprint of the 1913 edition; Fowke (1913): 57.
- ²³ Fowke (1913): 60.
- ²⁴ *Ibidem*, 117.
- ²⁵ P.C.F. Daunou, "Recherches sur la Tapisserie représentant la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands, et appartenant à l'église cathédrale de Bayeux, par M. L'abbé de la Rue," *Journal des Savants* (Nov. 1826): 690-699, esp. 695; Bruce (1856): 19; Edward J. Lowell, "The Bayeux Tapestry," *Scribners*, 1. (1887): 334; Joseph Jacobs, *Fables of Aesop*, 1 (1889): 181.
- ²⁶ Albert Marignan, *La tapisserie de Bayeux. Etude archéologique et critique* (1902): 20.
- ²⁷ Freeman, 3 (1869): 708-71, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 7-18, esp. 13.
- ²⁸ Helen Churchill Candee, *The Tapestry Book* (1912): 241-248.
- ²⁹ Cecil Smith, *Guide to Bayeux Tapestry* (1914): 17.
- ³⁰ Wilhelm Tavernier, "The Author of the Bayeux Embroidery," *Archaeological Journal*, LXXI (1914): 171-186, esp. 184.
- ³¹ Abraham and Létienne (1929): 501.
- ³² No mention of Abraham and Létienne's article found in Chefneux (1934): 1-194; or in Herrmann (1939): 376-382; for mention of this article, see Bernstein (1986): 215, n. 2.
- ³³ Chefneux (1934): 1-22, esp. 22-23.
- ³⁴ *Ibidem*, 1-35 and 153-194; for the quote, see Chefneux (1934): 3.
- ³⁵ For the basic sources for the fables available when the BT was made, see Chefneux (1934): 1-35; Adolph Goldschmidt, *An Early Manuscripts of the Aesop Fables of Avianus and Related Manuscripts* (1947): passim; Dodwell, *The Canterbury School of Illumination* (1954): 71; Bernstein (1986): 216 n. 16.

- ³⁶ While *Influences antiques dans l'art du Moyen Âge français* was first published in 1939, I am using the widely available 1996 reprint; for the quote, see Jean Adhémar (1996): 230; see also Bernstein, (1986): 216, n. 21.
- ³⁷ Léon Herrmann, "Apologues et anecdotes dans la tapisserie de Bayeux," *Romania* 65 (1939): 376-382.
- ³⁸ Léon Herrmann, *Les fables antiques de la broderie de Bayeux* (1964): passim.
- ³⁹ Herrmann (1939): 376.
- ⁴⁰ Goldschmidt (1947): 48, also quoted in Bernstein (1986): 216, n. 19.
- ⁴¹ Francis Wormald, "Style and Design," in *The Bayeux Tapestry, A Comprehensive Survey*, F. Stenton, ed. (1957): 25-36, esp. 27-28.
- ⁴² For the quote, see Dodwell (1966): 559.
- ⁴³ For the quote, see Dodwell (1966): 559; see also Dodwell (1966): 232.
- ⁴⁴ For the quote, see Dodwell (1966): 559.
- ⁴⁵ Bernstein (1986): 82-88.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 86.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 125-26.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 126-127.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 128-135.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 85.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 124, 128.
- ⁵⁷ Hallé (1987): passim.
- ⁵⁸ Yapp (1987): 15-75, esp. 24.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 24-75.
- ⁶⁰ S. A. Brown (1988):39.
- ⁶¹ Cowdrey (1988): 49-65; Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 93-110, esp. 97-98.
- ⁶² Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 100.
- ⁶³ McNulty (1989): 23.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 23.
- ⁶⁵ Daniel Terkla, "Cut on the Norman bias: fabulous borders and visual glosses on the Bayeux Tapestry," *Word and Image* 11/3 (July/Sept. 1995): 265.
- ⁶⁶ Hicks (1992): 265.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 255.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 255-56.
- ⁶⁹ Abbé Gervais de la Rue, "Mémoire sur la tapisserie célèbre de Bayeux," in A. Jubinal, *Les anciennes tapisseries historiées*, 1 (1838): 9-12, 11 for the quote.
- ⁷⁰ Mary Madeleine Davy, *Initiation à la symbolique romane* (1977): 34.
- ⁷¹ For the quotes, see Terkla (1995): 264.
- ⁷² Terkla (1995): 268 and 289, n. 31.
- ⁷³ Grape (1994): 42.
- ⁷⁴ Foys (1998): 76-79.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, 77.
- ⁷⁶ For the quote, see Lewis (1999): 6.
- ⁷⁷ Brilliant, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 111-137, esp. 132.
- ⁷⁸ Lewis (1999): 53, and 143 n. 89.

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- ⁷⁹ Garnier, I (1982): passim; Garnier, II (1989): passim; Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'occident médiéval* (1990): passim; for the quote, see Schmitt (1990): 18.
- ⁸⁰ Lewis (1999): 60 and 144 n. 107, uses Hicks (1992): 252-53 as her source.
- ⁸¹ For the quotes, see Lewis (1999): 73.
- ⁸² Lewis (1999): 72-73; Wissolik argued along similar lines in "The Saxon Statement: Code in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Annuaire Medievale*, 19 (1979): 69-97.
- ⁸³ Lewis (1999): 72-73.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 2.
- ⁸⁵ Hicks (1992): 265.
- ⁸⁶ Grape (1994): passim and esp. publisher's preface.
- ⁸⁷ Gameson (1997): 163.
- ⁸⁸ For the quote, see Gameson (1997): 158.
- ⁸⁹ Bernstein (1986): passim; McNulty (1989): passim; Terkla (1995): passim.
- ⁹⁰ Dodwell (1966): 228.
- ⁹¹ For the quotes, see Dodwell (1966): 228; for Odo's personality, character and mentality, see Bates, (1975): 1-20; Gameson (1997): 177, ns. 102-106; 178, and ns. 107-109.
- ⁹² Bates (1975): 16-18; Darlington, R. R. and P. McGurk, eds. *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 3 (1998): 11, sub anno 1070; *ibidem*, 49-53, sub anno 1088.
- ⁹³ For the reshaping of history in the eleventh century, see Geary (1994): esp. 7-9.
- ⁹⁴ Bertrand, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 35-37.
- ⁹⁵ McNulty (1989): vii.
- ⁹⁶ Lewis (1999): 16-29.
- ⁹⁷ Baxandall (1985): 41.

CHAPTER II

HAROLD MEETS WITH KING EDWARD

AND SAILS TO NORMANDY

SCENES 1 THROUGH 7

Things written or drawn in the margins add an extra dimension, a supplement, that is able to gloss, parody, modernize and problematize the text's authority while never totally undermining it.¹

Michael Camille

Image on the Edge – The Margins of Medieval Art

Chaque élément, chaque forme ayant valeur de signe, le choix des personnages figurés, l'organisation du décor, les artifices de la technique peuvent être considérés comme des manières de dire quelque chose.²

François Garnier

Le langage de l'image au moyen âge; Signification et symbolique

When perusing the images embroidered on the long cloth known as the Bayeux Tapestry in the carefully lit penumbra of the special room in which it is displayed at Bayeux, one cannot help but be mindful of Michael Camille's remarks aimed at the margins of medieval manuscripts. Indeed, the purpose of this dissertation is to acquaint the observer/researcher with a different approach to the reading of the Bayeux Tapestry, based on the premise that the borders play a significant role in its overall interpretation. Careful analysis will bring to the attention of the reader that the pictographs in the borders are charged with meaning; that the meaning they contain seems to inflect, reflect and be modulated by the central images; that not only a symbiotic but also an osmotic relationship occurs between pictographs in the periphery and images in the center; and that this synergic interplay may help in the discovery, and stimulate the generation of a novel understanding and interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry. J. Bard McNulty already hinted at the process, without acknowledging it fully, when he referred to "linkage" that "makes explicit the connection between scenes,"³ and to "symbols, and conventional devices" to improve the reader's grasp.⁴ In addition, as François Garnier demonstrates painstakingly in his seminal work on the language of medieval images, while it may be difficult, and at times even impossible to recover all meanings, medieval art is replete

with symbolism, be it in the choice of figures, their placement vis-à-vis each other and the audience, their facial expressions, movements of the limbs and of the body, and in the relation of the figures to the surrounding objects found in the décor.⁵ Jean-Claude Schmitt's inquiries into the origins of gestures, their *raison d'être*, and their meaning, which demonstrates the continuity of their importance to the comprehension of images, is useful to this research.⁶

The assemblage of gesticulating figures in the 58 scenes that make up the long narrative of the Bayeux Tapestry forms a cartoonish text, an epic story captured in images with only the few words of the inscriptions as an anchor. Its margins/borders can be compared to those of a manuscript. It seems that each element in the borders has a specific function and serves to give the observer a better grasp of the subject matter that is conveyed by performative and non-performative readings. The borders act as a gloss not only to the central narrative, but also to the inscriptions. As will be pointed out in this chapter, the opening scene and its borders appear to be helpful in determining the identity of the major participants, and deciphering the main theme of the epic. In Scenes 2 through 7, the borders interact again with the inscriptions and the main narrative, continuing the preamble as well as uncovering the underlying and repeated innuendoes affecting the outcome of the epic. Additionally, the borders may play a determinant role in helping the reader to discover the motivations behind the actions of the protagonists through the compound analysis of their psychological traits latent in the symbolism of the animal imagery. It is also important to remind the observer of two significant parameters. Since the Tapestry may be considered an illustrated text, it was meant to be performed publicly and/or read aloud for and by the literate or semi-literate audience (who could also read it silently at leisure), for the illiterate among them, like William.⁷ Secondly, since the Tapestry may also be considered a *chanson de geste* or epic, in which events build on one another in a contiguous and serial manner, it was and remains important to read it from the beginning and in a chronological order -- especially if one is not familiar with its contents -- and not to single out individual episodes.⁸ It would have been extremely difficult and even counter-productive for any reader, except perhaps for those who knew the Tapestry intimately, to select scenes to be read out of context.⁹ Finally, the reader/observer needs to keep in mind that in order to facilitate the analysis, when a scene

is discussed, it is identified by the appropriate number, 1 through 58, according to the numbering system mentioned above.

1. SCENE 1: EDWARD REX

Scene 1 represents the meeting between King Edward and Harold, which probably occurred during the spring of 1064.¹⁰ Edward was faced with a grave dilemma concerning the English succession since he still had no direct heir, and hopes that he would sire an heir had vanished long ago. At the time of the meeting, according to the Tapestry, two potential candidates were left to vie for the crown.¹¹ The first was William, the powerful duke of Normandy to whom Edward had purportedly promised the English throne, perhaps too hastily, in time of dire need.¹² The second one was the “immensely wealthy” Harold Godwin who, as the head of the Great Council of English Earls, known as the Witan, had reached the apogee of his power, being referred to as *sub-regulus* (“deputy king”).¹³ In that capacity, Harold wielded perhaps more power than the king because he played a pivotal role in the royal succession. The perspicacious Edward probably knew that neither William nor Harold would abandon willingly his respective, ambitious scheme to become the next king of England.¹⁴ It is most likely that those who viewed the Tapestry shortly after its completion were also aware of the particular historical circumstances surrounding the end of the reign of Edward the Confessor.

While the main field deserves close attention, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to elaborate on every aspect of the images therein, if one hopes to examine the borders in their entirety. However, some details of the main field need to be pointed out in order to understand the significance of the borders. In Scene 1, Edward, seated in majesty on a throne adorned with one visible lion’s head, is clearly represented as an aging king, which confirms that this particular meeting occurred towards the end of his reign, probably in the spring of 1064.¹⁵ Edward’s posture, with his right shoulder lowered and his head turned and inclined slightly to his right, demonstrates that he is engaged in a friendly exchange with the man standing next to him, identified in the literature on the Bayeux Tapestry as the Anglo-Saxon Earl, Harold Godwin.¹⁶ The king’s gesture, the index finger of his right hand extended and resting on Harold’s own, may be intended not only to express an exchange of trust, but also to establish a clear hierarchy of power. As Harold’s liege, Edward is originating the exchange and

demonstrating his trust in Harold. Likewise, Harold's open hand displays his willingness to accept the king's mandate.¹⁷

Contemporary and near contemporary texts also maintain that during the meeting illustrated in Scene 1, Edward entrusted Harold with a mission, the nature of which was, and still is the subject of speculation.¹⁸ In their respective writings, Guillaume de Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury report that Harold went to Normandy for the sole purpose of reiterating Edward's promise to William.¹⁹ Indeed, as Frank McLynn proposes:

It is not impossible that Edward encouraged Harold to visit Normandy in 1064 out of a mood of sheer malevolence, avenging the 'slights' he had suffered in Normandy by amusedly observing William's raised hopes and eventual discomfiture.²⁰

Conversely, the English monk and chronicler, Eadmer argues that Harold had another objective, and went to Normandy to secure the release of his brother and nephew, held at William's court as surety for the Godwins' good faith after Edward had allowed them to return to England following their rebellion and exile of 1051.²¹

As the marginal imagery will be shown to intimate, and history demonstrated, Harold's consent to surrender the English crown was not forthcoming in the end. Whatever the mission, Harold's position, standing on the right side of the king (his good side), reiterates that he and his followers have the king's complete confidence.²² This exchange of trust between a king and one of his subjects in the first scene of this epic seems to imply the pivotal role that pledges and oaths play. One may then puzzle over this particular pledge and its possible link to the later oath, perhaps forced upon Harold by William.²³ One may also wonder if the first pledge between a king and his subject, illustrated plainly in the opening scene of the Tapestry, supersedes the one between a duke (William) and an earl (Harold) who does not owe fealty to him (William) and who has already pledged himself to another (King Edward).²⁴

1.1. SCENE 1: The Main Theme and the Lions in the Lower Border

Interrupting the vertical border, the lion on the left is still in the process of entering the lower border of Scene 1.²⁵ Jaws open in a mute roar, bodies noticeably stiff, paws planted firmly on an imaginary ground line, tails raised, the two confronted lions are not unlike two predators engaged in a battle over territory. Picking and choosing

once more what is significant in the border, Bernstein admits to “no discernible reason for its [the lion’s] inclusion at many points in the narrative.”²⁶ On the contrary, McNulty is of the opinion that the “lions, traditionally associated with royalty, are appropriate to the royal struggle at the heart of the Tapestry’s story.”²⁷ Indeed, these two lions are not only appropriate to the story, but, for the medieval mind steeped in symbolism, they appear to be already enacting vividly the successional struggle occurring behind the scenes. It is possible that in the context of the Tapestry, a late eleventh-century audience would have associated these snarling lions with the two pretenders to the English throne, namely William and Harold. The placement of these lions, symbols of royalty, engaged in a conflict at the very beginning of the Tapestry, may have been intended to focus the attention of the audience, and to act in a manner similar to the preamble of a *chanson de geste*, anticipating the essential element of the story, namely the covert struggle between William and Harold, which was gaining momentum.

1.2. SCENE 1: Preening Birds in the Lower Border

In the main field, Harold’s position in profile, and his small size may have been an attempt to intimate his lower status.²⁸ Conversely, in the lower border, the royal birds of prey below Edward and Harold may have been intended to offer a differing view of Harold’s standing vis-à-vis Edward. In spite of their fanciful coloring, the two birds preening themselves are probably eagles, as their beaks, shape of the head and size indicate. The one on the left is positioned midway between Harold’s and Edward’s feet, bridging the gap between the two figures, and the other is located directly below Edward. In general, preening birds symbolize contentment and self-congratulation. In this case, the preening birds may suggest that the meeting between Edward and Harold satisfied both parties. The equal size of the two birds also tends to imply a factual, if unofficial, equality between Edward and Harold. Additionally, by symbolically eliminating the gap between Edward and Harold, the bird on the left may act as a sign that a link now exists between these two figures. This particular point is significant because it may be interpreted as symbolizing the mending of the rift that existed between King Edward and Harold’s family since the rebellion of 1051. In the case of Scene 1, the representation of the lions and eagles in the lower border seems not only to add meaning to the central narrative, but also to alter to some degree the observer’s comprehension of the scene in the main field.

1.3. SCENE 1: *Diversitas* in the Upper Border and the Norman Cause

As a prelude to my analysis of the upper border, it is necessary to explain the meaning of stripes. In medieval society, stripes were a mark of *diversitas* or *varietas*, and were linked to disorder, and thereby to evil.²⁹ In his seminal research on stripes, Michel Pastoureau discovered that in medieval culture, “ce qui est *varius* exprime toujours quelque chose d’impur, d’agressif, d’immoral ou de trompeur.”³⁰ During the Middle Ages stripes were the source of many decrees and sumptuary laws promulgated throughout Western Europe. While these laws were not always followed, the renewed attempts of medieval lawmakers to enforce them, tends to show that they were familiar to a medieval audience. Amongst others, a code of customary laws used in the early Middle Ages, and later compiled as the German *Sachsenspiegel*, imposed the wearing of stripes on undesirable members of society, such as condemned criminals, prostitutes and illegitimate children, commonly known as bastards.³¹ Similar laws were promulgated and applied in Normandy, sometimes with tragic results, throughout the Middle Ages.³²

The only avowed bastard in the story is William, Duke of Normandy. However, in the case of Scene 1, it is not a person who is wearing stripes. As Michel Pastoureau noted, it need not be since “toute surface rayée joue un rôle de filtre, de barrière, d’obstacle, même lorsqu’il s’agit d’une simple marque apposée sur un poteau.”³³ Indeed, it is on two posts that stripes are embroidered in the upper border, and in this case, the stripes may be doubly significant. Because he was born an illegitimate child, the stripes may serve as an identifier for William; and because he ruled Normandy, the striped posts may indicate Norman markings.

1.4. SCENE 1: Animal Imagery and Inanimate Objects in the Upper Border

In the upper border of Scene 1, two lions, symbols of royalty, are strategically placed over the corner towers flanking the vaulted-ceiling room, in which Edward is sitting.³⁴ These two lions may be viewed simply as reminders of Edward’s role as king. In spite of the damage to the lion on the left, its position directly above the word *EDWARD* confirms this function. However, the appearance and behavior of these two beasts are quite different from those in the lower border. Made to look older, they seem to mimic the appearance of the older Edward. The behavior of the lions -- their tongues sticking out and their tails between their legs -- adds another dimension to the imagery.

On a natural level, an old and tired animal is more likely to let its tongue loll out of its mouth when panting because of heat or when exerting itself. However, if such were the case, like the tongue of any predator, the lion's tongue would hang down, not stick straight out as it is represented in the Tapestry. On a symbolic level, sticking one's tongue out has another meaning in medieval imagery. As François Garnier observed, extending one's tongue is often a sign of disorder, mockery, and irreverence towards something or someone highly valued, or even sacred.³⁵ Associated with Edward, caged under the guise of an old lion within a narrow space delineated on one side by a post marked with signs of *diversitas*, suggesting the presence of William the Bastard, a tongue sticking out of an old lion's mouth in the direction of said post may have served to suggest Edward's mockery of his idle promise of the crown to William. Additionally, observation of predatory animals reveals then and now that an older predator tends to react in a more cowardly fashion, often holding its tail between its legs when responding to something or someone it perceives as potentially threatening to its status or well-being.

It seems that the lions in the upper border, especially the undamaged lion on the right, and the area surrounding it, may offer clues regarding Edward's actions in the central narrative. With his hind legs kicking backwards, the lion on the right is attempting to push back the post confining him within a narrow space. Unable to free himself, he is obliged to rest his left paw on the boldly striped post, one of a pair forming a sort of canopy in the form of an inverted V trapping the word *REX* directly below. Thus, perhaps the king was portrayed as being restrained twice: under the guise of the old lion whose movements are hampered by the striped posts; and in the form of the word *REX*, trapped between the legs of the inverted V-shaped, striped posts.

Additionally, this lion is placed directly above the word *UBI*. The obvious use of the word *UBI* is to introduce the inscription of Scene 2. However, its placement immediately below the lion on the right, which is part of Scene 1, may hold another latent, symbolic meaning. Perhaps the word *UBI* was meant to attract the attention of the observer to the place *WHERE* the tired, apparently subdued lion, perhaps symbolizing the older Edward, appears to be trapped between two diagonal posts. In this instance, these posts may serve as Norman restricting devices, metaphorically allowing little space for the old king to turn around and possibly change his mind about the royal succession.

Similarly, the striped posts tightly encasing the word *REX* may illustrate the Norman point of view. Perhaps, William and his followers believed that at the time of the meeting portrayed in Scene 1, they had already captured the kingdom. However, one of the old lion's gestures throws an element of doubt. As noted above, the old lion (possibly king Edward) is sticking his tongue out in the direction of the striped post facing him, indicating that he may be tired, old and apparently restrained, yet, he mocks William who is holding him hostage to a promise made long ago, perhaps because he still has a trump card to play, namely Harold, whom he is in the process of entrusting with an important mission. In support of this hypothesis, the central figure of King Edward is depicted pointing at this area of the upper border, with his scepter, as though he were attempting to direct Harold's gaze and that of the audience towards it, thus perhaps giving the observer a clue about the topic of discussion between Edward and Harold.

1.5. SCENE 1: The Use of Stripes and The Patron's Influence

Before this part of the analysis can proceed, it is necessary to reiterate that it is the position of the majority of researchers, and my position, that Odo is the person who commissioned the Tapestry. Therefore, at this point of the analysis, a question comes to mind: Could Odo have indicated plainly and with impunity that William was the bastard whose desire to be king of England had put Edward in such a bind, and had contributed to Harold's death? The answer is a resounding NO. No matter how influential Odo was, William held the reins of power. However, one cannot help but discern a shadowy presence, probably Odo's, which seems to act as the guiding light for the design of the Tapestry. Indeed, Odo may have instructed the designer to insert a certain amount of ambiguity, in the form of (an)other plausible interpretation(s) behind which he could retreat and hide in the event that William was perspicacious enough to see through this adroit charade. A cursory reading of Scene 1, omitting the signs of trust between Edward and Harold and a synergic interpretation of the pictographs in the lower border, may point to the stripes as indicative of Harold and his actions, because, as was commonly assumed in Norman circles, Harold turned out to be a traitor, a class of person evil enough to be associated with the stigma accorded to stripes.³⁶

However, when considering the ensemble of Scene 1, it is doubtful that the stripes could be used as identifiers for Harold, especially at the onset of the story when he

has yet to exhibit signs of treachery. In fact, Andrew Bridgeford makes an accurate assessment when he states that “Harold appears God-fearing and heroic in the first part of the Tapestry.”³⁷ Conversely, because of his illegitimacy, the stripes could easily serve as an identifier for William, and, by extension, for the Normans. David Bernstein has already noted that the zigzag pattern one finds in the borders as well as in the central narrative is linked to the Norman cause.³⁸ Like zigzags and checkers, stripes that show elements of *diversitas* are pejorative because they set apart the person who is wearing them, or the environment in which they are represented.³⁹ In the case of the Tapestry, one may add David Bernstein’s shrewd observation that the “zigzag pattern is most ingeniously included as a framing device beside episodes involving Harold’s relationship with William even when no Norman is physically present.”⁴⁰ However, Bernstein’s conclusion that “the images here are able to communicate two ideas – legitimate king and perjured vassal,” is tainted because of Bernstein’s prejudice in favor of the Norman cause. Likewise, by picking and choosing in a disorderly fashion, Bernstein fails to recapture the whole meaning of the scenes that he cites as examples.⁴¹ Again, one cannot emphasize enough the importance of placement and order of presentation to achieve an accurate analysis of the Tapestry.

Stripes (checkers, zigzag, or diamond patterns) as depreciatory symbolic devices, and striped posts as constraining borders appear to play a role in the upper border of Scene 1, and in other parts of the Tapestry, which will be examined below. Why, then, would the patron use elements disparaging to William, and therefore potentially jeopardous to himself? From examining the little reliable information that is known about Odo, one may arrive at the conclusion that because he was legitimate, and better educated than William, Odo may have held a latent, yet deeply entrenched, superiority complex with regard to his powerful half-brother. In addition, being prone to the same failings as any human being, the ambitious Odo may have been jealous and envious of William, especially after the Conquest, when the Tapestry was made, and Odo had tasted power more fully, ruling England for the King when William was in Normandy.⁴² Most of what is known about Odo comes from Orderic Vitalis’ *Historia Ecclesiastica*. However exaggerated Orderic’s portrait of Odo may be, studies of the few elements available about Odo’s life and character reveal what David Bates calls his “extraordinary personality,” and his “ambitious and independent nature.”⁴³ From the reliable

information that is available today, one may deduce that Odo's primary allegiance was to himself. Until his sudden fall into disgrace in 1082, Odo, "swollen with pride," may have been the victim of a syndrome common to powerful people who believe they are above the law.⁴⁴ Additionally, as McNulty records, "there is plenty of evidence to show that Odo and William did not always see eye-to-eye."⁴⁵ One may wonder if Odo did not instruct the designer to utilize disparaging elements in order to discredit William and to enhance his own standing at approximately the same time as he was vying for power in his own right, perhaps aspiring to be the next pope, and/or conspiring with Robert Curthose, the oldest of William's remaining sons, to overthrow William.

Viewed in this context, the patron's decision to use symbolic devices loaded with contemporary pejorative connotations, such as stripes, checkers and zigzags, to symbolize William and his cause may be understood more easily.⁴⁶ Taking their symbolism into account, it is possible that Odo was attempting to convey the idea that Edward felt constrained by the promise he had made earlier to William (the Bastard), especially when considering the circumstances depicted in Scene 1, where the king is portrayed in the act of placing his trust in Harold.

As demonstrated above, Scene 1 fulfills the primary function of a preamble: it divulges the main theme – the struggle between two pretenders to the throne of England. It also elaborates on the root cause of the epic – the purported, hasty promise made by King Edward to William in 1051. Scene 1 also shows that the first section of the borders may play a pivotal role in supplying additional information to the reader, acting as an explanatory commentary on the main narrative.

2. SCENE 2: UBI HAROLD DUX ANGLORUM ET SUI MILITES...

The old lion straddling Scenes 1 and 2 in the upper border, and the doors to Edward's castle opening to the right, indicating the primary movement of the narrative in the center field, lead the reader into the next scene. As the narrative continues to unfold, the main field of Scene 2 portrays Harold and his retinue on the way to Bosham, a protected port, formerly belonging to the Archbishops of Canterbury, but acquired by Earl Godwin under questionable circumstances.⁴⁷ Harold's hounds are leading the way as he rides towards Bosham with his hawk (or falcon) perched on his left fist. In spite of the noncommittal inscription that only tells the observer that "Harold, chief (or

commander) of the English and his soldiers are riding to Bosham,” one cannot deny the apparently pacific nature of the enterprise when it first began, which is achieved through the imagery in the central narrative and perhaps emphasized by some of the pictographs in the borders.

2.1. SCENE 2: Birds and Lions in the Upper Border

Accustomed to reading images, contemporary readers may have taken into consideration details which may escape twenty-first century observers. Several items may have held some significance for the medieval reader. The equal size of the two preening eagles in Scene 1; the two preening birds of prey (the head of the one on the left is missing), with sharp-clawed feet and curved beaks, portrayed in the upper margin at the beginning of Scene 2; and the words *DUX ANGLORUM*, together with Harold's proud posture. These elements may have led the observer to conclude that Harold demonstrated a confidence equal to that of the king, as he was riding away with his men. Another element of the upper border, a *fleuron* or fleur-de-lis, is placed between the two preening birds above the words *DUX ANGLORUM*. *Fleurons* or fleurs-de-lis are used in medieval representations as early as the ninth century to suggest that “all power comes from God.”⁴⁸ These devices, utilized generously in the borders of the Bayeux Tapestry, were probably meant to insist on the role that divine providence played in the outcome of the epic. Except for the one at the end of Edward's scepter -- which indicates that Edward's kingship was by divine order -- the fleur-de-lis is used for the first time in the upper border above the words *DUX ANGLORUM*, perhaps to suggest God's will in Harold being so named.⁴⁹ As a result, Harold may have been not only confident, but also content as suggested by the preening, regal birds and the confronted leonine creatures -- one of which is placed directly above Harold -- that are grooming themselves and playing with their tails.

2.2. SCENE 2: Pictographs in the Lower Border

In oral presentations of *chansons de geste*, the major theme of the narrative is repeated so that no confusion occurs, and it can be remembered clearly. The patron of the Tapestry seems to have instructed the designer to use the same method in order to keep the main story line in focus. Immediately below the last horseman to enter the scene, two lions are again represented in the lower border. The location, postures, and

physical portrayals of these two beasts were probably meant as a reminder of the main theme, i.e., the struggle between two pretenders to the English throne. However, the portrayal of these two lions differs from the one in Scene 1. This time, the lions' jaws are barely open. The growling is muted; yet the hair of their manes is raised as though in fear or anger, and the lion on the left exhibits a certain level of hostility as he seems to be advancing toward the lion facing him squarely on the right. The left lion is probably a symbolic representation of Harold, as his movement towards the right matches Harold's. The lion on the right may symbolize William awaiting Harold in Normandy. Next to these potential reminders of the main theme, two birds, whose heads were cut off because of wear and tear, were probably engaged in pecking the ground, a non-violent endeavor that complements the occupations of the royal birds of prey preening themselves and of the leonine creatures playing with their tail in the upper border. Thus, as he rides toward Bosham, it appears that one of the royal pretenders, Harold, is satisfied with the events that took place during the meeting in Scene 1. His satisfaction seems to be reflected in and confirmed by the irenic pursuits of the animals in the borders.

2.3. SCENE 2: Signs of Foreboding in the Upper and Lower Borders

Yet, elements of disquiet are also part of this scene. As Scene 2 ends, the animals in the borders take on a totally different aspect, either because of their constrained postures, or because of their own nature. The fettered birds directly above Harold's hounds, and the two strange looking, and most often ignored fantastic creatures immediately below the hounds, add a certain level of foreboding.⁵⁰ These birds are physically trapped between the disjointed diagonal bars that are used throughout the Tapestry to separate the animals or scenes in the borders. Since it is the only place in the Tapestry borders that birds are restrained in such a manner, their inclusion at this point in the preamble is probably significant. They may function as cautioning devices, warning the reader about Harold's impending fate. In addition, the horse on which Harold is riding seems to have stopped; its left front hoof is raised as though unwilling or perhaps unable to step over the creature below. Contrary to the other horses, the pupil of its eye indicates that Harold's horse is staring downwards as though spooked by the monstrous beings with their wings outstretched inhabiting the lower border.

These two creatures are not centaurs as so often described.⁵¹ On the contrary, they fit the description of sphinxes: they possess a human head, a leonine body, and

wings. Sphinxes are classified as frightening creatures, and are known as the guardians of thresholds.⁵² When considering that these are the only two composite creatures of this exact type represented in the Tapestry, and that they are associated with Harold and with the fettered birds above, it is not difficult to accept that they performed a definite function. Perhaps, they were placed in this particular area to catch the observers' attention. The signs of evil portents in the borders may have been stitched in this part of the Tapestry to forewarn the audience about the dangerous threshold (indicated by the sphinxes) that Harold was about to cross, i.e., his impending departure for Normandy. These signs may have also been designed to convey apprehension at the future dangers Harold was about to face, which would result in his capture, perhaps illustrated by the fettered birds biting their feet.

2.4. SCENE 2: Harold's Problem: Controlling his Tongue

The saying "to put one's foot in one's mouth," was probably used then, and is still used now, to comment on a person's propensity to talk carelessly. In essence, these two sets of creatures -- the fettered birds and the sphinxes -- may have been placed in this particular area of the Tapestry to inform the audience that unless Harold learned to open his mouth cautiously (give the right answers to the sphinxes), he would lose his freedom and be bound like the babbling birds above.

Throughout the Tapestry many references are made to Harold's speaking habits, and to his indiscriminate speech. In the very first scene, speech is implied in the meeting between Edward and Harold, and is part of the pledge that they exchange. In Scene 2, speech may be implied once more indirectly as a warning to Harold to open his mouth cautiously, prudent speech being also part of any oath. As is shown below, allusion to careless speech may also be part of Scene 3.

3. SCENE 3: ECCLESIA

A few words of explanation regarding the main field are again necessary if one hopes to understand the meaning of the borders, their influence on the main field and vice-versa. The words, *AD BOSHAM*, straddling the bicolor tree separating Scenes 2 and 3, seem to indicate Harold's primary destination.⁵³ One word, *ECCLESIA*, seems to have provided enough information to identify Scene 3. The single word of the inscription following the words, *AD BOSHAM*, is sufficient to make a statement, as it starts a process

of association that was eminently familiar to the medieval mind. The building, *ecclesia*, was part of Harold's recently and suspiciously acquired estate, and the house, where the banquet scene is illustrated, was the scene of the murder of Earl Beorn, by his cousin, Harold's brother, Sweyn.⁵⁴ As McNulty mentioned, "Bosham was anything but a neutral place name... Bosham, in short, was a substantial symbol of Harold's family's evil influence."⁵⁵ By extension, the church building symbolizes the Catholic Church as an institution, and the house may be a metaphor for Harold's family who usurped it from its rightful owner, the Norman, Robert de Jumièges, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the symbolic head of the Catholic Church in England.⁵⁶ Perhaps, this unlawful appropriation was reason enough to represent hesitation on the part of Harold and his companion. Remember that the patron was probably Bishop Odo, a man who, in spite of his many failings, was punctilious about church ownership.⁵⁷ Thus, the introduction of *diversitas* in the form of stripes on the roof of the church and checkers in the roof of the building where Harold was banqueting, may have been a ploy (perhaps inspired by Odo) to ensure that no doubt existed that the true owner (if not the legal one) of this estate in 1064 was still the Norman, Robert de Jumièges. After 1066, Bosham and its church became part of another Norman ecclesiastic's domain, i.e., Bishop Odo's. It is also possible that the *diversitas* were a sign of William permeating influence, already suggested by lions and stripes on posts.

When the major historical circumstances are known, the simplest details, such as the juxtaposition of a building clearly identified as a church, and a stately home, both decorated with Norman *diversitas*, whose owners were known for their misdeeds, may transform a banal scene of religious devotion and a secular party before setting sail, into a reflection on the owner's mentality and morals.

3.1. SCENE 3: The Borders Above and Below *ECCLESIA*

Pressing the point further, to insinuate that Harold's character was flawed may have been meant to cast doubt on the worth of the pledge depicted in Scene 1. Keeping in mind that any deviation from the norm was considered evil in medieval culture, the hybrid nature of the two creatures in the upper border, probably meant to be lions standing guard above the Bosham church, may reflect the devious nature of Harold, a would-be king. The two confronted birds in the lower margin below the church are portrayed as covering themselves with one lifted wing; and while the left bird is stepping

on its head, the right one is dragging its elongated neck on the ground, perhaps both wanting to hide themselves in shame. Both the so-called lions and the birds may bring their own twist to the interpretation of the scene; they may have been intended to function as a healthy commentary on the events represented in the center. Because of their placement above a building belonging to the Godwins, and because of their proud bearing, yet defective appearance, the lions probably symbolized Harold; because of their postures and gestures, the birds may have been intended to communicate the shame that the proud Harold, a would-be king and an avowedly Christian man, should have (and may have) felt upon entering the church. Thus, these particular animals may have been inserted in the borders to reinforce the above interpretation achieved through an association of ideas based on known historical facts. At the same time, these animals explicate and add a satirical dimension to the representation. The empty space between the church and the country mansion, in which the banquet is taking place, acts as a quick pause for the change of venue between church and house.

3.2. SCENE 3: The Borders Above and Below the Banquet Room at Bosham

At first glance, the two birds in the upper border above the house at Bosham are engaged in some carousing of their own. One is proudly holding a large worm in its beak, while the other is squawking at the top of its lungs with its wide open beak and flapping wings. McNulty is content with mentioning the appropriateness of representing a bird in the process of eating over a banquet scene.⁵⁸ But is this superficial explanation sufficient? The detail of the worm goes easily unnoticed, and the incident demands further analysis.

As explained earlier, the importance of the placement of figures and objects should not be overlooked, as they may modify the meaning of a scene. Thus, when the readers maintain the same order of reading as they have done up to the present scene, it may be possible to interpret the bird on the left as representing Harold, who, at present, is rejoicing because he believes that he has caught the worm, symbolizing his prize, namely the English crown. Close examination also reveals that the demeanor of these two birds is quite different. The bird on the right has a wide open, yet empty beak, and, as mentioned above, gives the appearance that it is squawking rather than singing. The downward shape of the bird's solitary eye mimics the appearance of one who frowns in anger. Guided by the patron, the designer may have implied William's dark mood, since

it is probable that he was well informed of the events occurring in England, and may have already known of Edward's and Harold's successful meeting, and of Edward's possible change of heart.

Simultaneously, in the lower border, two feline creatures are licking their paws as though they also participated in the feast, and were enjoying the last bits while cleaning themselves. But the feline on the left, probably symbolizing Harold because of its placement, has its tail caught behind the diagonal bar, perhaps signifying by this innocuous happenstance that, from this point onwards, Harold's enjoyment will be curtailed. As a matter of fact, the main field of Scene 3 is the only place where Harold is portrayed in any type of entertaining endeavor. Conversely, the feline on the right, probably symbolizing William, is rotund, unencumbered, and appears to have had its fill, perhaps anticipating the coming fulfillment of William's ambitions.

In this case, the upper and lower borders seem to contain glosses that complement each other. In fact, the center scene of the banquet, which is quite unnecessary to the development of the epic, may have been inserted to introduce the commentaries in the borders and warn the reader about impending events. As pictured in the upper border, Harold (the left bird) may have believed that he held the crown (the worm). Yet, as the lower border seems to demonstrate, Harold (the feline on the left) will not be allowed to enjoy possession of the crown (relish his fare) because he will be detained (caught by the tail), perhaps another pre-figuration of his capture by Guy, and of his detention by William, and finally of the loss of his crown and his life to William.

4. *SCENES 4, 5, 6 and 7: HIC HAROLD MARE NAVIGAVIT...*

4.1. Speech, Mockery and Protruding Tongues

At the beginning of Scene 4, a man, whose twisted posture serves to lead the gaze of the observer from Scene 3 to Scene 4, comes to announce to Harold and the revelers that the boats are ready to sail. Scenes 4, 5 and 6 are dedicated to the representation of Harold's flotilla crossing the channel and to his arrival on the Continent.

Several small, yet important, details are illustrated in the main field of Scenes 4 through 6. Contemporary vessels were usually adorned with figureheads installed in the prow (bow) and stern. One aspect of the imagery that has gone unnoticed concerns the appearance of these monstrous heads at the prow and stern of the last three vessels, which are portrayed with tongues protruding out of their mouths. A man, identified as Harold

by his placement directly under his name, stands at the prow of the vessel that has touched land. Decorating the same prow, a fantastic figurehead is sticking out a thick dark tongue, perhaps at the events unraveling in the next scene.

In medieval art, protruding tongues were signs of mockery, disorder and evil portent.⁵⁹ Garnier notes “les diables font ce geste, en particulier quand ils se moquent de leur victime.”⁶⁰ In this case, the various monstrous heads with tongues sticking out, add credence to the possibility that evil forces were at play, mocking Harold, and that these forces, perhaps under the guise of an unexpected strong wind may have been engaged in detouring the vessels from their appointed course. However, outstretched tongues may serve another purpose, hinting once more at the underlying cause for the Norman invasion, i.e. Edward’s idle promise of the throne to William, a promise that Edward made to others before and would make again before he died; and at the obvious reason for the Conquest, i.e., Harold’s reneging on his supposed oath to William.⁶¹

4.2. **SCENE 7: Dragons, Hairstyles and the Legitimacy of Power**

As Harold stands alone in the prow of the last ship on the right, he points to the words *HIC APPREHENDIT WIDO HAROLDUM*, marking the beginning of Scene 7 where Guy and his men arrest Harold as he is coming ashore.⁶² One symbolic element is to be noted in the main field of Scene 7. The knight directly behind Guy is holding a kite-shaped shield with a round top on which a dragon is depicted. Dragons were part of Nordic mythology and were often painted on Norsemen’s shields. In the Anglo-Saxon *Exeter Book* dating from c. 1046, it is noted that the “Lord God was benignant to all creatures...except the dragon, source of poison.”⁶³ In medieval lore, drawing heavily from Rabannus Maurus, it was believed that the dragon was able not only to blow deadly flames from his mouth, but also that its strength rested mainly in its tail which it used to strike and kill its opponents.⁶⁴ In one of the first medieval bestiaries, Philip de Thaon (c. 1121) gives the following description of the dragon: “And know that the dragon has the form of the serpent; it is crested and winged, it has two feet and is toothed; by its tail it defends itself, and does harm to people.”⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that the dragon represented in this part of the Tapestry has its tail tied into a knot and that it is biting one of its wings.

Since the dragon was also the emblem of Wessex, its representation was probably meant to comment on Harold’s posture and status at this juncture in the narrative.⁶⁶

Symbolically constrained twice, this particular dragon was compelled to inaction. First, it was restrained because it was encased within the frame of a pro-Norman shield, just as Harold was restrained by pro-Norman guards. Secondly, its physical representation with a knotted tail and biting jaws demonstrates that it was precluded from defending itself, i.e., blow flames and/or utter sounds. Similarly, Harold, a man who has a propensity to speak carelessly, is held captive by pro-Norman knights, the one immediately behind Guy carrying the shield adorned with the trapped, powerless dragon. A simple association of ideas may have led the medieval observer to understand that this impaired and restrained beast was designed to hint at the predicament in which Harold, the dragon of Wessex, now found himself. While this is the first representation of a dragon in the Tapestry, other depictions occur later both in the main field and in the borders, and are always associated with Harold and the events hinging upon his actions. Additionally, these particular details demonstrate once again the importance of symbolic figures, their placement, posture and gestures.

Another detail of Scene 7, i.e., haircuts, may be significant in understanding the status of the various players vis-à-vis one another. Guy and his men are not represented with their heads distinctively shaved in the back following Norman custom. Mentioned only briefly in the research on the Tapestry, the changes in hairstyles that occur in the main field seem much more significant than the construction of “the long haired Anglo-Saxons, especially Harold, ...as a feminized ‘other’ or the enemy,” as Madeline Caviness postulates.⁶⁷ Indeed, changes in hairstyles may have been used as signifiers of underlying concerns about the legitimate exercise of power, as indicated in early eleventh-century writings.⁶⁸ Perhaps the hairstyle first sported by Guy de Ponthieu and his men was meant to indicate Guy’s pride in being a Gaulish aristocrat, his reluctance at being William’s vassal, his penchant for acting alone, and the overt and covert struggles of Guy and his relatives against William’s encroaching policies.⁶⁹

4.3. SCENES 4, 5, 6 and 7: Paired Animals in the Upper Border

Above the departing men and the sailing vessels in Scenes 4 and 5, the designer represented three pairs of confronted animals, the series being interrupted by the sails of one of the boats encroaching on the upper border in the middle of Scene 5. First, two beasts, each a mix between a dog and a lion, are touching their front paws and heads, perhaps exchanging signs of friendship, or conversely a description of *capita conferre*, a

traditional representation of “conspiracy or collusion,” as McNulty maintains, suggesting further that “Harold and his men act secretly and [are] up to no good.”⁷⁰ First, physical deformity being synonymous with spiritual flaws in medieval culture, the indefinable appearance of these two predators may symbolize an inner defect, or that the persons that these animals symbolize are involved in a covert action, which fits Edward and Harold perfectly. Secondly, with their paws and heads touching, the two predators outwardly mimic the exchange of trust between Edward and Harold that took place in Scene 1, perhaps hinting at and mocking their potential plan to evince William, since the first scene suggests a secret collusion between the two men against William. Next to the conspirational beasts, two birds -- probably pigeons -- with opposite wings lifted, seem to be directing the attention of the viewer in opposite directions, one towards the predators conspiring on the left, and the other toward two animals resembling *genettes*. In fact, two *genettes* are the last pair of animals represented in the upper border before the encroachment of the sails.⁷¹ These cunning, predatory animals were used for hunting in medieval times. A close examination shows that both animals (especially the one on the right) seem to be enjoying a good laugh while engaging in a pirouette above the departing boat. Overtly, the two birds looking away from one another may emphasize the concept of departure and separation. However, they also may serve to connect the two deformed lions touching paws (suggesting the amicable entente between Edward and his *sub-regulus*) to the *genettes* (symbolizing the ruthlessness of the hunter), thus hinting at the potential effect of Edward’s and Harold’s hidden agreement. Indeed, it is possible that the *genettes*, served as a satirical aside, indicating to the reader that Harold, the man represented as a hunter, careful to leave England with his hawk and his hounds, is about to become the hunted -- someone’s prey.

The upper border resumes above Scene 6, as Harold is about to set foot on dry land, with the depiction of two large birds of prey, perhaps vultures, extending one wing as though to hide in shame while pecking at one of their feet. Concerning “birds, beak to ground or to foot,” McNulty is of the opinion that this type of “a stock posture [is] usually without immediate relevance to the accompanying narrative.”⁷² However, as was the case in the upper border of Scene 2, the two birds of prey may have been another reminder of the danger of excessive and careless speech.

As a matter of fact, these paired birds -- the bird on the left is located immediately above Harold -- are also in close proximity to the protruding tongues encountered in the main field. The combination of two elements referring to blunder (putting a foot in one's mouth), and to mockery and the careless use of one's tongue (protruding tongues), may be instrumental in reaffirming the warnings already given to the observer about Edward's careless promise to William, and about Harold's arrogance and loose tongue. These birds of prey may also have been placed at the beginning of the scene in which Harold is taken prisoner, to warn the reader of the rapacious nature of Harold's captors.⁷³ Between the paired birds, the strange mask of a predator, perhaps a "vorant-de-lys," i.e., a destroyer of kingship sanctioned by God (one of two to be found in the borders of the Tapestry), stares impassively from under the inverted V-shape formed by two diagonal bars.⁷⁴ This mask is above the area immediately preceding Harold's arrest. Perhaps, because of its placement, this mask with predatory features was meant as another warning device concerning the rapacity of the men about to arrest Harold, and acted as a forewarning for Harold's destruction at the hands of another predator, i.e., William.

The next pictographs in the upper border are two young lions, with tails raised, looking in opposite directions -- mostly a modern repair. J. C. Bruce's drawing shows a gap in the fabric, and only the rump of the lion on the right is illustrated.⁷⁵ The loss of the original appearance and position of the lions makes it difficult to include them in a meaningful interpretation of the border. However, if the restoration is accurate, the two lions portrayed looking in opposite directions, as though attempting to ignore one another, may qualify the scene of Harold's arrest. Their placement on either side of Guy de Ponthieu, shown riding a horse below, may have pointed to Guy's precarious position vis-à-vis Harold and William. Perhaps, Guy should have recognized that it was dangerous to act independently and interfere in a struggle between two powerful men. Next to the lions, paired griffins are depicted for the first time in the Tapestry, and they were placed directly above Guy, his men and the words *ET DUXIT EUM*. It was believed that griffins were eagle-headed lions with wings and clawed feet, and that they symbolized temporal power, strength, and by extension, the means to attain one's desires, often consisting in the acquisition of gold.⁷⁶ Represented directly above Guy's men, and in close proximity to Guy, they were probably meant to indicate Guy's ruthlessness and his intention to hold Harold for ransom in order to assuage his (Guy's) desire for gold.

Scene 7 terminates with one of a pair of animals resembling dogs, the other being part of Scene 8. The canine on the left is located directly above the preposition *AD*, meaning towards, which starts the inscription in Scene 8. This particular animal, skidding to a stop, with tongue protruding from its mouth, and its tail flying in the air, is in the process of stopping dead in its tracks. Conversely, the other canine is seated defensively on its haunches, jaws barely open in a mute growl, as though preparing to stop the oncoming dog. Two diagonals forming a V with a large inverted fleuron in the center separate the two affronted beasts. The differences in the appearance of these paired animals should not be overlooked and merely attributed to the clumsiness of the embroiderers.

Their placement at the juncture of two scenes is probably significant. With their gestures and postures, they seem to point to the two main protagonists in Scenes 7 and 8, namely Harold on the left and Guy on the right. The comparison to a dog would not have been flattering to either Harold or Guy. After all, the nomen *canaille* comes from Latin *canis* -- a dog, and “cynical” is derived from the Greek word *kynos* also meaning dog. The dog’s bad reputation found in the pre-Christian tradition, became part of the Old and New Testaments, and carried over into the early Middle Ages.⁷⁷ So far, Harold may have been considered as foolish because he had fallen into Guy’s trap and because he was engaged in an adventure that entailed the dishonorable use of his tongue, and was therefore unworthy enough to be compared to the dog sticking out its tongue. Guy may have been regarded as a contemptible sort, a true *canaille*, worthless to the point of being likened to a dog, because he was ready to commit a villainous act by holding for ransom a man of high rank who was ostensibly a “friend” of his (Guy’s) liege, William. Indeed, the placement of the two canines in the upper border strategically between Harold’s capture and his being taken prisoner to Beaurain, may serve to reinforce the above reading. Keeping in mind the events occurring in the main field, and the symbolic meaning of the animal frieze above Scenes 4, 5, 6 and 7, I will now turn to the lower border below the same scenes.

4.4. SCENES 4, 5, 6 and 7: Fables in the Lower Border

When perusing Scenes 4, 5, 6, and 7 one may wonder if the designer did not depict Harold’s voyage in such a deliberately lengthy manner precisely to be able to include fables in the lower border. At the beginning of Scene 4, directly below the

stairway leading to the banqueting room of Harold's country mansion at Bosham, one encounters the first in a series of fables. The introduction of fables raises two questions: Why were they included in the borders? And why were they introduced at this point in the narrative? In answer to the first question, as mentioned earlier, fables were used since antiquity to articulate collateral ideas and subversive thoughts. As Michael Camille mentions, "in fables and beast epics, which were popular in oral as well as written form, they [the animals] became anthropomorphic signs of human vice."⁷⁸ Indeed, fables were used to comment with impunity on defects in character, and/or on the actions and exactions of the rich and mighty through the use of animals endowed with anthropic qualities.⁷⁹ Medieval readers had access to Aesop's fables through the writings of Phaedrus, Avianus and especially Romulus.⁸⁰ As well, a perusal of early medieval texts, sculptural programs, and wall paintings demonstrates that animals functioned then as they did in the original Greek fables, and in later Christian texts, i.e., as types or models exemplifying human qualities or defects (vices).⁸¹ It would be difficult to deny that the erudite in charge of illustrating the borders of the Tapestry had knowledge of the writings of early medieval authors, such as Isidore of Seville, and especially Rabannus Maurus who refers to the guileless lamb and the cunning fox.⁸² It is also probable that the learned were aware of the writings of other, perhaps less famous, early writers, such as Pseudo-Maximus of Turin (c. eighth – ninth cent. AD), who noted the predatory nature of the wolf.⁸³ Additionally, among the *rustici*, exposed to nature and animal behavior, it was common practice to attribute anthropic qualities and faults to animals.⁸⁴

In the context of the fables found in the Tapestry, the behavior of animals seems to have been used to reveal the potentially nefarious psychological traits that were attributed to the principal characters in the epic. The choice of fables may have been aimed to emphasize particular character and personality traits in order to expose publicly the defects of the main protagonists in the narrative, to convey veiled rebuke and criticism through satire, and finally, to demonstrate the inevitability of the outcome that normally ensues from these defects. In other words, working as a cohesive and orchestrated group, it is probable that the fables help define the character and personality traits of the protagonists by revealing their salient qualities and defects which influenced and even directed the outcome of the story. Finally, the ultimate aim of fables was and still is to moralize through satire.

Of the protagonists at the core of the narrative, only two, Edward and Harold, have so far been introduced by name and in human form. While William's presence permeates and overshadows the narrative from the start, he is not represented in human form until Scene 12, where he is portrayed while receiving an Englishman pleading for the Duke's help in releasing Harold from Guy's clutches. Until then, it appears that William was represented vicariously through the imagery in the borders.

In answer to the second question regarding the placement of the fables at this stage in the development of the narrative, several reasons come to mind. First, from a practical standpoint, the description of the sea voyage afforded ample space to include dramatic episodes, such as fables in the margins. Second, once the theme of the epic, i.e., the struggle between two pretenders to the English throne, and the main reason for the aforesaid struggle, were brought to light by a careful analysis of the main field in conjunction with the pictographs in the borders above and below Scenes 1 through 3, the need to provide more information about the protagonists and their actions became evident if the readers' attention was to be kept. An interesting story becomes captivating if the main characters are given substance and are made more human, i.e., endowed with outstanding qualities and/or especially with deplorable defects in their psychological make-up.⁸⁵ Third, to deride the main actors in the narrative through the use of fables may have been a calculated ploy to promote the presumed patron, Odo, enhance his role and bolster his position in the eyes of contemporary viewers, a common and enduring practice among politicians.

When perusing the literature on the borders of the Tapestry, one realizes that a great part of it is devoted to the identification of the fables, and to the debates over their number, which varies from eight to forty-two. Discussions are also limited to which of the fables are actually illustrated in the Tapestry. As mentioned earlier, thus far, no published work has analyzed thoroughly all the fables in conjunction with the central narrative. Perhaps an unbiased perusal of the fables, including the arrangement of the animal pictographs within each frame, and the locations within the Tapestry borders of the frames they inhabit, will reveal the way the morals they contained should be interpreted, and will provide a comprehensive and objective reading.

4.4.1. The First Fable: *The Fox and the Crow*

The first fable is the well-known story of the *Fox and the Crow*.⁸⁶ It is the most talked-about fable in the literature on the Tapestry. However, attempts at explaining this fable within the Tapestry context have not been entirely successful. Its story line is taken for granted, rapidly dismissed as being self-explanatory,⁸⁷ or often presented without an explanation relevant to the story line.⁸⁸ In one case, it is summarily explained;⁸⁹ and in another, the author introduces a definite bias in his interpretation.⁹⁰ Bernstein could have been entirely successful if he had not taken the fable out of context by examining it after the tales of the *Pregnant Bitch* and the *Wolf and the Crane*.⁹¹ Unfortunately, he disregarded the fact that in order to comprehend the story fully, the fables were placed in a particular order for a reason that perhaps will become clear as they are explained.

A summary of *The Fox and the Crow* will refresh the reader's memory. A vain crow stole a piece of cheese, carelessly left uncovered on a window sill. Flying back to his favorite tree, he was about to enjoy the fruits of his theft. However, a wily fox had watched the whole operation and decided that the piece of cheese was a mighty tempting morsel. He approached the crow, saluted him most graciously, and complimented him on his beautiful plumage and voice. The crow became more and more puffed up with pride. Yet, in spite of the fox's compliments, the crow would not open his beak. Finally, in desperation, the fox told him that his fondest wish was to hear the crow's melodious voice. Unable to contain his vanity, and ignoring that it is unwise to trust flatterers, the crow opened his beak to sing and let the cheese drop.⁹² There are three renderings of this fable at various places in the Tapestry borders.

In this first illustration of the fable, the cheese is in mid-air, and gravity favors the fox as the recipient. Again, keeping in mind that nothing in medieval art can be considered superfluous or trivial, the placement of this fable and the arrangement of the figures within the fable are of the utmost importance.⁹³ First, it is placed in close proximity to the two birds above Scene 3, the left one holding the worm, probably symbolizing Harold's glee at holding the crown, and the right, squawking bird, interpreting William's discontent. However, Harold's dreams and hopes are immediately disrupted by the proximity and contents of the fable of *The Fox and the Crow*.

A closer look at this fable uncovers a message unlike the one provided by the two birds. The unseen person who, through carelessness or indifference, originally left his

“piece of cheese” on the window sill and lost it to the crow, is probably King Edward whose presence underlies this fable. Edward promised the crown to William, yet he is letting Harold (the crow) govern in his (Edward’s) place (take the cheese). The cheese, symbolizing the crown, is shown in mid-air, probably because in the Spring of 1064, the crown of England was literally up for grabs.

As already mentioned, so far the only character of importance introduced in human form besides King Edward is Harold. He is the person coming from the left, on the move toward Normandy, and following the epic’s progress from left to right. By analogy, the crow is placed on the left of the pictorial space that the framing diagonals create. It has been shown, earlier in the text, that Harold was proud and perhaps also vain, and like any vain person, responded to flattery. Thus, the defects attributed to the crow also befit Harold, who, blinded by his own conceit, and because of his powerful position, may have been lulled into feeling secure. Harold (the crow) probably believed that he held the crown (cheese), since according to the old adage, possession is nine-tenths of the law. The inscription, *DUX ANGLORUM*, the overall imagery, and more precisely, the pictographs in the border (Scenes 1 through 3) certainly hint at the fact that Harold was *de facto* ruler of England.

The other contender can only be William, since there is no mention in the Tapestry of the third pretender to the throne, Harald Hardrada. In contrast to the message provided by the two birds above Scene 3, *The Fox and the Crow* informs the observer that, like the cheese, possession of the crown is still up in the air, equidistant between the open beak of the crow (Harold) and the jaws of the fox (William). Both animals want the cheese badly, just as both Harold and William want the crown of England badly, yet it is metaphorically dangling in the air.

The combination of these elements shows that once Harold made the decision to go to Normandy, he started the process of symbolically opening his mouth to show his “beautiful voice,” and that, as a consequence, he dropped the cheese (crown). Perhaps, together with the warning presented by the sphinxes in Scene 3, the fable alludes to Harold’s potentially careless words and to the fateful oath to come. For the moment, the fox is left with his mouth open, waiting for the cheese to fall, without effort, into his mouth, just like William was waiting in Normandy for Edward’s death to receive the crown of England, and was hoping that Harold would commit a blunder that would help

him (William) ease his way onto the English throne. It is interesting to note that in the other two areas of the narrative, where the fate of the crown is contemplated, the fable of *The Fox and the Crow* is again displayed. The other two representations – in the lower border of Scene 16 and upper border of Scene 24 -- will be examined below, in conjunction with the images in the main field.

4.4.2. **The Second Fable: *The Wolf and the Lamb***

To depict *The Wolf and the Lamb* next to *The Fox and the Crow* is a stroke of genius on the part of the designer.⁹⁴ In the second fable, a wolf accuses a lamb of muddying the water in which he (the wolf) is drinking, while knowing that the poor lamb is actually drinking downstream from him. No matter what the innocent lamb says to defend himself, and no matter how right he is, since the lamb is the weaker of the two animals, his arguments are wasted and he is bound to lose, since “any excuse will serve a tyrant.”⁹⁵ Following the flow of the narrative once more, Harold is portrayed as the guileless lamb of the fable, which the wily wolf, probably William, is determined to devour/destroy. While Harold was no lamb, his guile was surpassed by William’s, who, as a bastard son and heir to a duke, had learned at a young age to use deceit in order to survive and keep his duchy.⁹⁶ A clue that enables the observer to associate Harold with the lamb is found in the lamb’s placement vis-à-vis the wolf. In the main field, Harold is leaving England. In this case, the lamb is portrayed on the left side of the water right under the feet of Harold climbing aboard the vessel, wading in the water and carrying his hawk and one of his hounds, which seems to be a clear attempt to associate Harold with the lamb. The stream separating the lamb from the wolf, and the placement of the animals vis-à-vis the stream offer other clues. Indeed, when the lamb (Harold) crosses the water (the English Channel), which he is in the process of doing in the main field, the wolf (William) will find an excuse to do away with him. In fact, with his tongue sticking out, the wolf (William) was in the process of not only mocking but also maligning the lamb (Harold).⁹⁷ Additionally, like the wolf, William did not hesitate to twist the words of the lamb (Harold) to achieve his end, and destroy him (use the oath as an excuse to wage war on England and kill Harold). In this case, the observer is faced with the futility of Harold’s spoken words since no matter what he says, his (Harold’s) fate is sealed, independently of how hard he tries to defend himself through speech. The use of this fable at this juncture in the story, may be interpreted as another example of the patron’s

subtle, caustic wit. It seems that the patron implied that the fate of Harold was already decided before he crossed the Channel and swore his fateful oath of allegiance and support to William.

4.4.3. **The Third Fable: *The Pregnant Bitch***

The sarcasm grows in the next fable, known by different names, e.g., *The Pregnant Bitch* or *The Bitch (or She-Dog) and her Puppies*.⁹⁸ In this fable, a she-dog opened her house to a poor pregnant bitch about to have puppies. However, when the puppies are grown, the she-dog, who rightfully owns the house, comes back to claim it, only to be sent away indignantly, as though she were trying to take what was not hers, and is threatened further with bodily harm. Again, it is important to note the position of the figures in the borders, and remember to associate Harold with the left side, since he is the one who is traveling in the direction of the narrative, i.e., towards the right and William. William (the she-dog/rightful owner) was promised the English throne, yet now he finds that Harold (the bitch), and his brothers and nephews (her puppies) are de facto in his place. In this first of the two renditions of this fable, the owner of the house is sent away. But, as the picture clearly shows, the she-dog (William) seems to be waiting patiently, while alluding to its discontent by barking back at the brood (Harold and his siblings) facing it. One cannot ignore the scathing identification of both William and Harold with a female dog, a nomenclature that still conjures up deleterious remarks. Besides the caustic monicker, this fable seems to suggest that William was biding his time, letting Harold believe that he was secure in his occupation of the seat of power. However, the combination of Harold's tenacity, symbolized by the she-dog refusing to leave, and William's indecisiveness, which the designer represented by the bitch/rightful owner's hesitation to act, may have contributed to the impossible situation in which Harold and William would later find themselves. After being apprised of the existing situation (by *The Fox and the Crow*), and forewarned (by *The Wolf and the Lamb*) about the inevitable disastrous results of the encounter between the two main participants (Harold and William), it seems that the patron pitted the illegitimacy of Harold's pretensions against William's indecisiveness (*The Pregnant Bitch*).

Once more the borders are used to gloss over the narrative in the main field, reminding the reader/viewer of the struggle between William and Harold, warning the observer about the impending fate of the two major actors in the drama, and anticipating

future events. Being associated with voice, song, speech and denied promises, the fables continue to remind the reader about the primary cause for Harold's defeat, i.e., his propensity to make careless promises.

4.4.4. **The Fourth Fable: *The Wolf and the Crane***

In the next space, below the inscription indicating that "with sails full of wind he (Harold) came to the land of Count Guy," the designer placed the fable of *The Wolf and the Crane*.⁹⁹ In this story, a crane is promised a reward if it removes a bone from a wolf's throat where it is stuck. Independently of the fable, Rabannus Maurus acknowledged the helpfulness of the crane.¹⁰⁰ After performing this service, the wolf tells the crane who demands payment that it is reward enough for the crane to escape with its life.¹⁰¹ As McNulty states, "it is a remark plainly applicable to Harold as he returns alive to England."¹⁰² McNulty's statement is accurate, even though he does not give any other explanation for his assessment. Because of its placement on the left side of the image, the crane probably symbolizes Harold. Like the crane, Harold is stupid enough to go to Normandy to try to remove metaphorically a bone from William's throat; the bone being, of course, the English succession, i.e., the "bone of contention" between William and Harold. This fable outlines the dangerous, yet ridiculous situation in which the crane (Harold) finds itself, essentially because it is gullible enough to place its trust in its natural enemy, the wolf (William). However, cross reading of the image shows a subdued wolf, lying quietly while the crane operates. Additionally, the wolf's jaws are wide open and not touching the crane's beak as though intent on not harming the crane helping it. Thus, the patron may have wanted to reiterate that, at this time, William was biding his time and may have wanted to give the impression that he meant to do Harold no harm. In spite of the non-threatening posture of the predator, the crane (Harold) is told that it should rejoice in its ability to retrieve its neck unscathed, as the sole reward for its services. By crossing the channel, the gullible Harold was not only introducing his head between the wolf's (William's) jaws, but as the inscription indicates, since he was entering Guy de Ponthieu's estate, he was also about to place his head in another wolf's mouth, i.e., Guy's. Under the guise of revealing Harold's gullibility and stupidity, it may have been someone's design, possibly the patron's, to show William's duplicitous nature. Such a peek into the darker side of his personality may be construed as another propagandistic innuendo against William. The moral of this fable seems to anticipate the

story, proclaiming that Harold should be thankful to William for his rescue from Guy de Ponthieu, and that he should not claim any other form of repayment; but, conversely that Harold should show his gratitude to William, perhaps by relinquishing whatever power he (Harold) held in England, thus paving the way for William to accede to the English throne, which, according to *The Pregnant Bitch*, William regarded as legally his.

4.4.5. The Fifth Fable: *The Wolf King*

The next two fables are not as well known. Depicted below Scene 5, they are usually identified as *The Wolf King* and *The Eagle, the Mouse And the Frog*. Once more, their inclusion was probably destined to emphasize the meaning of the veiled admonitions in the central field. Most specialists on the border identify the fifth fable as *The Wolf King*.¹⁰³ In this fable, an old lion, knowing it was about to die, asks its subjects to come to its lair so that a new king can be picked from among them. Responding to the call of their king, an andromorphous ape, a wolf, a member of the ovine family,¹⁰⁴ a hart, a fox, a horse, a donkey, and two difficult-to-identify creatures depicted between the hart and the fox, gather in front of the lion's lair. Lulled by the wolf's promises of good behavior, they decide that it should be their new king, a choice that the old lion king finds disturbing because of the wolf's reputation as a wily, deceitful character that caters to its own needs more than to the welfare of others.

Once king, the wolf cannot keep its promise not to eat meat and finds excuses to eat its subjects one after the other until it comes to the ape. This ape was shrewd and sly. It understood the wolf's designs and decided to trick it. However, the trickster was not as smart as it thought itself to be. It may have fooled the wolf once, but it failed to fool the wolf a second time, and was promptly eaten. What could this fable possibly mean in the environment of the Bayeux Tapestry? The old lion king refers most probably to Edward, who was previously identified with an old lion. In this particular representation, the new king has not been chosen yet. The andromorphous ape is placed directly in front of the old king and is gesturing in the direction of the wolf, directly behind it, as though it were asking the old king a question about this animal, or pointing it out as its choice. All the animals are made to witness this meeting and are not yet eaten. The placement of the ape, as the first one facing the lion in its lair, shows it to be an important figure. Yet, while this andromorphous ape is sporting a mustache, which identifies it as Anglo-Saxon, it is represented as an asexual being contrary to some of the overly endowed animals and men

depicted in the Tapestry. The *Physiologus* informs the reader that an ape was considered to be a distorted image of a man.¹⁰⁵ In addition, since distortion was synonymous with evil, an ape “symbolized base forces...sin, malice, cunning and lust,” an interesting point, in view of the way this particular ape is represented minus part of its genitals.¹⁰⁶ Even today people are familiar with the vulgar expression “having no balls,” meaning “lacking courage.” A medieval audience, which enjoyed associations of ideas and word games, would have been amused greatly by the cynical double entendre associated with an impotent symbol of lust, i.e., the mustachioed, “ball-less” ape, which was probably meant to symbolize Harold, a known womanizer.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the “ball-less” status of the mustachioed ape may have been intended as an insinuation regarding Harold’s courage or lack thereof.

It is probable that the wolf coming from the right personifies William who has not yet “eaten” any of his subjects. However, the audience knew how the fable ended, with the trickster escaping one time, but being “eaten” in the end by the wolf. In the main narrative, Harold (the asexual ape) escapes once through speech in the form of a careless oath and returns to England, only to be killed later by William’s (wolf’s) knights at Hastings. As the viewer progresses along the Tapestry, details are constantly added, making the message richer, more complex, and also more satirical, helping the readers to anticipate events and whetting their appetite and desire to find out more.

4.4.6. The Sixth Fable: *The Eagle, the Mouse And the Frog*

This fable is also considered problematic because of the loss of stitches in the embroidery. However, a bird of prey, perhaps an eagle, is represented holding a small animal, probably a rat or a mouse, in its claws, while the rat/mouse is close to another difficult to identify animal, perhaps a frog. In the literature on the Tapestry, this fable is identified either as *The Eagle, the Mouse and the Frog*,¹⁰⁸ or as *The Eagle, the Crow, and the Turtle*,¹⁰⁹ with a marked preference for the first identification. In *The Eagle, the Mouse and the Frog*, also known as *The Mouse, the Frog and the Kite*,¹¹⁰ the rodent is persuaded to visit the underwater abode of a frog, but since it cannot swim, the frog attaches a leg of the rodent to its own. When the frog dives, the rodent swears as it is drowning that it would take revenge on the frog. The dead rodent still attached to the frog floats to the surface where it is seen by a bird of prey that swoops down on it and devours both animals.

Again, it is important to attempt to decipher what a late eleventh-century audience may have understood this fable to mean in the context of the Tapestry. The eagle is probably William, whose territory is Normandy, where he is the “eagle,” the *DUX NORMANNORUM*. In this context, it is plausible that the rodent represents Harold who, by coming to Normandy, enters into unknown territory, symbolized by the water, an element dangerous to a rodent. The water may have also reminded the audience of the dangerous element Harold encounters while crossing the Channel. Anticipating the events occurring in the next scene, the frog that unjustly detains the mouse (Harold) may be Guy de Ponthieu, who perhaps thought he knew how to “swim the waters” of Norman politics, but who was unaware of William’s intentions vis-à-vis Harold, and thus was also “devoured” in the process. History tells us that, although Guy was William’s vassal at the time, he had been at odds with William, even joining forces with William’s adversaries.¹¹¹ The enmity between the two men may have been common knowledge, leading Fowke to argue that “he [Guy] would have rejoiced to have in his power one [Harold] whose person was of value to his powerful enemy.”¹¹² In fact, Fowke’s argument may be correct since Guy was William’s prisoner for a couple of years prior to this incident for his active support of Henri I, King of France (1031-1060).¹¹³

4.4.7. The Seventh Fable: *The Wolf and the Goat* or *The Goat who Sang*

At the beginning of Scene 6, Harold, identified clearly by his name, stands in the prow of his vessel and is about to set foot on Guy de Ponthieu’s land where, as the inscription reads, he is quickly apprehended. Immediately below, the designer included the seventh fable. Contrary to other researchers, Herrmann cuts the fable in two parts, identifying the first as *The Wolf and the Kid* and the second, as *The Envious Fox*. However, this cut is artificial and without cause, since there is no element in the border that may suggest a possible division.¹¹⁴ While less known, this fable has been repeatedly identified as *The Wolf and the Goat*, or *The Goat who Sang*, two different titles for the same story.¹¹⁵ This fable, illustrated once more, but in shorter form and in the upper border of Scene 51, is interpreted below in conjunction with that particular scene.

The Wolf and the Goat tells the story of a she-goat that was enjoying her afternoon repast in a luscious field. She was so intent on eating that she did not realize she had strayed and was now near the woods. A wolf came out. The goat knew immediately that her fate was sealed, and that she was destined to become the wolf’s next

meal. Knowing that she would beg for her life in vain, the clever goat asked a last favor from the wolf before he devoured her: the goat wanted to sing two masses, one for the wolf's soul and one for hers. The wolf granted the goat's last request. The smart goat, supposedly singing the mass, started bleating at the top of her voice. Her cries were heard afar by animals and men alike. Peasants armed with clubs and accompanied by their dogs came running to her rescue and chased away the wolf. In the Tapestry, the wolf is shown as he parleys with the goat. Then the clever goat is represented as she sings with head held up high, eyes closed and a smile on her face, while next to her, two men armed with clubs are following a pack of dogs that are chasing after the wolf. In this particular case, in order to show that the goat is the pivotal character in the story, she is represented twice. The juncture between the two episodes is adroitly achieved by showing two images of the same goat (stitched in different colors), back to back, and by the peasant closest to the goat looking back at the goat, while starting on his pursuit of the wolf, accompanied by another armed peasant and dogs. Additionally, by placing both representations of the goat, sandwiched between the wolf on one side and the peasant with their clubs chasing the wolf on the other, the designer may have aimed to communicate the impossibility for the goat to escape.

Daniel Terkla is one of the latest researchers to put forward an explanation of this fable. Terkla clearly identifies the goat with Harold and the wolf with William. However, impeded by his "Norman bias," Terkla assumes too much and does not follow the evolution of the narrative, anticipating future events out of context when he concludes that "Harold-the-goat repays William-the-wolf's largesse by breaking his oaths of fealty and support of the Duke's succession: William is driven from his rightful place on the English throne."¹¹⁶

An unbiased analysis reveals other elements that are germane to the story in the main field of Scenes 6 and 7 directly above. The first representation of *The Wolf and the Goat* is located directly under Harold standing in the prow of his beached vessel. Because of this ambivalent placement, it is difficult to associate Harold with either of the animals at this point in the developing story. However, the wolf being chased is placed directly below Guy, shown riding a large horse and pointing to Harold, while ordering his arrest. As a result, the wolf may be associated with Guy de Ponthieu who, blinded by his own greed and already envisioning the ransom Harold would bring, allowed the goat

(presumably Harold) to sing and secure his release. Harold's (the goat's) cries for help reached William who immediately sends envoys to order Guy to release Harold (Scene 10). Subsequently, William and his men (the peasants and their dogs) came and rescued Harold (the goat), and metaphorically ran off Guy de Ponthieu, the embarrassing and greedy wolf, by paying Harold's ransom. However, Harold's rescue does not signify that he (Harold) has gained his freedom. On the contrary Harold (the goat) is hemmed in between Guy de Ponthieu (the wolf) on the left, and William and his men (the peasants and their dogs) on the right. Essentially, Harold (the clever goat) is not so smart, since being first captured by Guy, he is handed over to William, thus managing to fall from the frying pan into the fire.

On yet another level, it is through his voice that Harold is rescued by William and his men. By inserting the fable of *The Wolf and The Goat*, the story line of which revolves around a goat who escapes by deceiving through speech, the designer -- probably following the instructions of the patron -- ensures that the observer understands the importance that utterances may have for good or evil. Indeed, it would be difficult for this allusion to Harold's deceptive speech to go unnoticed. Again, the fable of *The Wolf and The Goat* was probably meant to remind the viewer that it is through his voice, in the form of a fateful oath, that Harold engaged on the path towards his final fall. On yet another level, taking into account the patron's probable identity, one cannot help but marvel at Odo's audacity in using peasants and dogs to personify William and his men.

4.4.8. The Eighth Fable: *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*

In their analysis of the fables in the Tapestry, Chefneux and Terkla do not consider *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat* and the next fable, *The Lion and the Stag*, to be separate fables. They assert that the ninth fable is the continuation of the eighth, even though stylized trees are used to separate the last three fables.¹¹⁷ However, while Terkla acknowledges that a stylized tree separates *The Wolf and the Goat* from *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, he overlooks the one that divides *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat* from the ninth fable, *The Lion and the Stag*. Terkla argues that the flora in the border acts "much like the comma does in print, allowing the viewer to pause without necessitating a full stop."¹¹⁸ In spite of Terkla's assertions, perhaps the flora replaced the diagonal posts as

separating elements between the seventh, eighth and ninth fables because one of the themes, the theme of the chase, is common to all three fables, allowing them to be connected rather than isolated. It does not seem appropriate at this point in the narrative, where the preamble ends with Harold's capture, that the eighth fable be prolonged under Scene 8, as Chefneux and Terkla posit.

McNulty is more ambivalent. First, he acknowledges three fables, adding the ninth fable of *The Lion and the Stag*. Later, McNulty mentions that "arguably, the scene shows, not a ninth fable, but the conclusion of the eighth," adding that "in either case, the point remains the same," i.e., the fable is an analogy of William overcoming Harold.¹¹⁹ Again, McNulty's conclusion is a prime example of what occurs if one disregards the placement of the elements, whether in the border or in the main field, and neglects the flow of the epic in order to follow, in this case, a pro-Norman bias.

Although the last three fables, starting with *The Wolf and the Goat*, have one theme in common, namely the hunt, a close reading of the main field as well as the borders favors the separation of the eighth fable *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, from the ninth, *The Lion and the Stag*. As mentioned above, this last fable continues with the theme of the chase, yet only displays the lion's brutal capture of a stag. To refresh the reader's memory, in *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, a lion who was hungry could only find unlikely companions to accompany him on the hunt. Promising them an equal share of the future carcass, the lion and his new associates set out on the hunt. When the deer is caught and killed, the lion breaks his promise, saying that being king, the first part belongs to him automatically. The second part is also his because he is the one who assembled them and led them on the hunt. Finally, the third and fourth parts are also his because, being the strongest, he will destroy anyone who dares demand a share. Notwithstanding the fate of the hunted, the moral of this fable reiterates the famous adage: No matter the promises made beforehand, to the victor belong the spoils.¹²⁰

In the border of the tapestry, directly below Guy's men, the designer represented the incongruous foursome in pursuit of a stag. On one level, because of the event represented directly above in the main field, i.e., Harold being taken prisoner, the fable symbolized Harold being pursued by William and his unlikely companions, such as his reluctant vassal, Guy de Ponthieu. On another level, it is well-known that, when he

prepared to invade England, William gathered a motley crew, symbolized accurately by the strange group of animals portrayed in the border below Scene 7. In his effort to win the English crown, William not only appealed to his “bored Norman gentlemen,” but also “went beyond Normandy to tempt adventurers,” and “made alluring promises of land, loot, rank, and feudal rights in a rich land [England] that had lost the way of war.”¹²¹

In the border, the stag is depicted well ahead of his pursuers, because perhaps the moral of this fable concerns the hunters more than the hunted that appears to be escaping, yet is later caught in the next fable. The situation of the stag is comparable to that of Harold, who first escapes, only to be caught again and finally killed by William, like the stag in the next fable.

It is important to remember that the acknowledged patron is Odo. It is also important to keep in mind that, in all probability, Odo had an ambitious political agenda. As a result, it is likely that, with the fable of *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, the patron was keen to remind those invited to view the Tapestry that, like the lion in this fable, William made promises to those who helped him conquer England, and that many remained unfulfilled when the Tapestry was produced. Indeed, William’s unfulfilled promises may have contributed to several revolts that occurred in England after he became king.¹²²

As Harold steps from his vessel onto the domain of Guy de Ponthieu, he is embarking on a journey that led him eventually to his death. The tone of the overall narrative and of the glossing pictographs in the borders changes as soon as Harold is seized. Mocking tongues and reminders of idle speech and broken promises embedded in the main field, the pictographs, and the morals of the fables, are no longer emphasized. As the reader/viewer reaches the end of Scene 7, a large tree, with intricately braided branches blocks the way into Scene 8. Similarly, a smaller tree, also with entwined branches stands in the way of the running stag in the lower border. With the end of Scene 7, the reader comes to the conclusion of the explanatory preamble. The epic is now set to begin fully with Harold being taken prisoner to Beaurain.

5. CONCLUSION

The first seven scenes of the Bayeux Tapestry act as a multifaceted introduction to the epic unfolding in the next 51 scenes. After a thorough examination of these scenes,

there is little doubt that an examination of the main field alone is insufficient to recapture the epic with all its nuances and suggestions. Keeping in mind the probable identity of the patron, if one takes into account the layers of meaning contained in a combined reading of the main field, inscriptions and borders, the first seven scenes become infinitely more complex.

From the very beginning, the reader is informed that there is one main theme. However, one may look in vain in the center field to become acquainted with it. Instead, the lower border where two lions are placed before any action occurs in the main field, may provide a decisive clue regarding the identity of the participants and the nature of the endeavor in which they are engaged. For the first time, the observer is apprised of the significance of the placement of pictographs or figures as a means to indicate importance or to qualify events occurring elsewhere in the Tapestry. Placed at the very beginning, the lions, symbols of royalty, probably indicate to the viewer that the story revolves around two kingly individuals. At the same time, the reader/observer is made aware that posture and gesture are noteworthy. Indeed, the postures and gestures of these two royal symbols point to their emerging struggle and to their ability to hold their respective ground. The main theme of the struggle between the two pretenders is intimated once more at the beginning of Scene 2. While the postures and gestures of the two regal beasts differ somewhat, and, as explained above, indicate a change in the conduct of the two protagonists, the message is still that of a continuing struggle.

The cause for this struggle is hinted at both in the main field and the upper border of Scene 1. A majestic Edward seated in the center field may be the primal cause for the struggle between the two royal pretenders. Perhaps, he is the old lion in the upper border trying to push away a striped post holding him captive. Stripes were a probable allusion to William's illegitimacy, and, by extension, since he is the Norman Duke, to the Norman overweening presence. Taking the striped post into consideration, the depiction of this old lion may be a symbolic allusion to Edward's being held captive of the purported promise of the English crown that he made to William, which he may have wished to discard in the spring of 1064. Meanwhile, in the center field, Edward pledges his trust to Harold who readily accepts it, establishing the point of departure for the epic. Indeed, read holistically, the first scene implies that Edward may have had a change of heart regarding the succession, and turned to Harold for help.

Additionally, the old lion with his extended tongue may be viewed as the first allusion to careless speech and broken promises. It would seem that Scene 1's representation of a summary of the root cause of the struggle between Harold and William may be achieved only through a comprehensive reading of the main field, the inscriptions and the border. Beyond the main topic, and the source of the struggle, lesser themes, in the form of repeated innuendoes were included to bring to life both the struggle and the protagonists. These insinuated elements qualify the contest of strength occurring between the two pretenders. Similarly, they help define the psychological traits of the protagonists.

In Scene 2, the proud Harold -- *DUX ANGLORUM* -- shows his unabated contentment as he rides towards the port of Bosham as though he were going on a hunt. Yet, at the end of the same scene, Harold is faced with sinister omens in the form of sphinxes and birds of prey with one wing caught, that are biting their feet. Here, the second allusion to careless speech ("to put one's foot in one's mouth) was inserted, hinting at the importance of saying the right thing at the right time (give the right answer to the sphinxes). Above Scene 4, via a pair of affronted deformed lions extending mutual signs of friendship, the reader/viewer is reminded about the collusion that exists between Edward and Harold. Through the amused, mocking *genettes* also in the upper border of Scene 4, the audience is warned about Harold's future change of status from hunter to hunted.

Thus, starting in Scene 3, and through Scene 7, the observer is cautioned repeatedly about the value of speech, of the correct time to speak, and of the importance of what one utters. These admonitions are achieved through the use of protruding tongues in the main field and borders, and of birds biting their feet in the upper border. Additionally, the fables and their morals are replete with the many allusions to speech, voice, and promises made and broken. In *The Fox and the Crow*, the fox's flattery and his desire to hear the so-called beautiful voice of the crow, led the vain crow to open his beak to sing, probably symbolizing Harold whose vanity pushed him to talk carelessly. In *The Wolf and the Lamb*, the lamb's (Harold's) words of defense are futile; the wolf (William) has condemned him in advance, suggesting to the reader that Harold's voyage to Normandy will be fruitless. In *The Pregnant Bitch*, the she-dog (William) demands to be given back the house (the English throne) she temporarily loaned to another bitch and

her puppies (Harold, his relatives and followers). In *The Wolf and the Crane*, the wolf (William) reneges on his verbal promise of payment in exchange for removing a bone (the bone of contention between William and Harold regarding the succession to the throne of England). In *The Lion King*, the “ball-less” ape (Harold) argues for his life with flattery and falsehoods and saves himself once (by a false oath), only to argue once more in vain and be eaten by a wolf, the new king (William). In *The Eagle, the Frog and the Mouse*, the rodent (Harold) is betrayed by the frog and drowns, while swearing that he will take revenge on the frog (Guy); both are then destroyed by the eagle (William). In *The Wolf and the Goat*, (also known as *The Goat that Sang*) the goat (Harold) captured by the wolf (Guy) promises to sing two masses. Instead the goat cries out for help and is rescued by the peasants and their dogs (William and his men) only to fall prey to the latter. Finally, in the *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, the lion promises to his unlikely companions a share of the hunt, only to break his pledge, once he has achieved his goal. It is eminently notable that one of the functions of the first eight fables is to allude relentlessly to speech and to the breaking of promises, perhaps to remind the reader/observer of the original determinant for the epic, i.e., Edward’s complicated foreign policies and his habit of making promises he had no intention to fulfill, as well as the proximate cause for the struggle which is at the core of the narrative, i.e., Harold’s devious speech and broken oath.

However, it is probable that the fables serve other purposes as well. In fact, the fables were probably implanted at this stage of the story to develop the character and personality of the main protagonists in order to give them substance and to keep up the interest of the reader/viewer. From the first scene and the inscriptions, the reader learned that both Harold and William believed themselves worthy to inherit the English crown. They are both lions, and Harold is dubbed *DUX*, as a reminder to the audience that Harold’s status was on a par with William’s. However, no further information about the psychological traits of the participants is given or even hinted at until the fables appear in the lower border of Scene 4. Thereafter, the reader seems to be bombarded with a plethora of characteristics attributed principally to the major participants, namely William and Harold. From *The Fox and the Crow*, the reader/viewer may learn that Harold (the crow) is vain and easily swayed to his own detriment, while William (the fox) is cunning, adroit with words and tenacious. Accordingly, the fable of *The Wolf and the Lamb*

seems to provide additional insights into Harold's and William's personalities. Thus, Harold may have been vain, easily deceived and may have indulged in futile talk, but when faced with William, he was also as guileless as the lamb. Indeed, William (wolf) had learned early to be devious because of the pernicious influence of his experiences as a young orphan and bastard son of a dead duke. According to the fable of *The Pregnant Bitch*, Harold (probably, the bitch) believed himself to be in his rightful place. As history shows, Harold did not hesitate to have recourse to force to keep what he believed belonged to him, namely the English realm. Conversely, William (the other dog) wanted everyone to believe that the crown was promised to him, and, as the posture of the other dog suggests, was willing to wait for the right time to act. Again, the fable of *The Wolf and the Crane* seems to point to the gullibility of Harold who was about to trust William to release him without prejudice from Guy's clutches, no matter how outrageous the idea may seem. Indeed, from historical records one learns that Harold was loyal and over-trusting.¹²³ On the other hand, it appears that William believed the old adage "to the powerful belong the spoils." Indeed, in William's case, being powerful enough, he could make and break his promises as he wished. *The Lion King* may have provided additional information about Harold's character. Not only was he vain, easily swayed, and gullible, his courage may have faltered at times as the ball-less ape seems to indicate. However, this asexual ape may have been a pun directed at Harold who, in contrast to William, was a "known hedonist and a womanizer."¹²⁴ While a patient man, William was a relentless and devious opportunist whose power placed him above the law. Therefore, contrary to Harold, who lost in the end, William's success and increased power placed him above the opprobrium attached to the breaking of promises. Once more, the fable of *The Eagle, the Frog and the Mouse* points not only to Harold's credulity, but also to his need for revenge. It would seem that Harold was hopeless; he never learned; he took his fellow men at their face value. In other words, at the beginning of the story Harold was really a man of honor who could be tricked easily, as Edward predicted, when, according to Eadmer, he warned Harold about William. Yet, according to the fable of *The Wolf and the Goat*, Harold was not without resources: he proved to be clever when he appealed to William for his release from Guy de Ponthieu. However, truly full of guile, William outsmarted Harold, releasing him from Guy's clutches only to ensnare him in his own, and make him (Harold) his (William's) debtor.

In sum, it is probable that the borders indicate that Harold may have been proud, even vain, clever and overconfident, but he was also gullible and glib. As for William, he was powerful, wily, cruel, conceited and even ruthless; he believed that he would never be Harold's fool, and his cunning surpassed Harold's own. William was utterly unreliable, in other words he was a wolf. An analysis of separate elements in the center field, inscriptions and borders, evaluated at the level of the unit, then synthesized, suggests once more that the margins of the Tapestry act like a gloss in a manuscript, or are similar to the preamble of a *chanson de geste*. As the reader comes to the end of Scene 7, chapter 2 has provided plausible evidence that the interactions between the figures contained in the borders and the narrative in the center, explicate, develop, and even alter to some degree the viewer's perception and understanding of the main narrative.¹²⁵

¹ Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge - The Margins of Medieval Art* (1992): 10.

² Garnier, I (1982): 9.

³ McNulty (1989): 44.

⁴ McNulty (1989): 50.

⁵ Garnier, I (1982): *passim*.

⁶ Schmitt (1990): *passim*.

⁷ Gameson (1997): 191.

⁸ Lewis (1999): 51-52, 74.

⁹ For arguments "for" and "against" a chronological reading, see Lewis (1999): 51-52, 74 and 77.

¹⁰ David C. Douglas, "Edward the Confessor, Duke William of Normandy, and the English Succession," *The English Historical Review*, LXVIII (1953): 526-545; T. J. Oleson, "Edward the Confessor's Promise of the Throne to Duke William of Normandy," *The English Historical Review* LXXII (1957): 221-228; Douglas (1964): Chap. 7.

¹¹ For the other pretenders to the English throne, see J. M. Kemble, ed., *Codex diplomaticus aevi Saxonici*, 4 (1848): 74-110; Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishop of Hamburg*, Francis J. Tschan, ed. (1959): 124-25; Eric John, "Edward the Confessor and the Norman succession," *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979): 241-267; Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, Eric Christiansen, ed., 1 (1980): 210; McLynn (1999): 15 and n. 68; *ibidem*, 142.

¹² For Edward's alleged promise to William, see Guillaume de Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, J. Marx, ed. (1914): 132; Guillaume de Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi ducis Normannorum et regis Anglorum*, Raymonde Foreville, ed. (1952): 174 -76; T.J. Oleson (1957): 221-228; Guillaume de Poitiers, in J. A. Giles, *Scriptores rerum gestarum Willelmi Conquestoris* (1967): 129-130; McLynn (1999): 75-79, 83-84, 176-177.

¹³ For the quote see, McLynn (1999): 144. For the term *sub-regulus*, see Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon ex chronicis, sub-anno 1066*, Thorpe, ed., 1(1848): 224; Douglas (1964): 172; R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (2000): 116, n. 133; Rud (2002): 24. For Harold's status prior to 1066, see McLynn (1999): 132-152; R. A. Brown (2000): 92-3, 115-118.

¹⁴ For events before the Battle of Hastings, see esp. Douglas (1953): 526-545; Douglas (1964): Chap. 7; P. Zumthor, *Guillaume le Conquérant* (1978): 1-314; McLynn (1999): 1-216; and R. A. Brown (2000): 1-141.

¹⁵ For Harold's visit to Normandy, see Douglas (1953): 526-545; Douglas (1964):175; McLynn (1999): 155; R. A. Brown (2000): 110, and n. 100.

¹⁶ For the position "in majesty," see Garnier, II (1989): 54; Garnier, I (1982): 142. For the positions "in state" and "in action," see Meyer Schapiro, *Words and Pictures* (1973): 17-36.

- ¹⁷ For the meaning of the open palm, see Garnier, 1(1982): 174; H. E. J. Cowdrey's comment that "F. Garnier, *Le Langage de l'image au moyen age – Signification et Symbolique*, refers only to manuscript illumination," is inaccurate (see, H. E. J. Cowdrey, "Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry," Gameson, ed. (1997): 93); Pierre-Gilles Girault, *Un langage sans parole. L'image au moyen âge* (1992): 11-12.
- ¹⁸ For Harold's mission, see Eadmer, M. Rule, ed. (1884): 5-6; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 100-104; Giles (1967): 107-08; .
- ¹⁹ Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, L. Delisle and A. Le Prévost, eds., 2 (1838-1855): 116; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, W. Stubbs, ed., 1 (1887): 278-79; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 132-33.
- ²⁰ McLynn (1999): 159.
- ²¹ Eadmer, M. Rule, ed. (1884): 6; Eadmer's *History of Recent Events in England*, Geoffrey Bosanquet, ed. and trans. (1964): 6.
- ²² For Eadmer's version of Harold's mission to Normandy, see Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. and trans. (1964): 6; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 100-106; Basing his findings on Wace and William of Malmesbury, Fowke (1913): 26, finds three reasons for Harold's voyage: to secure the release of the hostages (Wace); to go on a fishing expedition (Wm. Malmesbury); and to reassure William concerning his succession to the throne of England (Wm. Malmesbury); for more recent debates, see Douglas (1964): 175-76; Bertrand (1966): 77; Dodwell (1966): 554; Bernstein (1986): 17; S. A. Brown (1988): 33; McNulty (1989): 4; for a summary, see Foy (1998): 462-67; for a discussion of the various hypothesis concerning Harold's visit to Normandy, see McLynn (1999): 157-161.
- ²³ Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. and trans. (1964): 8.
- ²⁴ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (1961): 124; see also Lewis (1999): 102.
- ²⁵ In J. Collingwood Bruce's reproduction of Charles Stothard's drawings made prior to the nineteenth-century renovation, these lions are damaged, but not to the point where their demeanor is altered to an irretrievable degree. For a reproduction of Stothard's drawings, first shown in J. C. Bruce, *The Bayeux Tapestry Elucidated*, 2nd ed. (1885/1987), see McNulty (1989): 84 -146.
- ²⁶ Bernstein (1986): 127.
- ²⁷ McNulty (1989): 85.
- ²⁸ For the meaning of the face in profile, see Garnier, 1 (1982): 125 &142-43; and Girault (1992): 11.
- ²⁹ Michel Pastoureau, *L'étoffe du diable. Une histoire des rayures et des tissus rayés* (1991): 43.
- ³⁰ Pastoureau (1991): 43.
- ³¹ Pastoureau, (1991): 27-30; Gaston Duchet-Suchaux, *Bestiaire roman* (1992): 24; Michel Pastoureau, *Rayures - Une histoire des rayures et des tissus rayés* (1995): 20-21, 131, n. 6.
- ³² Pastoureau (1995): 19, 131 n. 13.
- ³³ Ibidem, 96.
- ³⁴ For the architecture in the BT, see R. A. Brown, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 76-87.
- ³⁵ Garnier, I (1982): 136-37.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 22.
- ³⁷ Andrew Bridgeford, "Was Count Eustace II of Boulogne the patron of the Bayeux Tapestry?" *Journal of Medieval History*, 25/3 (1999): 158.
- ³⁸ Bernstein (1986): 125-26.
- ³⁹ Pastoureau (1991): passim; Pastoureau (1995): passim.
- ⁴⁰ Bernstein (1986): 125-26.
- ⁴¹ Ibidem, 125-26.
- ⁴² ASC, "E," sub anno 1087, PL 155:37.
- ⁴³ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, Chibnall, ed., vol. 2 (1969):196, 202, 264-66; and vol. 4 (1973): 40-44, 98-100, 114-18, 124-34, 149-55; Bates, (1975): 1, 11.
- ⁴⁴ Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 202-203.
- ⁴⁵ McNulty (1989): 65.
- ⁴⁶ For Odo, see William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 334; S. E. Gleason, *An Ecclesiastical Barony of the Middle Ages. The Bishopric of Bayeux, 1066-1204* (1936): 8-17; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952) 2:134, 136, 240-42; see esp. Bates (1975): 1-20.
- ⁴⁷ Fowke (1913): 27 and n. 1; McNulty (1989): 68.

- ⁴⁸ Garnier, II (1989): 220-222, 386-388 shows several examples of the fleurs-de-lis fulfilling this role, the oldest dating from the ninth century (*Psautier de Corbie*, Amiens, Médiathèque, MS 18, fol. 17v.); for the symbolism of the fleur-de-lis, see also Monique Rey-Delqué, ed. *Voir et Comprendre au Moyen Age – Visuelle et Gestuelle* (1994): 53 ; see also above Chap. I, n. 5.
- ⁴⁹ For Harold's status, see H. E. J. Cowdrey, "Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 93-110, esp. 96; see also above Chap. 2, n. 13.
- ⁵⁰ For the fettered birds, see Bernstein (1986): 125. For the sphinxes, see Abraham and Létienne (1929): 491.
- ⁵¹ Hallé (1989): 39 ; McNulty (1989): 39, 85.
- ⁵² For a description of the sphinx, and its symbolism, see Jacques Duchaussoy, *Le bestiaire divin* (1972): 225-26 ; Philippe Seringe, *Les symboles* (1995): 174 ; Michel Cazenave, ed., *Encyclopédie des symboles* (1996): 653-54; Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionnaire des symboles* (2000): 906-907.
- ⁵³ For additional information about linkage in this area of the BT and others, see McNulty (1989): 44-50.
- ⁵⁴ McNulty (1989): 68.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, 68.
- ⁵⁶ Additionally, the Godwins had been instrumental in forcing Robert of Jumièges out of his see in 1052, see Bernstein (1986): 17; Fowke (1913): 27 and n. 1.
- ⁵⁷ For Odo's character, see Bates (1975): 9.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 87.
- ⁵⁹ Garnier I (1982): 136.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 136.
- ⁶¹ For Edward's "promises," see Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (1970): 107-08, 117; J. S. Beckerman, "Succession in Normandy, 1087, and in England, 1066; The Role of Testamentary Custom," *Speculum*, 47 (1972): 258-260; McLynn (1999): 79, 177; Ann Williams, "Some Notes and Considerations on Problems connected with the English Royal Succession, 860-1066," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 1 (1978): 144-167, see esp. 165.
- ⁶² For Harold's capture, see R. A. Brown (2000): 110-11; McLynn (1999): 155-156 and 282 n. 6.
- ⁶³ *Exeter Book*, W. S. Mackie, trans. (1934): pt. II, 63.
- ⁶⁴ Rabannus Maurus, *De Universo*, VII, PL CXI: 229-30.
- ⁶⁵ For the quote, see Thomas Wright, *Popular Treatises on Science Written During the Middle Ages in Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, and English* (1841): 84; for the dragon, see Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XII, IV, *De serpentibus*, P.L LXXXII, 442-448; also in J. André, ed. and trans. (1964): 2; Rabannus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, P.L CXI, 230; Jacques Voisenet, *Bêtes et Hommes dans le monde médiéval* (2000): 95.
- ⁶⁶ Fowke (1913): 57; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, T. Arnold, ed. (1879): 121, 183.
- ⁶⁷ Madeline Caviness, "Obscenity and alterity: images that shock and offend us/then, now/then," in *Obscenity: Social Control and Artistic Creation in the European Middle Ages*, Jan M. Ziolkowski, ed. (1998): 155-175, see esp. 172.
- ⁶⁸ For the symbolic significance of changes in hairstyles, see above "Introduction," 22 n.79.
- ⁶⁹ For the history of the comtes de Ponthieu and of their struggles with the Norman dukes, see D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (1982): esp. 77; C. Brunel, *Recueil des actes des comtes de Ponthieu* (1930): iv; Hariulf, *Chronicon Centulense*, F. Lot, ed. (1894): 193, 204, 230, 282; Douglas (1964): 67, 176-77; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 132-33; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 100-06; McLynn (2002): 155-56; John Gillingham, "William the Bastard at war," *The Battle of Hastings*, S. Morillo, ed. (1995): 109; Christian Pfister, *Etudes sur le règne de Robert le Pieux (996-1031)* (1883), passim; Edmond Pognon, *La vie quotidienne en l'an mille* (1981): 289.
- ⁷⁰ McNulty (1989): 87.
- ⁷¹ The *généttés* are found only in Europe, and North-Africa. The name is derived from the Arabic, *jerneit*.
- ⁷² McNulty (1989): 85.
- ⁷³ For the vulture, see Eugène Droulers, *Dictionnaire des Attributs, Allégories, Emblèmes et Symboles* (undated): 224 ; Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism* (1992): 370-71.
- ⁷⁴ The other *vorant-de-lys* is found in the upper border of Scene 40.
- ⁷⁵ For a partial copy of Bruce's drawing of Scene 7, see McNulty (1989): 88.

- ⁷⁶ For the griffin, see Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, XII, André, ed. (1986): 17; Rabannus Maurus, PL CXI: 222; Thomas Bullfinch, *Age of Fable* (1867): 178-79; B. Rowland, *Animals with Human Faces* (1973): 87; Janetta R. Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie* (1992): 129-130; Félix-Pierre Fornas, *Le bestiaire roman et son symbolisme* (1998): 48-49; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 487.
- ⁷⁷ See Prov. 26:11, quoted in 2 Peter 2:22; see also Voisenet (2000): 75.
- ⁷⁸ Michael Camille, "Mouths and Meanings: Towards an Anti-Iconography of Medieval Art," in *Iconography at the Crossroads*, B. Cassidy, ed. (1993): 43-57, esp. 51-52.
- ⁷⁹ Jacques Voisenet, *Bestiaire Chrétien* (1994): 86-87.
- ⁸⁰ Avianus, *Fables* (1980): passim; Phaedrus, *Phaedri fabulae aesopiae* (1969): passim; For Romulus, see M. Zink, "Le monde animal et ses représentations dans la littérature française du Moyen Age (11^e - 15^e siècle)," *Actes du XV^e congrès de la S.H.M.E.S.P., Toulouse, 25-26 mai 1984* (1985): 47-71, esp. 63; Voisenet (1994): 83, and n. 105.
- ⁸¹ For a list of early medieval sources, see Voisenet (1994): 337-347; see also Zink (1985): 47-71.
- ⁸² For the lamb, see Rabannus Maurus, PL CXI: 202; For the fox, see *ibidem*, 214.
- ⁸³ Pseudo-Maximus of Turin, *Homily CIV*, PL LVII: 494; see also Gen. 49:27, for the wolf's rapacity.
- ⁸⁴ Camille (1993): 51.
- ⁸⁵ For a post-modern discussion of characters and personalities in the BT, see Lewis (1999): 36-37.
- ⁸⁶ Abraham and Létienne (1929): 504; Bernstein (1986): 133-34; Chefneux (1934): 5-6; Herrmann (1964): 16-17; Terkla (1995): 269-70; the fable of *The Fox and the Crow* was already mentioned in the early text, see J. Collingwood Bruce, *The Book of the Bayeux Tapestry* (1914): 19; P.C.F. Daunou, "Recherches sur la Tapisserie représentant la conquête de l'Angleterre par les normands, par M. L'abbé de la Rue," *Journal des Savants* (1826): 695; Fowke (1913): 32; Montfaucon, I (1729): 373.
- ⁸⁷ Fowke (1913): 32; Eric MacLagan, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1949): 15.
- ⁸⁸ Abraham and Létienne (1929) 504; Chefneux (1934): 5-6; Herrmann (1964): 16-17; Yapp (1987): 36.
- ⁸⁹ McNulty (1989): 28-29.
- ⁹⁰ Terkla (1995): 269-70.
- ⁹¹ Bernstein (1986): 133-34.
- ⁹² Janet B. Kopito, ed., *The Fables of Aesop* (2002): 19-20.
- ⁹³ Duchet-Suchaux (1992): 8.
- ⁹⁴ Abraham and Létienne, (1929) 505-06; Bernstein (1986): 130; Chefneux (1934): 6-7; Herrmann (1964): 20; Terkla (1995): 270-71; Yapp (1987): 36.
- ⁹⁵ For the quote, see Aesop, Kopito, ed. (2002): 4-5; For the nature and symbolism of the wolf, see R. Delort, *Les animaux ont une histoire* (1993): 267; Voisenet (2000): 75-77.
- ⁹⁶ ASC, "E," in D.C. Douglas, ed., *English Historical Documents II* (1953): 163.
- ⁹⁷ For protruding tongues, see Garnier, I (1982): 136.
- ⁹⁸ Abraham and Létienne (1929) 506; Bernstein (1986): 130-31; Chefneux (1934): 7-8; Herrmann (1964): 21; Terkla (1995): 271; Yapp (1987): 36-37.
- ⁹⁹ Lancelot, 6 (1729): 755; Abraham and Létienne (1929): 507; Bernstein (1986): 131-32; Bruce (1987): 19; Chefneux (1934): 8-9; Herrmann (1964): 16-17; Terkla (1995): 272; Yapp, (1987): 35.
- ¹⁰⁰ Rabannus Maurus, *De Universo* VIII, 6, PL CXI : 244D.
- ¹⁰¹ Aesop, Kopito, ed. (2002): 10-11.
- ¹⁰² McNulty (1989): 29.
- ¹⁰³ For various interpretations, see Abraham and Létienne (1929) 509; Herrmann (1964): 23; Marie de France, Bibl. nat. fr. 24.428, fol. 103 recto, "*De lupo regnante*," in Chefneux (1934): 11-12; McNulty (1989): 27; Terkla (1995): 272.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hallé (1985): 81
- ¹⁰⁵ *Physiologus latinus - versio B*, F. J. Carmody, ed. (1939): chap. XXI, "*Onager et simian*;" also *Physiologus latinus - versio Y*, F. J. Carmody, ed. (1941): chap. XXV, "*Onager et simius*."
- ¹⁰⁶ Schmitt (1990): 137; for the quote, see Benton (1992): 90.
- ¹⁰⁷ McLynn (1999): 137.
- ¹⁰⁸ Chefneux (1934): 13-14, 14 n. 1 & 2; Herrmann (1964): 24; Terkla (1995): 273.
- ¹⁰⁹ Abraham and Létienne (1929): 509.
- ¹¹⁰ McNulty (1989): 32-33.

- ¹¹¹ McLynn (1999): 89.
- ¹¹² Fowke (1913): 46.
- ¹¹³ Douglas (1964): 176-77.
- ¹¹⁴ Herrmann (1964): 25-26.
- ¹¹⁵ Chefneux (1934): 14 -17, and Terkla (1995): 273-74, identify one fable, *The Wolf and the Goat* (*The Goat that Sang*); Marie de France, Bibl. Nat., ms. fr. 2173, fol. 90 recto, "*De lupo et capra*," also in Chefneux (1934): 16; while Herrmann (1964): 25-26, sees two fables, *the Wolf and the Goat* and the *Envious Fox*, where there is only one, *the Wolf and the Goat*; McNulty (1989): 30, mentions *The Wolf and the Goat*, yet fails to connect the first representation of this fable with the narrative.
- ¹¹⁶ Terkla (1995): 274.
- ¹¹⁷ Chefneux (1934): 14-20; Terkla (1995): 273-75.
- ¹¹⁸ Terkla (1995): 274.
- ¹¹⁹ McNulty (1989): 34; for the quote, see *ibidem*, 91.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.
- ¹²¹ For the quote, see Morris Bishop, "The First Four Norman Kings of England," *Horizon*, VIII/4 (1966): 8. For the diversity of the men who participated in the invasion of England with William, see R. H. George, "The Contribution of Flanders to the Conquest of England," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 5(1926): 81-97; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville (1952): 150, 192; J. O. Prestwich, "War and Finance in the Anglo-Norman State," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, IV(1954): 19-44; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2(1969): 144; *The "Carmen de Hastingae Proelio" of Guy of Amiens*, Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz, eds. (1972): 18; Paul Zumthor, *Guillaume le Conquérant* (1978): 296; Stephen Brown, "Military Service and Monetary Reward in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *History*, 74 (1989): 20-38; George Beech, "The Participation of Aquitanians in the Conquest of England, 1066-1100," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 9 (1986): 1-24; McLynn (1999): 185-186; R. A. Brown (2000): 131.
- ¹²² R. A. Brown (2000): 166-167 and 170-174; Douglas (1964): 207-215.
- ¹²³ For Harold's character and personality, see Freeman, 2 (1870): 38; William of Malmesbury, *De gestis pontificum Anglorum*, N.E. S. A. Hamilton, ed. (1870): 207; William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 1 (1887): 380; William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani*, R. R. Darlington, ed. (1928): 13; D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (1989): 217-20; E. Mason, *St. Wulfstan of Worcester* (1990): 65-7, 219-21; McLynn (1999): 135-36; R. A. Brown (2000): 92-93.
- ¹²⁴ *ASC*, "C," sub anno 1039; for the quote, see McLynn (1999): 137.
- ¹²⁵ Dodwell (1966): 559.

CHAPTER III

GUY DE PONTHEIU IMPRISONS HAROLD

HAROLD MEETS WILLIAM

SCENES 8 -15

The perceived character of visual things is strongly determined by what surrounds them, so that as long as these surroundings are not defined, any particular thing will be subject to an uncontrollable number of meanings...The frame defines the picture as a closed entity, a center that exerts its dynamic effects upon its surroundings as well as upon its own inside field.¹

Rudolph Arnheim
The Power of the Center

The men of the Middle Ages participated in two lives: the official and the carnival life. Two aspects of the world, the serious and the laughing aspect, co-existed in their consciousness.²

M. M. Bakhtin
Rabelais and his World

These two quotes address two different thrusts for my research on the Bayeux Tapestry. The first directs the attention of the reader towards the osmosis and symbiosis that occur between the borders and the main field, including the inscriptions. The second relates to the culture that produced the Tapestry and qualifies its proposed contemporary audience. So far, I have suggested that the pictographs in the border combined with the figures in the main field, their postures, gestures and placement seem to help in identifying and clarifying the major theme of the epic, i.e., the struggle between two would-be kings and their efforts to capture the English crown. The pictographs and their combination with the figures in the central field also appear to be beneficial in pinpointing the starting point for the struggle, i.e., King Edward's desire to secure Harold's help in ascertaining William's intention vis-à-vis the English succession, and perhaps even in finding a compromise to obtain his (Edward's) release from his purported promise to William. The fables and their morals seem to play a definite role in bringing another dimension into the epic. The fables and their morals probably serve to qualify the personalities of the main protagonists, and give them substance by constructing their psychological portraits one symbolic element at a time. Trained to read symbolic meanings into ordinary scenes, the medieval viewers would have been able to

decipher these elements. Indeed, reading “below the surface” was natural to the late eleventh-century reader. The meaning of symbolic attributes or themes was part of the collective memory of the medieval readers/viewers. As Jacques Le Goff observed, “Medieval man, like Baudelaire, lived in a ‘forest of symbols’,” ... “Medieval man was an assiduous ‘decipherer’.”³

1. **SCENE 8: “...ET IBI EVM TENVIT ”**

A tree with a bicolor trunk and quadri-color braided branches separates the main field of Scenes 7 and 8, perhaps referring to the intricately entwined fates of the antagonists. Conversely, the dogs running in the main field and the words of the inscriptions bridge the two scenes and serve to lead the gaze of the reader into Scene 8. In the main field, Harold is portrayed riding ahead of Guy and his knights. Contrary to his men, whose necks have been shaved, Guy’s hair reaches his nape. Perhaps the difference in haircut was meant to intimate that Guy is continuing to act independently of William, while Harold is brought “*AD BELREM*” in Scene 9. An analysis of the borders may provide further information concerning the events taking place in the main field.

1.1. **SCENE 8: A Dog, Vultures, and Distorted Lions in the Upper Border**

The first animal above Scene 8 is a dark-colored dog, the second of the pair depicted in the upper border of Scene 7, explained in Chapter II. In medieval times, dogs, especially black or dark-colored dogs, were associated with felony and with the forces of evil.⁴ It is probable that this particular dog is used to personify Guy, whose character and actions at this point in the narrative may be compared to those of a *canis*, i.e., *canaille*. The despicable quality of Guy’s actions is reinforced by the inclusion of this growling, dark-colored dog performing a restraining gesture with his right paw while facing off against the other foolish, blabbing dog on the left, probably symbolizing Harold. Similarly, by crossing the channel into William’s territory, Harold, the other *canaille*, is in the process of engaging in a series of contemptible actions of his own related chiefly to his propensity to use his tongue inappropriately and irreverently -- like the foolish dog at the end of Scene 7.

Next to the dogs, two birds with twisted necks are hovering above Guy and his men taking the English prisoners back to *Beaurain*.⁵ It appears that Harold’s status is questioned once more in the main field where he is represented as both the hunter and the

hunted.⁶ Indeed, the ambivalence is notable. Below the vulture-like birds in the border, Guy's tight hold on a hawk, facing backwards to prevent it from taking flight, may have been a deliberate attempt to symbolize Guy's tight hold on Harold.⁷ As a confirmation, Harold is riding spur-less, an indication of his status as a prisoner.⁸ Conversely, Harold's hawk -- to which Harold is pointing with the index finger of his right hand -- is perched once more on his left fist, indicating that Harold's status as a hunter, an aphorism for a man of substance and "a symbol of aristocracy" in early medieval culture, was restored to him.⁹

The birds with small heads and long, bent necks at the beginning of Scene 8, are carrion eaters, most probably vultures, with their prominent curved beaks, designed to tear flesh (the one on the right is clearly visible), and long, featherless necks. Besides being rapacious and predatory, vultures were reputed to forewarn those who saw them of a great danger, possibly their impending death.¹⁰ The vultures' unsavory reputation and their symbolism seem to fit Harold's predicament. They are also suitable for the type of men with whom Harold is embroiled below. Besides questioning Harold's status, the combination of the events in the main field with the symbolism of the border pictographs seems to forewarn the reader about the dangers that Harold was about to encounter.

Two affronted creatures, resembling lions, follow the carrion eaters in the upper border. With their tails raised and tongues sticking out, the deformed beasts are confronting each other impudently. It was commonly known to the medieval reader that physical distortions and aberrant behaviors were signs of evil. Once more, protruding tongues may be an allusion to mockery and the incontinent use of one's tongue to produce deleterious speech, perhaps a warning to the reader qualifying the type of verbal exchange about to occur between Harold and Guy during the meeting depicted in Scene 9.¹¹ The heads of these two leonine creatures, especially the one on the left, are also pushing on the border as though attempting to break free.¹² Similarly Harold and his men are held captive below, probably harboring the secret desire to escape.

Additionally, these two lions, in close proximity to Harold and pro-Norman knights -- Guy's men are now shown with typical Norman hairstyles -- may remind the readers of the main theme of the story once more, i.e., the continuing struggle between two pretenders to the English throne (William and Harold). The distorted aspect of the lions and their protruding tongues insinuate elements of duplicity, mockery and evil

linked to speech. The use of deformed regal beasts performing mocking gestures may have suggested to the audience that William and Harold had no respect for each other, and that they were not overly impressed by their respective achievements. At this point, it is important to remind the reader that William's conquest of England had not gone as smoothly as he may have hoped. In fact, when the Tapestry was made, Norman rule over England was still being questioned and tested.¹³ From what is known about Odo, the most likely patron, it would have been in character for him to use whatever method was available, in this case animal imagery, to render manifest latent undercurrents of discontent, and to use them for his ambitious purposes and those of his allies.

In general, the animals in the upper border of Scene 8 are well-suited to accompany a scene of unlawful capture and detainment. True to his earlier portrayal, Harold, a would-be king (portrayed below a fleur-de-lis), may also be an untrustworthy blabber. However, Guy is a *canaille*. Likewise, he and his men are akin to vultures because of their rapacious appetite for any enrichment scheme. Openly trying to escape the limits of the frame, the distorted lions with protruding tongues -- especially the one on the left, closest to Harold -- may have been used to ridicule the two pretenders surreptitiously, especially William who was king when the Tapestry was produced, and who seems to have been the patron's primary target. An examination of the imagery in the lower border may confirm and emphasize these findings.

1.2. **SCENE 8: *The Lion and the Stag* and Pictographs in the Lower Border**

Directly below the last riders going towards Beaurain at the beginning of Scene 8, probably guided by the patron, the designer inserted the ninth and last fable in the first series. Chefneux and Terkla posited that the ninth fable, *The Lion and the Stag*, was in fact the continuation of the eighth, *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*.¹⁴ However, paralleling the quadri-colored tree in the main field, a similar ornate tree separates the last two fables in the lower border. In fact, the last three fables (fables 7, 8 and 9), are separated by plant life, contrary to the first six fables divided securely by diagonal bars. Perhaps this type of separation, more akin to a linkage, may be attributed to a similarity in one of the themes, the theme of the chase, pervading fables 7, 8 and 9.

While Chefneux and Terkla join fables 8 and 9, another fable specialist, Léon Herrmann separates them. Yet, it is unfortunate that Herrmann failed to notice the antlers on the stag, which led him to misidentify the ninth fable as *The Lion and the Donkey*

Hunting Together.¹⁵ In Herrmann's defense, the only sign that makes the identification of the stag possible is an antler. As McNulty notes the "antler of the stag, [is] easily overlooked in the Tapestry, [because it] closely parallels the lion's tail."¹⁶

In the fable of *The Lion and the Stag*, a stag was being pursued by two sets of assailants. While escaping from dogs, his original pursuers, the stag fell prey to a lion. In spite of reading the content of the fable accurately, McNulty failed to explain the fable in the context of the main field and the upper border. Ignoring that this fable referred first to dogs, and the probable symbolic relationship of the dogs to Guy and his men, McNulty associated the stag's fate to Harold's escaping first from William, then winning the battle at Stamford Bridge against Harold Hardrada, and finally falling back into William's hands and being killed at Hastings.¹⁷ However, rather than associating this episode with the battle of Stamford Bridge, it seems more appropriate to derive an interpretation of the events from what is depicted above in the main field of Scene 8. In this case, it is likely that the failed capture of the stag by dogs mimics Harold's capture by Guy. As the audience knew, this capture was not entirely successful, and was followed by Harold's release to, and detainment by William. The capture of the stag, which is the only part of the ninth fable represented in the Tapestry, emphasizes the part of the epic that is the most important, perhaps foreshadowing Harold's capture by William (the lion in the fable), which resulted in Harold's incautious oath and final destruction at William's hands.

Only a tree separates the lion killing the stag and the griffin immediately to the right. Failing to see the talons of this griffin, McNulty questioned the identification of the pair of adorsed animals as griffins, stating only that "griffins? (though without talons) maintain the basic balanced border motif." In fact, the first griffin of the pair has highly visible claws, which, according to ancient beliefs, were the seat of the griffin's strength.¹⁸ Only the second griffin seems to be without claws.

Again, it appears that the animals in the borders were intended to qualify the characters, personality and actions of the figures in the main field. The placement of the clawed griffin, the first to follow the fable of *The Lion and the Stag* almost directly below Guy, seems to correlate the two, giving a clear indication of the aggressive nature of Harold's captor, and of his desire for easily acquired power and wealth. By extension, and since Guy was William's man, this griffin may also be associated with William who

was vying for the crown and wealth of England. Similarly, the placement of the talonless griffin below Harold seems to intimate that Harold's capture rendered him powerless, perhaps bringing to the reader's attention the comical tidbit that, like the griffin, Harold has symbolically been de-clawed. Perhaps to reinforce this reading, next to the griffins, the designer introduced two birds with their necks lowered and their heads touching the ground as though in utter submission. One of the wings of each bird is outstretched and caught behind a diagonal bar. Again these two captive birds, assuming a position symbolizing humiliation, parallel the situation in which Harold and the English knights find themselves directly above.

In the case of Scene 8, the pictographs in the upper border seem to first qualify Guy as a *canaille* (black dog), then both Guy and his companions, as rapacious men (vultures). The malformed lions placed above the captured Englishmen may impart an element of distortion not only to Harold's image, but also to William's, whose presence pervades the story vicariously since the beginning of the Tapestry and is intimated by pro-Norman men in the main field. Through the ingenious device of distorted, mocking beasts, one may have hoped to deride not only Harold, but also William, pointing out that in either case, England would have a flawed king. Additionally the pictographs in the lower border probably symbolized the perils that Harold and his companions faced. Next to the griffins, the birds cowering in shame suggested that the humiliated Harold (directly above in the main field) should "lay low" and hope for a quick release from his bonds as he is about to face Guy in the next scene.

2. SCENE 9: "UBI HAROLDO ET WIDO PARABOLANT"

Scene 9 is the locus of the formal meeting between Guy and Harold. This scene parallels Scene 12, in which William is first represented as he receives one of Harold's companions who came begging for help in securing Harold's release. These two scenes form the bracket for the parenthetical phrase encompassing Scenes 9 through 12. The four scenes are devoted to the sequence of events leading to Harold's rescue from Guy's clutches. The inscription, "Where Harold and Guy are conversing," is non-committal as usual. However, as in earlier scenes, elements of composition may help enlighten the reader.

From all appearances, the meeting between Harold and Guy took place within the confines of Guy's great hall. Guy is enthroned formally and, with his sword held upright, demonstrates that he holds a position of power.¹⁹ Besides the lack of a cushion on Guy's bench, which, as Fowke pointed out, may be an indication of his inferior rank, Guy's seated position seems precarious.²⁰ His feet are barely touching the top of his footstool, as though the seat were too high for him, perhaps intimating that Guy imagined his position to be more important than it was in reality. Guy's probable delusion of grandeur was also highlighted by the size of his throne, much too large for him. As well, the heads of dogs adorning Guy's seat of power, seemed to comment once more on Guy's disreputable character.

However, two details of the scene need to be mentioned. First, the back of Guy's head is completely shaven midway through the crown in the Norman fashion. Thus, it is as a full-fledged pro-Norman vassal of William that Guy faces Harold. Secondly, in an effort to reinforce the message given by Guy's appearance, the ceiling of the room in which the meeting is progressing is decorated with a checkered pattern, the *varietas*, which also links Guy to William and the Norman cause. Essentially, details of Guy's appearance, his size vis-à-vis the size of his "throne," and, as will be shown below, his placement vis-à-vis the pictographs in the border, serve as unstated comments that, notwithstanding Guy's trappings as a lawful vassal of William, he remains a *canaille*, and a small, pretentious pawn involved in a larger struggle that has evil connotations. Concurring with the assessment that evil intent may have permeated the proceedings, the little man who is holding onto one of the columns delineating Guy's hall and framing the scene, is performing the well-known sign against the evil eye with his right hand, extending two fingers of his closed right hand towards the next scene.²¹ Through an examination of the borders, the reader/viewer may be able to obtain a greater insight into the exchange taking place in the main field.

2.1. SCENE 9: Birds and Dogs in the Upper Border

The two birds in the upper border have twisted necks. For McNulty, "the birds, their necks twisted, suggest by analogy Harold's awkward circumstances in the scene below."²² Indeed, the neck of the bird positioned above Harold is so twisted that it seems to form a knot, indicating the bird's complete inability to emit any sound, perhaps

reflecting Harold's powerlessness, and especially, his impeded speech. While constrained by his posture, the bird on the right is still able to preen himself, perhaps symbolizing that in spite of the self-inflicted volatile situation in which the bird (Guy) finds himself, he is satisfied with the outcome – preening being a sign of contentment. Additionally, distortion denoting an evil ingredient, may also be interpreted as highlighting the unlawful character of the proceedings taking place below, as well as the mutual desire of the protagonists to literally “wring the other's neck.” These twisted birds in the upper border of Scene 9 may have reaffirmed Harold's lack of power, and Guy's contentment despite the restraint that he must use while acting as William's vassal. However, they also seem to point to the impossibility of Guy harming Harold without retribution. In essence, Harold may be a captive, but Guy is as much of a prisoner as Harold, because he has to operate according to the rules of vassalage, which theoretically were supposed to discourage him from performing actions that his liege, i.e., William, frowned upon.

Next to the twisted birds, a pair of affronted animals, identifiable as dogs, bridge Scenes 9 and 10. These two *canes* -- like the two *canailles* they may represent -- seem content as they appear to be proceeding merrily toward each other with a bouncing gait. It is interesting to note that dogs in the upper border, paralleled by quadri-colored trees in the main field, open and close (beginning of Scene 8 and end of Scene 9 respectively) Harold's formal entanglement with Guy, framing the unsavory episode where he is brought to Guy's castle. In spite of the restraint and evil ingredient implied by the birds with the twisted necks, the visible satisfaction, illustrated in the dogs' attitude and confident posture, seems to indicate the successful completion of this incident. One may surmise that Guy was satisfied because he probably was in the process of negotiating a sizable ransom, thus perhaps, in a strange twist of fate, retrieving part or all of the ransom that was paid to free him from two years of imprisonment in one of William's dungeons at Bayeux (1054-56).²³ For other reasons, Harold may have been temporarily just as content as Guy to be close to regaining what he believed to be his freedom.²⁴

2.2. SCENE 9: Lions in the Lower Border

Consistent with the twisted birds, the lions in the lower border seem to express the mutual lack of respect the two antagonists probably felt. However, those lions are distinctly different. On the left, a growling lion, his jaws open in a mute roar was placed

directly below Harold. Separated by two slanting bars, the mute lion on the right, set partly below Guy's bench, wears a sardonic expression on its face. Contrary to the distorted lions in the upper border of the previous scene, these two beasts are adorsed while their heads are twisted back to face each other, and their tails, ending in a three-prong tuft, are wrapped around their rump with the ends pointing in the direction of the other lion. Once again, the two lions may be representative of the two pretenders to the English throne. Placed directly below Harold, the lion on the left may symbolize Harold who is angry at being held prisoner. The smug-faced lion on the right may signify William and the Norman cause personified by the self-satisfied Guy. The posture, back to back, of these two lions, symbols of power and royalty, seems to enforce the mutual lack of respect of the opposite factions striving to rule England. This mutual lack of respect was encountered previously, and hinted at again in the main field of Scene 9. Once more, the borders seem to qualify the central field, explaining that, despite the malaise, and constraint inherent to the events illustrated in Scenes 8 and 9, and expressed by the distorted animals in the upper border and the placements and postures of the lions in the lower border, both parties may have attained a degree of satisfaction commensurate with their respective positions, as the preening birds and the content dogs, reflecting Guy's and Harold's state of mind, seem to intimate.

3. **SCENE 12: "HIC VENIT NVNTIVS AD WILGELMUM DUCEM"**

From Scene 9 it is necessary to jump to scene 12 to follow the story, which is an ingenious procedure to express the almost simultaneity of the events taking place while Guy holds Harold prisoner.²⁵ As mentioned earlier, the representations of Guy in state with sword held upright (Scene 9), and of William (Scene 12), form a bracket for the parenthetical phrase in which are explained the intervening events pursuant to Harold's capture by Guy and his men. Within the bracketing scenes (Scenes 9 and 12), the chain of events illustrated in the central narrative, as well as the pictographs in the border run in the usual direction, from left to right. Only in Scenes 10 and 11, which are inside the bracket, does the narrative flow in reverse, from right to left.

In Scene 12, William is receiving Harold's envoy, probably sent for the sole purpose of convincing William to help secure Harold's release. No longer intimidated or symbolized by animal imagery, William is physically present in human form for the first time in the Tapestry. Conversely, Harold is present vicariously through the dragon held

captive on the shield of the guard standing behind the kneeling Anglo-Saxon. A dragon was already used on a shield in Scene 7, illustrating Harold's capture by Guy and his men. In Scene 7, probably summarizing the situation of the captured Harold, the dragon, which was part of the emblem of Wessex, was depicted as powerless with its tail tied and his jaws biting one of its wings. In Scene 11, the dragon's tail still appears to be knotted, the wings are close to the body, and the head seems to hang low as though to symbolize Harold's misery at being held prisoner.

The majority of the architectural elements found in this scene are decorated with a checkered pattern, again linking *diversitas* or *varietas* to William and the Norman cause. William is represented in state; but unlike Guy, William is seated comfortably on a cushioned bench with his feet resting squarely on a stool. The bench on which he sits is also adorned with dogs' heads that appear to have acquired a life of their own. The one on the left is turned towards William and looking squarely at him, while the one on the right has its eyes closed and seems to be barking silently. One may wonder if the two dogs' heads were meant as sly commentaries on William's actions, and/or on the content of the exchange that is taking place between William and one of Harold's men.

It may be that these particular dogs' heads were meant to poke fun at William who is represented in the process of accomplishing a gesture, which may be perceived as royal, at a time when he was only a duke. Indeed, William's hand movement is similar to King Edward's gesture towards Harold in the first scene. With his index finger extended, he is touching the index finger of the Englishman half-kneeling before him. With this gesture, William was probably pledging to help Harold. But the dogs' heads, and the manner in which they are depicted, as well as the negative symbolism attached to dogs, seem to insert an element of doubt and perhaps evil into the proceedings, perhaps insinuating that William may have had ulterior motives for helping Harold. An examination of the pictographs in the upper border, and of the fable in the lower border may provide additional hints.

3.1. SCENE 12: Rams and Fowls in the Upper Border

In the upper border at the beginning of Scene 12, the only pair of affronted rams portrayed in the Tapestry appears to be pausing, as though in the process of measuring their mutual might and determination prior to an encounter. The one on the left is partly above a tree dividing Scenes 11 and 12, and partly above Norman guards. The one on the

right is located above Harold's representative and William. While McNulty mentions that "the rams probably carry special meaning," he does not pursue his inquiry.²⁶ Rams were known since antiquity as stubborn, pugnacious, and violent beasts that butt heads with one another.²⁷ The placement of these beasts and their proud stance seem to convey these qualities to the protagonists: William on one side, and Harold's representative, and by extension Harold himself, on the other. Yet, contrary to Harold, William, who may be headstrong, bellicose and prone to violence, is also a powerful, regal man, as suggested by the oversized, distinctively-formed fleur-de-lis (perhaps the largest in the whole Tapestry), to which he points with the tip of his sword and under which he sits in majesty.

Next to the fleur-de-lis, two birds, each with one wing raised, bearing a resemblance to geese, are performing a gesture of friendship, similar to an embrace. McNulty already contended that "the birds with necks entwined are distinctive enough to suggest special meaning. Harmony, perhaps, in William's domain?"²⁸ However, McNulty left his question unanswered. Contrary to the negative connotations that geese have today, based on legends that can be traced to old Germanic and Celtic beliefs, medieval society continued to attribute wisdom to this fowl that was believed to play a role as an arbiter of life and death.²⁹ However, the symbolism of the goose slowly evolved through the centuries. In the early medieval period, the goose came to be associated with the bearer of news and rumors.³⁰ At the same time, according to Aurelius Ambrosius (St. Ambrose, c. 339-397) and Rabannus Maurus, the goose had long been recognized as a symbol of the cautious man reluctant to commit himself and able to escape problematic situations.³¹

Overtly, these embracing geese placed above William's castle/seat of power may have expressed William's wisdom and his friendly benevolence as an arbiter of Harold's fate. Additionally, these geese exchanging signs of friendship may have been inserted at this particular point to suggest that the two leaders were cautious men about to find a way to live in harmony. Covertly, the geese may have fulfilled another function. It is likely that contemporary viewers/readers were aware of the deleterious gossip and rumors surrounding William, which depicted him as anything but compassionate towards his enemies.³² William certainly showed his cruelty to the fullest when, probably unwilling to risk his own life, he sent not one, but four knights, to kill Harold at Hastings.³³ Thus,

instead of painting William as a compassionate arbiter, it is possible that the geese, standing in an embrace above William's castle and pointing downward, each with one wing, were meant as a sarcastic comment on the two leaders newly found amity. In a post-Conquest setting, the geese may have reminded the audience that the relationship between these two leaders had been insincere from the start, perhaps mainly because of contemporary politics. It is likely that their friendly exchange was contrived, and that William had no intention of letting Harold escape his grasp. While the observer may have expected attacks on Harold's character and personality, the slow and continual erosion of William's character and the insidious critique of his actions through the use of particular pictographs in the borders, and their actions and placements vis-à-vis the figures and objects in the main field, may have been part of a plan to discredit William, in the ultimate hope of enhancing someone else's achievements, perhaps those of the patron (most likely Odo), who had grown increasingly at odds with William.

3.2. SCENE 12: A Hunting Scene in the Lower Border

A hunting scene is illustrated below Scene 12. Perhaps it was meant to be a fable now lost. In fact, Herrmann identified this scene as the fable entitled *Le cerf (à la source)*, while Goldschmidt viewed the episode as "hunting a stag, whose antlers are held fast in the tree."³⁴ Both identifications are difficult to accept since the animal in question does not look at all like a stag or a deer, and is not represented with its antlers caught in a tree. The indistinctive nature of this particular mammal may reflect on Harold's own position. Indeed, Harold's status was probably a point of discussion, especially at the Norman court. This hunting scene may actualize, in pictorial form, words explaining why the Englishman was seeking help for Harold. Perhaps the man and his dogs hunting below William and the English supplicant, and catching what looks more like a gazelle than a stag, were Guy and his men who caught and were now detaining Harold.

In Scene 12, the upper border imagery was probably meant to communicate to the audience the direction taken by the discussion, as well as the nuances of feelings that pervaded it. Thus, first, the rams expressed the stubborn posturing by both sides (Norman and English); then, the geese exemplified the later agreement regarding Harold's fate. However, the main field incorporates a discordant note in the harmony and wisdom of the agreement. It appears to have been tainted from the start by the sardonic dog heads adorning William's bench, which probably insinuated deviousness and

ruthlessness on William's part, while he was discussing Harold's fate. The same deviant ruthlessness is also represented in the lower border, in which a man, sounding the mort, and his dog (Guy and his men?), have caught a gazelle (Harold?), which a dog (one of Guy's men?) is holding by the throat. Scene 12 is a pivotal scene. It opens the way for the events depicted in reverse in Scenes 10 and 11. At the same time, through the hunting scene starting below Scene 12 and ending below Scene 13, it is also linked to Scene 13, in which Guy delivers Harold into William's hands. Once again, the borders and the main field seem to be engaged in an osmotic exchange of information, the borders infusing the center field with modifying elements and vice-versa.

4. SCENE 11: "NVNTII WILLELMI"

Informed of Harold's trouble, William sent envoys to secure Harold's release from Guy. These envoys are depicted as they near what may be the arcaded gate to Guy's castle at *Beaurain*, roofed with a checkered pattern, again reminding the viewer/reader of Guy's affiliation with William and the Norman cause. The men's windblown hair seems to be an ironic tidbit inserted to illustrate William's anxious desire to get hold of Harold.³⁵ Another detail seems to have some significance for the meaning of this particular scene. The two riders are carrying shields adorned with dragons. In Scene 12, the countenance of the dragon framed within the confines of a shield was still that of a dispirited prisoner. However, in Scene 11, perhaps to qualify the news that William's envoys were bringing back, the appearance of the dragons has changed. They are depicted with what could be construed as a smile, their wings are all a-flutter and their tails are untied, as though to express Harold's elated state as he waited with anticipation for news of a possible release.

Indeed, after passing the gate, William's envoys were about to meet with Guy to inform him of William's decision concerning his (Guy's) demands and the conditions of Harold's release to William. Except for the sarcastic bit of information regarding Harold, provided by the dragon, this scene is relatively straightforward. However, the reader soon discovers that, the borders may have been intended to provide ironic and perhaps malicious remarks about the protagonists.

4.1. SCENE 11: Paired Roosters and Female Centaurs in the Upper Border

Following the movement right to left of the narrative in the main field, a pair of cocks, the left one almost headless, are illustrated in the upper border. The one with the visible head on the right appears to be crowing at the top of its lungs. The cock was considered a powerful solar symbol since antiquity. Adopted by the Gauls, it became the traditional symbol of France, and its symbolism has remained positive throughout its history.³⁶ His crowing was regarded as comforting to those in distress, perhaps because it signified hope at the beginning of a new day, and, for the superstitious, the disappearance of evil spirits that lurked at night.³⁷ Because it was believed to show concern for the welfare of the other inhabitants of the farmyard, the cock also symbolized generosity.³⁸ In addition, Ambrose makes ample use of the rooster in his sermons in which he acknowledges its function as a deterrent against the snares of thieves.³⁹ From the richness of the contents of the Tapestry, it is possible to suggest that both the patron and the designer were educated and probably aware of the contents of Ambrose's sermons. Thus, the association of the cocks in the upper border and William's envoys in the main field may be read on different levels: as McNulty suggested, they may be construed as a device announcing the envoy's arrival; taking into account their symbolic meaning, they were also probably meant to herald the coming of a salutary end to Harold's immediate problems through William's apparent generosity; and to proclaim loudly their success in warding off the attempt of the cunning thief, Guy de Ponthieu, to continue to detain Harold.⁴⁰

Male centaurs are often found in medieval imagery. For the medieval observer, the male centaur personified the knight who had not succeeded in overcoming his instincts and was brimming with pride.⁴¹ However, the creatures depicted next in the upper border have been identified as female centaurs. When McNulty referred to "traditionally unruly centaurs and to defenseless females," he had Harold in mind, especially when he added that the female centaurs "implore the help as William's messengers race to the rescue of Harold."⁴² Indeed, one may look upon the presumably female centaurs -- asexual except for the long hair -- as adding an element of vulnerability befitting to Harold's precarious position at Guy's hands. Perhaps these creatures, which were considered neither human nor animal, and were reputed to be part good and part evil because of their dual nature, were a reflection on Harold's character.⁴³ Additionally, their asexual appearance seems to provide a secure link to Harold, since

they were probably meant to remind the reader/viewer of the andromorphous monkey with no “balls,” a metaphor for Harold’s presumed cowardice, which was part of *The Wolf King* below Scene 5.

On the other hand, there are three reasons why these creatures relate more satisfactorily to Guy, and by extension to William and the Norman cause, than to Harold. First, these creatures were placed directly above and on either side of a structure marked as Norman by the checkered pattern of its roof, probably the entrance to Guy’s castle. Secondly, the centaurs are performing welcoming gestures towards William’s envoys, presumably bringing good news (the cocks) about a generous ransom for Harold. Thirdly, the symbolism associated with the shady nature of these creatures, may relate them just as satisfactorily, if not more so, to Guy, and to the Normans who are in the process of playing a rotten trick on Harold by releasing him into William’s hands. Perhaps these distinctive creatures, unique in the Tapestry, were another ploy employed to paint insidiously an unflattering portrait of William and his actions prior to the Conquest, by associating William, his vassal and his men, to ambivalent creatures, especially female centaurs, with all the spite that powerful men attached to the female condition.

4.2. SCENE 11: The Pictographs and Fable in the Lower Border

It would seem that the fable in the lower border, below the riders, reinforces the idea of reading the female centaurs as representative of the character traits of Harold’s captors. Goldschmidt regarded the episode as a fable, but failed to identify it.⁴⁴ Notwithstanding the lack of a horse in this part of the border, and mistaking the bear for a boar, Herrmann identified this fable as one of Phaedrus’ lesser known productions, *Le cheval et le sanglier*.⁴⁵ Other scholars identified the scene as “bear baiting,” a “sport” practiced commonly throughout the Middle Ages.⁴⁶ Additionally, McNulty noted the relationship between the baited bear and the captured Harold, detained by Guy.⁴⁷ In fact, it seems that a little-known fable, *The two companions and the bear*, was illustrated, which gave birth to the French adage, “il ne faut pas vendre la peau de l’ours avant de l’avoir tué,” or to use an English equivalent, “do not count your chickens before they are hatched.” In the fable, not realizing the difficulty of the task, two companions, in dire need of money and pushed by greed, sold the skin of a bear they had not yet caught, much less killed. In this case, only one of the men is shown, perhaps to shield the patron

(Odo?), from possible retribution, since the two greedy and unscrupulous companions of the fable may refer to Guy and William (not shown), whose avarice was well-known, with the bear being a metaphor for Harold, who was caught at the moment, but was still in the possession of his property and wealth.⁴⁸

To the left of this little scene, two large birds were enjoying a snack, pecking the newly grown leaves off a bush. In similar fashion, Guy and William readied themselves to pluck their rewards. Guy was about to receive a handsome ransom, and William was preparing to grab an even greater prize, namely Harold, under the guise of rescuing him from a ruthless *canaille* (Guy).

The borders and main field of Scene 11 seem to interact in typical fashion. Anticipation reigns as the riders, through the design of the frolicking dragons on their shields, bring news of Harold's coming release. The crowing cocks probably announced that a generous ransom was about to fall into Guy's hand, and that an equally generous "gift" (Harold) was on its way to William in return. In a manner similar to the female centaurs reaching out to William's envoys, the ransom was welcomed by both sides as it apparently fulfilled Guy's expected gain, and Harold's sought after freedom from Guy. Meanwhile, through the lower border, the readers/viewers are reminded soberly that in spite of being held prisoner, Harold (the bear tethered to a tree) withstood the taunting knight (Guy) raising his sword in the bear's (Harold's) direction. Harold was still in the possession of his "skin" (his wealth and property). Additionally, both parties were expecting rewards: money and land for Guy, and release from captivity for Harold. Remembering that the Tapestry was probably finished some twenty odd years after the event it depicted, this particular scene, including the fable, seems to have been a malicious stratagem to point out to the audience that the two companions (Guy and William) made the wrong judgment call, acting under the mistaken assumption that it would be easy to despoil Harold and "sell" his "skin."

5. SCENE 10: "UBI NUNTII WILLELMI DUCIS VENERVNT AD GUIDONE"

Scene 10 is the last of the scenes to be reversed in this area of the Tapestry. Scene 10 represents Guy receiving William's proposal concerning Harold's release. Besides being superbly clad and holding the pose of *superbia* that medieval culture attributed to the conceited members of the human race, Guy is also fully "Normanized" i.e., the back of his head is shaved in the Norman fashion and he is wearing a checkered

attire and striped hose. The colorful, “diverse” design adorning Guy’s main garment was probably meant to remind the observer that Guy was William’s man, and was on the Norman side. One of the envoys, *TUROLD*, boldly identified in the center field, was probably one of Odo’s tenants.⁴⁹ The implication that somehow Odo was involved in the release of Harold through his feudatory, Turol, may have been important to a contemporary audience aware of Odo’s ambitious designs, and may have served as a surreptitious reminder meant to aggrandize Odo’s overall role in the events leading to the Conquest of England. Once again, it seems appropriate to turn to the border pictographs in an attempt to understand this scene more fully.

5.1. SCENE 10: Winged Lions and Birds of Prey in the Upper Border

Following the scene in reverse order for the last time, the designer inserted a pair of winged lions. Bernstein recognized that winged lions played a specific role in the Tapestry since they always appear in conjunction with William, either personally, or when Norman knights are present.⁵⁰ In this instance, the winged lions are gnawing on the tip of one of their wings, perhaps to remove some annoying vermin from their feathers. Strategically positioned at the beginning of the meeting between William’s men and Guy, these two winged lions and their actions seem to suggest William’s and Guy’s attempt at finding an adequate way to rid themselves of Harold. In this case, it seems correct to assume that Harold was the one compared unceremoniously to pesky, objectionable, and difficult to control members of the animal kingdom.

Besides the winged lions, the birds in the upper border could be simply construed as symbolizing the messengers bringing William’s response to Guy’s demands. Yet, as their large talons and curved beaks indicate, these two birds are not carrier pigeons; they are a variety of birds of prey, the one on the right being slightly larger than the one on the left. The smaller bird is placed directly above the regal looking Guy, perhaps as an ironic jab at the conceited Guy holding a regal pose below, and at his inordinate pretensions. The slightly larger bird may be an eagle, a royal bird perhaps a metaphor for William, a suitable assumption since he is positioned above William’s name in the inscription, and above William’s envoys. These two birds are engaged in mimicking the exchange taking place below. Additionally, because of the variance discernible only if one observes the birds carefully, they were probably meant to insinuate the continuing sarcasm directed at the Norman duke through various media. In this case, the caustic irony, that permeates

the borders of the Tapestry, seems to have been directed at the attitude and posturing of the figures represented below. The subtle differences in the appearance of the two birds seems to have been especially intent on mocking Guy, and through Guy, his liege, William.

5.2. SCENE 10: Two Birds and a Fable in the Lower Border

In order to read the evolution of the episode in the border below Scene 10, it is necessary to resume reading from left to right. Scholars regard the episode below Scene 10 as one of the “genre scenes,” in which the representation of the bird slinger is indebted, for its style, to Abraham as a bird slinger found in the Aelfric Hexateuch, one of the Canterbury manuscripts from St. Augustine Abbey.⁵¹ It is possible that the stance of the bird slinger in the Canterbury manuscript inspired the embroiderers. However, inspiration may have also come to them from watching bird slingers ply their trade in the fields. Additionally, some researchers are of the opinion that this “genre scene” serves no specific purpose.⁵² However, specialists on the borders recognize that the scene represents a fable. Despite giving this fable a slightly different title, both Chefneux (*L'Homme semant le lin, l'Hirondelle et les Oiseaux*) and Herrmann (*l'Hirondelle et les Oiseaux*) give an accurate description of the events that it represents.⁵³ While not entirely convinced, McNulty mentioned the possibility that a fable was represented below Scene 10.⁵⁴ Intent once more on showing that the Tapestry was “Cut on the Norman Bias,” Terkla misidentified this fable as *Outwitting the Birds*.⁵⁵

It appears that the earliest identification of the fable, proposed by both Chefneux and Herrmann, is the most fitting. To refresh the reader’s memory, in the fable of *The Swallow and the Birds*, birds were watching as a man was sowing flax in his field, unaware of the implications of the man’s action. However, a swallow warned the birds to destroy these seeds because they would eventually grow into plants that produced a tough fiber named flax, which could and probably would be made into the strings of the very sling that could potentially destroy them (the birds). In this fable, the various steps of the story are illustrated from left to right, in one long uninterrupted line. First, two peasants are portrayed plowing the field; secondly, another is sowing; thirdly, another is aerating the ground to ensure that the growth of the crop; and finally, in order to kill birds flying over head and threatening to destroy their harvest, a man is depicted using a sling, the strings of which were probably made with the flax fibers harvested previously.

In the story, the invisible swallow may have been the unseen Edward whose presence permeates the beginning of the Tapestry. Indeed, Edward (swallow) had warned Harold (the other bird) not to underestimate William who was becoming a dangerously powerful leader (to eat the seeds of the flax plant before they had a chance to grow and be made into instruments to destroy the birds), and to deal with William before he was in a position to destroy him (Harold). According to Eadmer, King Edward had given Harold such a warning before Harold departed on his ill-fated adventure to Normandy.⁵⁶ But it was already too late. William had found unlikely help in one of his unwilling vassals, Guy de Ponthieu. Like the sower standing directly below him, by detaining Harold, Guy had prepared the field and sowed the seeds to help William destroy Harold. William was no longer the “lowly plant,” a bastard child of Count Robert the Devil, hiding and running from the would-be assassins who haunted his youth; he was master of his domain. Like the man releasing his sling, William was ready to destroy the bird (Harold) who tried to attack his interests. Indeed, Harold had let the proverbial grass – in this case, flax – grow under his feet, and must now suffer the possible consequences of his neglect. In spite of Guy’s (the sower’s) efforts in producing the element of Harold’s destruction, and in spite of the man and his sling (William) targeting him, Harold, like the bird, was in the process of flying away. However, the stone slung by the man (William) was still in the air, leaving unanswered the question of whether or not the bird was going to escape, and leaving open the possibility that William would eventually catch up to Harold and destroy him.

Below the structure, which may be a gate to Guy’s castle, two birds are pecking at the tender leaves of a growing plant, perhaps giving hints about the conversation that was taking place in the main field. However, these two birds engaged in a pleasant and fulfilling endeavor, would remain decorative only, if one did not survey the scenes depicted on their left. In fact, these two birds are probably the same as those flying away from William’s slung stone. The birds of this fable may have been used as a tool to convey to the audience that Harold was not completely deaf to Edward’s warnings, and, that realizing William’s strength, Harold decided to try to peck away at it. It is possible that the new growth on the plant symbolizes William’s newly gained advantages in the fight for the crown, i.e., Harold’s detainment by Guy, which Harold was hoping to overcome.

Through a careful perusal of Scene 10, main field and borders, the reader/viewer probably learned that Guy was a pompous jackass blinded by greed (Guy's posture and gesture of *superbia* combined with the animals in the upper border). They also learned that Guy erroneously thought himself William's equal (the small bird of prey and the eagle). As a result of his greed and conceit, he was putty in William's hands (his checkered and striped attire identifying him as one of William's men). William used Guy as a means to get hold of Harold, the pesky vermin festering in his feathers (the preening winged lion). However, thanks to Edward's warnings (the swallow of the fable), Harold was better prepared to face William. In spite of William's (the man with the sling) effort to bring Harold (the bird) down, like the birds in the fable, he and his companions were eventually going to fly away, though perhaps not for long, as the stone in the air, about to reach the bird, seems to indicate. Before being caught again, Harold and the English were going to nibble away at William's newly found power (the birds nibbling at the new growth below). Thus, the borders continue to play a role of qualifying device, and to foretell the development of the narrative. After Scene 10, the story begins to flow anew from left to right. The parenthetical phrase is closed. Leaving Scene 10 behind, the observer must jump to Scene 13 to resume reading the story.

6. **SCENE 13: "HIC WIDO ADDUXIT HAROLDUM AD WILGELMUM..."**

Leaving Guy's castle, Guy is leading Harold to William, riding ahead, with a hawk perched on his left fist. Harold, also holding his hunting bird, and no longer spurless, rides immediately behind Guy. In the center of Scene 13, William meets Guy, who is identifying Harold for the duke by pointing back in his direction, leading the reader/viewer to understand that William and Harold had not met before. Small, but intriguing details of the main field need to be highlighted. First, with its long ears, and smaller size than the other horses, Guy's mount looks more like a mule than a horse. Indeed, perhaps Guy's representation was one of the patron's -- most likely Odo's -- overt puns: a pompous jackass riding a mule. Secondly, the Norman rider following William carries a shield with a dragon whose tail is once more tied in a knot. Perhaps the continuous play on the dragon's appearance was meant to suggest that Harold's hope of a quick and complete release were doomed, and while allowed freedom of movement, he was to remain at William's court, a virtual prisoner. Keeping these two elements in mind, the borders will be examined next.

6.1. SCENE 13: Paired Beasts and Birds in the Upper Border

Four pairs of animals inhabit the margin above Scene 13, starting with a pair of stags recognizable by their antlers. So far, the stag and members of the same family, have been linked tentatively to Harold.⁵⁷ It is fitting that a pair of stags, often victims of some brutal predator, be embroidered at the beginning of Scene 13 in which Harold is delivered into William's hands. A fleur-de-lis under an inverted V separates the two affronted stags from two adorsed birds of prey, probably vultures. These two vultures were strategically located, one above Harold and his name, the other above Guy and *WILGELMUM* in the inscription. It would not be surprising if these two vultures were another expression of the sarcasm (perhaps Odo's) found especially in the borders, which linked Harold to one vulture, and William, the liege and Guy, his vassal to the other nasty bird.

Duly separated by two slanted bars, two bizarre looking camels with very small humps were embroidered next into the border design. The placement of the camel on the left above the word *NORMANNORUM*, and partly above Guy's mount, and of the camel on the right directly above the word *DUCEM*, and William on horseback, "suggests a special meaning" as McNulty noted, but did not explore further.⁵⁸ Indeed, placed in closed proximity to Guy and William, it would seem that the qualities or defects of these beasts reflected on the two men. For the average, medieval Western European who knew little about these exotic animals, except through sermons on texts, such as St. Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, the symbolic meaning of the camel remained ambiguous.⁵⁹ The camel symbolized humility, because it knelt to receive its load, and temperance, because it rarely drank;⁶⁰ yet, it was believed that it preferred to drink dirty to clean water, muddying it, if necessary.⁶¹ Conversely, the camel was the symbol of lust because it was believed to have a prodigious sexual appetite.⁶² The camel was also plagued by what appeared to be a physical impediment, namely the two humps on its back, which to an untrained eye could be construed as bumps caused by a weird ailment. Indeed, in the medieval world, physical differences were often construed as deformities, and defects of the body were interpreted as distortions of the soul. Repeating the warnings written originally by Origen (after 244 AD), and Basil the Great (330-379 AD), the French saint, Eucher of Lyons (5th cent.) noted "the *tortositas* of the camels," applying this physical deformity to the spiritual deformation of the rich and powerful.⁶³ This *tortositas* of the

soul included the anger, conceit and vindictiveness of the camel "that practiced vengeance as he would a virtue."⁶⁴ It is likely that the intricate symbolism of the camel was known, especially by men like the acknowledged patron, i.e., Bishop Odo. Placement often being the key to a symbolic interpretation, the respective positioning of the camels above Guy and William may have served to mock them both surreptitiously. From the little that is known today about Guy's private life, it is difficult to comment on his temperance or sexual prowesses. However, while William was known for his avarice, he was neither a lecher, nor a glutton, which may have been common topics of gossip in contemporary society.⁶⁵ From their actions and portrayal in the Tapestry, it is possible to draw a couple of conclusions: neither man was humble; both seem to have been conceited and prone to anger. As well, both seem to have been inclined to bear long-lasting grudges.⁶⁶ There is little doubt that Odo was aware of their faults -- especially William's. As the almost universally acknowledged patron of the Tapestry, Odo may have used this knowledge to point out some of the less agreeable traits of Guy's, and especially of William's, personalities, including elements which the camel personified, i.e., William's and Guy's tenacious rancor and continued desire to avenge the real or presumed ills done to them.⁶⁷

Following the camels, two birds, with curving necks bent downward, are watching the proceedings taking place below. The unhappy appearance of the two birds, silently squawking, may reflect William's displeasure at being forced to pay a ransom for Harold who, if he had not strayed and landed in Guy's territory, would have fallen easily onto William's lap.

At the beginning of Scene 13, the stag/deer in the upper border may remind the reader of Harold's status as victim, while the strategically placed vultures may bring to mind another aspect of Harold's character. Although in this instance, Harold may be the victim, he may have been a rapacious man, perhaps as rapacious as Guy, the man who had captured him for ransom, the man whose nature -- as the camel symbolized -- was as tortuous as that of his liege, William. The two birds do not relieve the nefarious influence exerted by the upper border on the center field of Scene 13, and the deleterious commentary that it provides for the apparently felicitous main field. Yes, Guy can go home, not to be seen again in the Tapestry, gloat over his newly found assets, and relish his revenge against William for the ransom that his family had to pay William to secure

his (Guy's) release from one of William's dungeons.⁶⁸ Yes, William may be satisfied because finally he has a firm hold on Harold. And, yes, for the moment, Harold may be reassured and no longer fear for his life and freedom. But Guy is nothing but a pompous vulture -- William's "mule;" William is an unforgiving bastard; and Harold is a prime sacrifice to be offered up on the altar of William's ambitions.

6.2. SCENE 13: Animal pictographs and Human figures in the Lower Border

In turn, the imagery in the lower border seems to qualify both the main field and the upper border. Below Scene 13, a knight is riding, against the flow of the story in the main field, toward the last pictograph below Scene 12 in which a large dog is holding the throat of a deer/gazelle in its jaws. As mentioned earlier, Harold, whose fate was being discussed in Scene 12, was probably meant to be the deer/gazelle which the large dog, the *canaille*, Guy, was holding by the throat. The knight who is brandishing what appears to be a stick or perhaps even a sword, as he hurries toward the deer/gazelle, probably symbolized William. As McNulty noted, Harold is caught in the middle, "in a position analogous to that of the deer in the border below William's castle."⁶⁹ Indeed, because of its placement directly below William's castle, the scene seems to anticipate Harold falling into William's hands.

Directly below Harold riding proudly on his horse to a hopeful meeting with William, the designer inserted a pair of naked human figures. Herrmann identified the episode as the fable of "*la vierge et les prétendants*."⁷⁰ However, the fable is a convoluted story about a young bride who loves a poor, handsome fellow yet marries an ugly, rich man at the behest of her parents only to disappear with the one she loves, before consummating the marriage. No one ever appears naked in the fable, and the fable does not involve a rape, which seems to disqualify it from the very start.

Conversely, in the Tapestry border, a sexually aroused man is portrayed with his arms extended, in the process of advancing toward a cowering female. At the same time, the female is attempting to cover her genitals with her left hand while shielding her eyes with her right hand, as though making a deliberate effort not to see the coming assault. Several rather unsatisfactory explanations have been proposed over time. Besides Herrmann's attempt to identify the nudes with a fable, some considered this naked pair as another type of "genre scene," part of the unspecific "*désordres qui accompagnent ordinairement les armées*."⁷¹ Without mentioning his source, H. E. J. Cowdrey

maintained that the nude pair referred to Harold's "notorious *luxuria*."⁷² McNulty was much more specific when he declared: "that Harold should be associated with a defenseless naked woman is in keeping with disparaging hints of feminine weakness elsewhere in the Tapestry."⁷³ In this case, the sarcastic episode of the two nudes may be explained in the following manner. If the overly endowed male symbolized William, and the female, Harold, it would mean that Harold riding confidently toward William was about to be "screwed," in other words tricked by his "savior." This coming trickery would also explain the future angry response of the firedrakes discussed below, the emblem of Wessex, and by extension, Harold.⁷⁴

Another interpretation that might fit the patron's (Odo's?) hidden agenda to deride William is possible if one continues to consider the movement of the naked figures, which mimics the movement, left to right, of the main protagonists, Harold and William, who are about to meet in the main field. Like the sexually excited man in the border, Harold is moving toward William in the center field. Harold's most profound urge may have been to somehow dominate and humiliate William. These two little nudes may be expressing Harold's deepest thoughts and perhaps overwhelming desire to "screw" the unsuspecting William out of his so-called "promised" inheritance, since Harold probably never had any intention to relinquish the power he had acquired. Overall, the naked pair may have acted as a sarcastic aside about the mind frame of the participants at this point in the narrative.

To support this assessment one may consider the next pair of animals in the lower border. According to medieval lore, dragons, like those represented in the lower border of Scene 13, were able to defend themselves by spewing flames from both ends of their body.⁷⁵ For McNulty, these dragons, named firedrakes, i.e., fire-breathing dragons, "occur in the borders of episodes in which William is directly involved."⁷⁶ In this case, their location, one below Guy, and the other partly below William, seem to confirm McNulty's interpretation.⁷⁷ Conversely, as Fowke noted, the dragon was Harold's emblem since it was the emblem of Wessex.⁷⁸ Thus, the depiction of active dragons in various stages of contentment or displeasure -- blowing fire from one end, two ends or not at all, and with tail tied or untied -- may have been intended to demonstrate Harold's state of mind and reactions to the different events in which he was willingly or unwillingly involved. In the case of the lower border of Scene 13, the dragons are not

only blowing fire, but the fire-drake on the right, partially below William, is firing from both ends, its most deadly defense mechanism according to the Bestiaries. Perhaps, placed next to the female about to be raped (symbolizing an act of dominance rather than an act of desire), the infuriated fire-drakes may signify that it was an irate Harold (dragon of Wessex), intent on doing harm to the proud William and his vain vassal, who followed Guy to meet William. Harold's implacable desire to keep by force what the Normans understood to be William's (scene of the rape), and his internalized anger (expressed tentatively by the fire-drakes), may be considered a "normal" reaction on the part of Harold, who was captured illegally, and subsequently became the victim of an illicit imprisonment.

Next, the designer portrayed a lone he-goat about to eat the leaves of a small bush. *Caper*, the he-goat, is etymologically and, by nature, a "capricious" animal. The he-goat also symbolizes duplicitous men who use deceitful words to achieve their aims.⁷⁹ Placed directly below William riding to meet Guy, who is bringing Harold to him, the presence of the he-goat was probably meant to sully William's character and actions, insinuating an ultimate motive for his ordering Harold's release. The two beasts next to the goat are difficult to identify. No notice has been taken of them, except by McNulty, who posits that the succession of three animals, i.e., the goat and the two beasts in a row, "...suggests an error in planning the join."⁸⁰ Upon close examination, these two beasts appear to be canines, walking toward one another, and paralleling the two angry birds above the end of Scene 13. Perhaps the dogs were introduced to comment on the characters of the protagonists who are finally meeting in this scene, i.e., Harold coming from the left and William from the right. If they seem content, it is probably because one (Harold) believed that he was walking towards freedom, and the other (William) because he knew that from the moment Harold was released into his care, he (Harold) would be indebted to him (William), and would have to somehow pay him back with a counter-gift commensurate with the one he (Harold) received. It seems that once more the borders are used to convey what cannot be expressed in the main field or the inscriptions. At this point in the Tapestry, even an ignorant audience would have probably become well aware of the subject of the epic. As the viewers read the Tapestry or as it was read to them, they were given a glimpse, perhaps unknowingly, into the Machiavellian mind (before the term "Machiavellian" was even invented) of Odo, the

most likely patron, who, through human pictographs and the animal imagery, dared to speculate within the borders, about the hidden state of mind and the covert feelings of the protagonists.

7. SCENE 14: “*HIC DVX WILGLEM CVM HAROLDO VENIT AD PALATIV[M] SVV[M]*”

William's and Harold's formal encounter finally occurs at the end of Scene 14, when they meet within the walls of William's castle. It is interesting to note that, once more, the *diversitas* attached to William and the Norman cause was woven into the architectural structure of the roof of William's palace and the two towers, one at the beginning of Scene 14 and the other separating Scenes 15 and 16, probably in order to remind the audience that the Norman Duke was first and foremost a bastard.

In the first part of scene 14, Harold is portrayed as he rides ahead of William, who is holding Harold's bird. Contrary to William who is riding a stallion, Harold is riding a gelding. Perhaps these small and apparently insignificant changes in the appearance of the horses, were included to reflect on Harold's loss of status and lack of power while in William's hands. In fact, a similar idiom is used in later scenes to emphasize Harold's diminished status vis-à-vis William. For example in Scene 22, when on his way to Bayeux and his fateful oath, Harold rides a gelding, and William, a stallion.

McNulty mentions that “Harold holds a hawk.”⁸¹ However, such a statement does not take into account the placement and gesture of the man on horseback, obviously English because of his hairstyle and mustache. This man riding ahead of William may be identified as Harold because of his position below the word *Haroldo*, directly above in the inscription, and because of the gesture of the index finger of his left hand pointing at the name. Contrary to McNulty, Bernstein acknowledged that William was now in possession of the bird, but posited that this bird was destined from the beginning to be a present from Harold to William.⁸² However, there may be another subtle meaning attached to the representation of Harold without his hawk. As mentioned earlier, the hawk may be considered as a mark of a person's status. While wearing his spurs, which indicates that he is able to ride his horse like a free man, Harold no longer has his hawk. Thus, Harold has lost one of the symbols of his position as a hunter, a metaphor for a leader in medieval culture. Harold's lower status vis-à-vis William seems to be confirmed in the next part of Scene 14 where he is standing in front of William seated in

state. Yet, in this case, William holds his sword point down, presumably to demonstrate that he is not sitting in judgment of Harold. Regarding this last part, Lewis wondered recently if this “suggestive and dramatically compelling scene...could have been intended as the first installment of Harold’s declaration of loyalty to William” or if it was “meant simply to work proleptically to anticipate the oath.”⁸³ It seems that the scene depicting the first formal meeting between William and Harold may be more expressive than Lewis recognized. An investigation of this last part of the scene, and of the placements, postures and gestures of both William and Harold seem to indicate that they are involved in complicated negotiations, which an examination of the borders may at least partially elucidate.

7.1. SCENE 14: Paired Animals and *The Peacock and the Jackdaw* in the Upper Border

The border above Scene 14 starts peacefully with two contented birds pecking at the ground. Next to the birds, immediately above William and Harold in the main field, and their respective names in the inscriptions, two lions, symbols of royalty are portrayed once more. Heads turned upward and away from the audience in utter disrespect, revealing only their manes, the two lions seem ready to engage in combat. While the claws of the one on the left, directly above William and his name, are barely visible, the claws of the lion on the right positioned above Harold and his name, are fully extended, as though the lion was ready to attack. Despite the implication in the main field that William was in charge, the portrayal of the lions in the upper border suggests that a still angry Harold, probably growing more infuriated as time passed, was acting like a wild, albeit royal, beast ready to strike William, who seems to have a hard time maintaining his own composure.

Therefore, it is no surprise to find griffins portrayed next to the lions. Like the lions, these griffins are not separated by bars or any other device. In fact, they stand menacingly in close proximity to each other, the one on the right extending its hind legs as though it had just taken a step forward. Again, these two fearsome, aggressive beasts, symbolic of one’s hunger for wealth and power, suggest the distressed state of mind of the infuriated protagonists. In a manner similar to the two vexed griffins facing off, William and Harold had probably decided to hold their anger in check while maintaining their respective resolves during the formal meeting about to take place below.

The pictograph next to the griffins represents two birds. Bruce (1856), later followed by McNulty (1989), and Lewis (1999), identified both birds as peacocks, with McNulty mentioning that “peacocks were traditionally associated with splendor and immortality, both being appropriate to William who appears seated in his handsomely arcaded palace in the scene below.”⁸⁴ Despite this unobtrusive and non-committal explanation, it may be noted that, while the bird on the left was made to closely resemble a peacock, the bird on the right was not given the conventional features associated with this bird, except perhaps for its conspicuous tail, which appears to be fake. Indeed, the second bird may be an ordinary bird that Herrmann identified as the jackdaw from Phaedrus’ fable of *The Jackdaw and the Peacock*.⁸⁵ This fable tells the story of a plain bird whose vanity and ambition led him to attempt to pass himself off as a peacock by adorning himself with feathers shed earlier by a peacock. Not accepted by the peacocks, the jackdaw returned home, only to be rejected by his own for having so patently snubbed them. As a moral, the peacock declared to the jackdaw that if he had remained where he was and been content with his station in life, he would never have been exposed to rejection.

Herrmann is the only one to adhere to this identification. However, in this case, there is no valid reason to disagree, especially in view of the other images in the scene, and of the symbolism attached to the jackdaw. Indeed, according to medieval culture, the jackdaw was a talkative bird, renowned to symbolize those who made empty and often deceitful speeches.⁸⁶ As the representation of these two birds indicates, the jackdaw on the right was less than successful in altering his physical appearance to resemble a peacock. In this portrayal, the proud peacock on the left adopted a conservative approach to the other bird. He did not position himself with his tail fanned out as he would when facing an equal or another spectator that he wanted to impress. In all probability, because of his placement, the lowly, pretentious, ridiculous, and loquacious jackdaw was meant to personify Harold, while the real and regal peacock was supposed to personify William, who was now in an advantageous position vis-à-vis Harold. Thus, the forewarning set out previously in the moral of *The Wolf and the Lamb* was starting to come true. Probably because of his naiveté, his less than convincing verbiage, and his conceit, Harold was falling prey to William’s power and cunning. Indeed, William used an interesting ploy to put Harold in his debt. By buying back Harold’s freedom from Guy,

William had made a gift of it to Harold. William had established a special bond between Harold and himself, which would have to be reaffirmed at a later date by a counter-gift from Harold. As Patrick Geary argues, the profit of such a gift “consisted in placing other people morally in one’s debt.”⁸⁷ As a result of William’s action, Harold was put in the embarrassing situation of being William’s debtor. Perhaps this was exactly where William wanted Harold to be.

Perched next to *The Jackdaw and the Peacock*, and at the very end of the roof of William’s hall, two predators, probably dogs, depicted with their tails neatly tucked between their legs to indicate their cowardice, are turning their heads away from each other.⁸⁸ These two *canes* seem to represent the respective contentment that Guy and William may have felt inwardly when the first unloaded Harold and received payment in return, and the second was able to seize Harold, make him a virtual prisoner, and use him for his own purposes until he (William) decided to let him (Harold) go. However, they may also reveal the patron’s true feelings about the figures depicted in the main field, i.e., William and Harold. Indeed, the ambitious patron, most likely Odo, may have regarded William on a par with Harold, considering both to be cowardly *canailles*. Paws touching, each dog appears to be enjoying a good laugh at the other’s expense, while turning away from each other to hide their respective glee. Placed at the end of Scene 14, the two sneering predators may symbolize William’s and Harold’s state of mind after the meeting, each believing that, in some subtle manner, he had succeeded in tricking the other.

7.2. SCENE 14: Animal Imagery and The Lone Nude in the Lower Border

In the area partly below William sitting on his cushioned bench decorated with one visible animal head (perhaps a lion’s head), and partly below Harold standing in front of William, the designer depicted two lions separated by an inverted V adorned with a small three-petal fleuron/fleur-de-lis in its center, which may be an allusion to King Edward’s shadowy presence. Their claws fully visible, the two lions seem ready to pounce, yet were incapable of doing each other harm because of the inverted V and its content (King Edward and what he represented) blocking their way.

A close analysis of William, Harold, and the other figures in the main field, of their gestures, placements and postures vis-à-vis one another, of the pictographs below, and of their combined relationships, seems to inform and modulate the content of the

main field. The man standing behind William is pointing upwards to the jackdaw of the fable, while his master, William, is pointing not only in Harold's direction, but also in the direction of the next scene, the so-called "Aelfgyva scene." Perhaps, the pointing fingers are meant to indicate that the discussion involves not only Harold, but also the aforementioned fable and Scene 15 representing Aelfgyva and the cleric. With the gesture of his right hand, Harold seems to indicate that he agrees in part with William and his chosen subjects of discussion, i.e., Scene 15.⁸⁹ But Harold's agreement is immediately modulated by the gesture of his left hand designating the bearded young man behind him.⁹⁰ With this gesture, Harold manifests his intention to include both the Aelfgyva scene and the bearded young man in the discussion.⁹¹ At the same time, making a fist with his right hand touching Harold's left hand, the bearded young man demonstrates that he is angry at Harold and wants to be heard about a subject that he is designating with his left hand, pointing down to the lion partly below Harold, i.e., Harold and the English succession. The extended fingers of the participants, pointing at objects and figures in the main field and in the borders, form a circular movement, delineating the matrix of concerns. At the same time, William's and Harold's fingers, pointing to Scene 15, express the unstated desire of the two main participants to extend the matrix of concerns to the particular set of events depicted in the Aelfgyva scene.

Besides the importance of gestures to the overall comprehension of the scene, one must also consider the placements and postures of the participants in conjunction with those of the pictographs in the borders. The seated figure of William and the cushioned bench, adorned with the head of a leonine creature, on which he sits, are straddling the space occupied by the two lions in the lower border. Additionally, William's feet are established firmly, flat on the line dividing the main field from the part of the border that contains the lion on the right, probably intimating William's strong foothold on the royal succession.

Contrary to William, who is holding a neutral, three-quarter pose, Harold was given a posture in profile, which puts him at a disadvantage vis-à-vis William.⁹² Harold's disadvantage is also emphasized by his standing astride two distinct spaces in the border, one holding a lion, the other a naked working man. The naked man with his axe has raised a few comments. Herrmann attempted to fit him within "the Aesop canon" but, as Wilson accurately stated, "this is hardly convincing," perhaps because the story is about

an ungrateful axe that chopped the tree that produced the wood for its handle.⁹³ Wissolik came to a different conclusion when he mentioned that “the ax or broadax was to the Anglo-Saxon warrior as the short-sword was to the Roman Legionary or the assegai was to the Zulu *impi*, they identified their bearers with their craft and their nations.”⁹⁴ Indeed, the naked man handling an axe so dexterously was probably meant to remind the viewers that Harold’s ancestors were commoners who worked with their hands. As well, the naked man’s explicitly depicted sexual organs were probably meant to show that Harold’s ancestors were men who had proven that they had “balls,” i.e., courage, contrary to Harold, the “ball-less” ape of the fable, who, prior to the Brittany campaign, was yet to prove his worth.

Occupying the same space as William’s feet, Harold’s right foot rests firmly above the lion on the right, while only the point of Harold’s left shoe touches the part of the border inhabited by the naked man holding an ax, apparently in the process of hewing a piece of wood. The attribution of this problematic posture to Harold, and his association with a regal beast and the naked figure of a working man, were probably meant to imply the ambiguity of Harold’s status. It seems obvious from Harold’s emphasis on his right foot resting over the lion, that he preferred to be viewed in a similar capacity as William, i.e., as a potential king. It is also evident from the light touch of Harold’s left foot, that he did not want to dwell on any allusion to his origins (the naked worker), i.e., that of an upstart whose family had become powerful during King Cnut’s reign.⁹⁵

Behind Harold, the young man, set apart by an unusual beard, and the guards depicted behind him, stand squarely above the naked man in the border, perhaps showing that, contrary to Harold, they acknowledge their origins fully. This young man making a fist at Harold while Harold points at him, and beyond him to Scene 15, is probably angry at Harold, perhaps for two reasons. First, if one accepts a possible identification of this figure as either Harold’s younger brother, Wulfnoth, or his nephew, Hakon, he would have a right to be angry, since he would have been one of the hostages sent to William’s court as surety for Harold’s and his family’s good conduct. Such an assessment of the situation is based on Eadmer, who reported that two members of Harold’s family were sent by Edward to William’s court to ensure their obedience to the king after the

Godwin's rebellion and debacle of 1051.⁹⁶ Secondly, he may also have been angry at Harold for being ashamed of his humble origins.

After breaking down the scene into its various elements, it may be possible to read it more clearly. The two lions were probably placed below the two pretenders (William and Harold) to remind the viewer once more of the main theme of the narrative: two would-be kings engaged in a fight for the English crown. However, after taking William's and Harold's placement, posture and gestures into consideration, William's status and pretensions appear to be a lot more secure than Harold's, who was literally pussyfooting over the issue of who he really was and where he really belonged. Taking into account William's and Harold's placement, postures and gestures, it seems that the two pretenders were discussing Harold's suitability as king. It is probable that considering himself to be the peacock in the fable, William was telling Harold, the jackdaw, that he should have been content to stay where he was, and not aspire to be someone he was not meant to be, i.e., the successor to the throne of England. The angry, young, bearded Englishman showed his rancor (the fist) against Harold while pointing to the naked worker below as though siding with William and indicating that Harold should recognize and accept his origins (the naked worker). In so doing, Harold, like the jackdaw of the fable, was running the risk of being rejected by both sides.

Notwithstanding the deliberate sarcasm inherent to the fully endowed nude worker, this man seems to point to the Godwins' less than royal background, a suggestion perhaps confirmed by the fable and its moral mentioned above, and emphasized by the smiling faces of the guards behind Harold and the Englishman, who seem to be enjoying a good laugh. The two dogs sharing a laugh in the upper border at the end of Scene 14 seem to add another twist to the story as they may suggest that while, in the main field, Harold was in apparent agreement with William (his open palm), both were but *canailles*, and each was convinced that he had tricked the other and had the upper hand.⁹⁷ It is also important to remember William's and Harold's fingers pointing toward the next scene, which may refer to Harold's response, as he probably objected to William's denying him a role in the future of England.

8. SCENE 15: “*VBI VNVS CLERICVS ET AELFGYVA*”

The enigmatic Aelfgyva scene has been the subject of extensive literature.⁹⁸ Attempts to decipher its meaning have met with varying degrees of success.⁹⁹ This deceptively uncomplicated scene represents a woman, *AELFGYVA*, framed by a doorway. She is looking away from Scene 14 toward a man, identified only as *CLERICUS* in the inscription above Scene 15. However, one may wonder why this particular scene was included at this stage of the development in the narrative and what it might possibly mean. McNulty already pointed out that narrative devices play a critical role in the observer's understanding of this scene, when he noted the significance of “linkage, conventional symbolism and analogy” in defining the meaning of the Aelfgyva episode.¹⁰⁰ McNulty should have also mentioned that elements such as location, position, and distinctive movements of the limbs play a major role in a cogent interpretation of the Tapestry in general and of this scene in particular. Thus, an examination of Scene 15, of the placement, posture, and gestures of the figures in the main field vis-à-vis the pictographs in the border, and of the relationship between Scenes 14 and 15, may further elucidate the potential meaning of this episode.

Regarding the placement and position of the figures, Lewis posited accurately that the doorway frames Aelfgyva and sets her apart in another place. However, this was no ordinary frame. The diagonally striped columns imitating a spiral design probably had some symbolic significance beyond Lucien Musset's recent comment on “le succès iconographique des colonnes spiralées dans la sculpture anglaise de la fin du XIe siècle pour encadrer des figures humaines.”¹⁰¹ By Scene 15, the reader was already familiar with the meaning of *diversitas* or *varietas* attached to stripes, checkers and zigzags, and the connection of these varied elements to William (the bastard) and the Norman cause. However, notwithstanding the Anglo-Scandinavian or Anglo-Saxon style of the frame, the pejorative meaning assigned to stripes in the Middle Ages was probably intended to reflect on the woman framed by the striped post, identifying her not only as a promiscuous, venal woman, but also as a member of William's family. Additionally, her position above the ground line suggests that Aelfgyva was not only in another place but also belonged to another time.¹⁰² She was wearing the veil of a married woman or a widow, her face colored in a pinkish hue, perhaps because of shame. She was holding a small object, perhaps a key, in her right hand, while performing a gesture of agreement

with the open palm of the left hand toward the cleric.¹⁰³ Her placement, countenance, and movements seem to indicate that, while she agreed with the cleric, Aelfgyva was reluctant to give to him the object that she was holding, perhaps the key that would have given the cleric access to her private chambers.

An examination of the figure of the cleric may shed more light on the subject at hand. The man is touching Aelfgyva in a particular manner. In medieval times, it would have meant that the person doing the touching was sexually attracted to her.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, the *situation sécante* of the man, whose arm is cut by the representation of the column, also indicates that the two figures are separated by time and space.¹⁰⁵ Apparently, this event to which William and Harold were pointing, and which may have been one of the subjects of discussion in Scene 14, occurred in the past, a conclusion already reached by examining the placement and posture of Aelfgyva. With one of his hands resting on his hip, the cleric holds the posture that a medieval audience would have associated with *superbia*, i.e., vanity, pride, and self-assurance.¹⁰⁶ In addition, he seems to be doing a balancing act as he stands awkwardly, the tip of his right foot barely touching the base of the striped column, while the tip of the left one is grazing the first of four steps leading to a structure, perhaps a church since it is decorated with crosses on its doors. Obviously, the position of this cleric is physically unstable, perhaps alluding to his compromised status, since he appears to be straddling the fence between his religious duties and his secular commitment to a member of the opposite sex. The way he is leaning towards the woman, makes it evident that he is inclined toward the latter. One may conclude that the name Aelfgyva, the striped door frame, a cleric who is attracted to her, and the sexually loaded scene, conveyed to the mind of a contemporary audience that "the Aelfgyva panel relates somehow to the concern with illegitimate coupling and illegitimate succession."¹⁰⁷ Perhaps a short historical review followed by an analysis of the borders may help in getting a better grasp of this situation.

It would be redundant to delve into the discussions surrounding the various possible identities that were foisted upon Aelfgyva as these have been thoroughly reviewed by Freeman, Fowke, Prentout, Wissolik, and McNulty.¹⁰⁸ Contrary to Gameson, who stated that "we may put aside all those women who were named Aelfgyva but who were dead and buried at the time," McNulty was rightly convinced that she need not have been there at all, at the time of Harold's visit.¹⁰⁹ Most recently, basing her

reasoning mainly on McNulty's analysis, Lewis posited that the Aelfgyva of the Tapestry represented two separate female entities conflated into one. The first was Aelfgyfu or Aelfgyva of Northampton, the concubine, later the wife of Cnut, who, according to contemporary sources, was reputed to be promiscuous.¹¹⁰ It was rumored that, while she was Cnut's concubine, unable to conceive from the king, she tried to pawn off Harold Harefoot, the son of a cleric, on her then husband, King Cnut (r. 1012-1013 and 1017-1035), as his son.¹¹¹ The second was Emma-Aelfgyva, Cnut's second wife.¹¹² Emma-Aelfgyva was the sister of William's paternal grand-father, Duke Richard of Normandy. She was also Edward the Confessor's mother by her first husband, King Aethelred II, whom she had married in 1002, and who reigned prior to Cnut from 978 to 1012, when he was defeated by Cnut, and again from 1013 until 1016 when he (Aethelred) died.

Emma-Aelfgyva's reputation was not blameless either. According to Fowke who refers vaguely to "some historians," "Emma-Aelfgyva was accused by Godwine, Earl of Kent, and Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury...of a disgraceful intimacy with Aelfwine, Bishop of Winchester."¹¹³ Whatever the worth of such rumors, they may still have been rampant at the time of the meeting between William and Harold, which may account for the inclusion of this episode in the Tapestry in order to make a point about the English succession.

Because of the intricacies of Aethelred's and Cnut's reigns, and because of children born to two different women, some of whom may not have been sired by the kings, the English succession was compromised. After marrying Cnut, Emma-Aelfgyva had disinherited Alfred and Edward, her children by Aethelred. Following Aethelred's death (Nov. 1016), his son (not by Emma-Aelfgyva, nor by Aelfgyva of Northampton), Edmund Ironsides reigned briefly before he died in 1017. Upon Cnut's death in 1035, his legitimate son by Emma-Aelfgyva, Harthcanute or Hardicanute, was made king, while Harold Harefoot (Aelfgyva of Northampton's son) became regent until Hardicanute, who was king of Denmark since 1028, could return. A crisis ensued caused by Hardicanute's delay in Denmark. As a result, Harold Harefoot seized the throne and sent Emma-Aelfgyva into exile at Bruges in 1037. In the meantime, Harold Harefoot and Hardicanute were involved in internecine warfare. Harold Harefoot's death in 1040 solved the immediate problem of succession. Unfortunately, Hardicanute's reign was marked by cruelty and heavy taxation. Fortunately, his reign was short, since he died in

1042, at which time, Edward, the son of Emma-Aelfgyva by her first husband (King Aethelred), whom she had disowned and removed from the line of succession, succeeded as king of England.¹¹⁴

This brief historical summary shows that confusion may have occurred because there were two queens with the same name, and they were married to the same king (Cnut) at different points in time. Furthermore, they both had children, some by Cnut, and some by other men. However, the stripes may be helpful in identifying the Aelfgyva represented in Scene 15 with Emma-Aelfgyva, William's great aunt on his father's side, since these signs of *diversitas* were already assigned to William and the Normans. Nevertheless, the history of the succession to the throne of England in the eleventh century proved to be complex, and difficult to unravel. The pictographs in the borders may provide additional help to understand Scene 15.

8.1. **SCENE 15: Pictographs in the Upper and Lower Borders**

Only one pictograph in the upper border belongs completely to Scene 15. It is an elaborate fleur-de-lis protected by an inverted V, perhaps signifying that the person (Aelfgyva) represented below was a queen. In the lower border, the only image that is totally part of the scene is a phallic looking fleur-de-lis placed under the figure of Aelfgyva. Its symbolic meaning is probably associated with that of the nude figure immediately to its left. Most researchers agree that the posture of the nude, depicted directly under the striped, left column delineating Aelfgyva's space, is a mirror image of the cleric's, and that both seem to be making sexually potent gestures. Indeed, the naked man's hand is placed directly under Aelfgyva, as though attempting to reach under her long tunic, and the cleric is caressing the cheek of Aelfgyva. However, the naked man's gesture does not seem to have any exciting effect on his sexual organs, which remain downcast and flaccid, perhaps in an attempt to signify someone's impotence (maybe Cnut's), and the queen's adulterous conduct with the cleric.¹¹⁵ The enclosure in which this nude is contained also touches on the limit of William's hall, demonstrating a potential influence on, and inclusion in, William's and Harold's conversation. After carefully examining the central field, and the borders, it may be possible to decipher Scene 15.

8.2. SCENE 15: Towards a Better Understanding of this Scene

Scene 15 was probably meant as a mnemonic device. Overtly, it was designed not only to suggest to the audience that the main topic of discussion between William and Harold was the succession to the English throne, but also to remind the viewers of the dire consequences incurred when the legitimately chosen king was betrayed by the man (Harold Harefoot) chosen by the king (Cnut) to hold his kingdom in trust until the rightfully chosen king (Hardicanute) could assume his role as legitimate king.

However, one must not forget that, while relating events that took place before the Battle of Hastings and the Conquest of England, the Tapestry was conceived and produced probably twenty years after the Conquest. Thus, the Aelfgyva was probably included for several reasons, and the viewers may have been inclined to read this scene in different ways depending on their political views, and how they regarded their new Norman king. By conflating the two queens with the same name, an oblique suggestion was made to the crises of succession that marred the eleventh century, especially after Cnut's death, when contrary to Cnut's wishes, his illegitimate son, Harold Harefoot, had usurped the throne, perhaps reminding the audience that Edward had also promised the throne to William but that another Harold had "usurped" it. Thus, outwardly by the play on names, the attention of the audience was focused on the potential problems England would have faced if another Harold, Harold Godwin, had been allowed to continue his "illegitimate" reign.

Besides this explanation, the scene can also be read in a different way. At the time of the Tapestry's production, not only the English had yet to come to terms with their new Norman king, but some of the men who had helped William conquer England had rebelled against William's iron rule, balked at his broken promises and at the injustices that were committed in his name.¹¹⁶ The Aelfgyva scene was probably intended to make a veiled, sarcastic comment on William's kingship. In this case, Aelfgyva and the cleric may have been included in the Tapestry in order to remind the viewers that Harold Harefoot, the illegitimate heir, who, by fortuitous coincidence, had the same name as Harold Godwin, was a better king during his short reign than the legitimate but cruel Hardicanute.

The formal meeting between William and Harold was a determining event in the developing narrative. Scenes 14 and 15 should be read in tandem, as Scene 15 has

enormous bearing on the continuing saga.¹¹⁷ Both men probably agreed that past events should not be repeated. Yet, each man may have had a different idea of what needed to be done to prevent a repeat of the debacle that occurred in the recent past.

9. CONCLUSION

The pictographs in the borders continue to shed new light on the character traits of the participants in the epic, to serve as a gloss on the events taking place in the main field, to anticipate future events and to forewarn the audience about the unfolding drama. Thus, the evolving aspects of the fleur-de-lis seem to remind the audience that God's presence in the affairs of men is liable to change, and that his benevolence should never be confused with condoning the evil actions of kings or would-be kings. In addition, several new beasts, i.e., rams, roosters, geese, camels, and two mythical animals, i.e., female centaurs and dragons, as well as two naked figures, were perhaps meant to emphasize some of the characteristics of the main protagonists, and comment on their actions. Likewise, four new fables, i.e., *The Lion and the Stag*, *The Two Companions and the Bear*, *The Swallow and the Birds*, and *The Peacock and the Jackdaw*, were included at pivotal points in the narrative. Because of the morals of these fables and of the symbolism of the animals, these fables seem to qualify the main participants and to further the explanation of their actions.

About the new beasts, the placement of the affronted rams above both William's and Harold's envoy sent with Guy's men to present the terms of Harold's release in Scene 12, and their (the rams) arrogant demeanor were probably meant to qualify William and Guy. Indeed, the rams were known symbols of determination, pugnacity and coercion. The roosters crowing above Scene 11 not only announce the envoys' arrival, and proclaim William's successful bartering for Harold's release, but also were introduced for other reasons. Indeed, by association of ideas, the symbolism of the cock probably aimed to remind the audience that William had ransomed Guy in the past, that Guy was acting in a manner similar to William, probably suggesting that William was no better than the thieving Guy. The apparently elated dragons (Harold's emblem) represented on the envoy's shields, with their tails almost completely untied seem to reinforce this interpretation. First appearing in the upper border of Scene 12, the goose was probably chosen because of its dual symbolism, which could be used as protection against the prying, incisive mind of some of William's advisors. Thus, while overtly

expressing William's wisdom as a benevolent arbiter of Harold's fate, the psychopompic goose could remind the reader/viewer of Harold's final demise and, by extension, of William's role in Harold's cruel death. The camels are an intriguing addition to the variety of animals illustrated so far in the borders. With the representation of camels above Guy and William, it is probable that the intent was to remind the audience of their shared spite and malevolence, undoubtedly stemming from their previous disastrous encounter, before William reduced Guy into vassalage. Thus, a greedy, rancorous Guy probably felt avenged when he succeeded in extorting money from William, who also had a long memory for slights.

Incongruous at first, the presence of the female centaurs can be explained because of the value of their symbolism, if one intended to use the Tapestry for a propagandistic end. In spite of their possible convenient association with Harold, mainly because the centaurs are female and seem to reflect the lack of courage which the "ball-less" ape (below Scene 5), symbolizing Harold, has already implied, the female centaurs are better suited to symbolize Guy, and by extension, his liege lord William. Indeed, because of their female status, and ambivalence, pretending to act nobly while performing evil tricks, they may be another stratagem to belittle William. The other mythical animal is the dragon. In spite of their first appearance in the main field of Scenes 7 and 11, dragons are not depicted in the borders until Scene 13 in which Guy releases Harold to William. The appearance, actions and movements of the dragon of Wessex, Harold's emblem, was probably used to suggest Harold's changing fate and express his mood variations, as he was released from Guy's clutches only to fall prey to William, thus alerting once more the reader/viewer to the type of actions William performed when he wanted something bad enough, in this case the English crown. It is obvious that the beasts under Scene 13 manifesting their pent-up anger, symbolize Harold's fury, a normal reaction in view of Harold's criminal imprisonment by Guy and his subsequent unwarranted detainment by William.

Besides animals, a nude couple was introduced in the border below Scene 13, next to the dragon on the left. Likewise, two nude males were placed, one below Scene 14, and the other below the following scene. In the case of Scene 13, as McNulty suggested, the sexually excited man may have symbolized William, and the fearful female, Harold. In this case, it would mean that Harold, whose status seems to be

restored via his hunting bird and spurs, was about to be “screwed” by William. However, if one continues to follow the movement of the figures to the right vis-à-vis the flow of the narrative, Harold may be the male who can barely contain his desire to “screw” his so-called “savior” out of what William believed to be his rightful inheritance. Either way, the naked pair was probably placed below the meeting of the two royal pretenders to remind the audience about the simmering dispute between William and Harold, which grew into the final confrontation at Hastings.

Of the other two nudes, both are explicitly male. The first one is located below Scene 14 and seems to relate to Harold who stands gingerly with the tip of his left foot barely touching the ground above the naked figure. It seems that various elements such as placement, gestures and postures of the figures involved in the discussion taking place in Scene 14, express Harold’s dilemma during his face to face meeting with William. William may have been a bastard (striped roof), but through his father, Duke Robert, he had inherited royal blood (lions below). On the contrary, Harold may have wanted to become a king (lion under his right foot), but, as the naked worker seems to remind the audience, he was from a family of *parvenus*. This particular suggestion is also inferred by the fable of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw* and its moral, mentioned below in connection with the fables.

The last naked figure to adorn the borders of this area of the Tapestry, occupies an ambivalent space that seems to link the room in which William and Harold are discussing England’s future and a small space enclosed by striped columns which segregate an area depicting figures from the past. Because of its placement, lewd gesture, and posture that mirrors the cleric’s, this naked man was probably used as a mnemonic device, to remind the audience of the lamentable situation affecting the English succession, and of the ensuing years of turmoil that followed Cnut’s death, hinting at the possible repeat of such turmoil if William and Harold did not come to terms.

The fable may be another device employed to pass along a subtle message, that perhaps Odo, the most likely Odo, wanted the audience to capture. Because of its placement below Harold being taken prisoner, *The Lion and the Stag* emphasizes Harold’s predicament at Guy’s hands. However, the contents of this fable probably allude to a future and greater danger that Harold faced, i.e., William’s future nefarious actions against Harold.

The captured bear from *The two Companions and the Bear* was probably meant as another instructive tidbit directed at the viewers/readers, calling to mind Guy's (the knight) capture of Harold (the bear). In addition, the moral of the fable suggests that Guy made a terrible mistake when he sold the bear's skin before he had metaphorically killed it (Harold). By demanding that his liege ransom Harold, Guy forced William's hand, provoking a renewed resentment in the avaricious and calculating William. Likewise, this fable may also have been intended to disparage William by implying that he made a mistake when he forced Harold into swearing him (William) an oath of fealty, then released him to go back to England.

The Swallow and the Birds probably aimed to remind the reader/viewer of Edward's (the swallow's) dire warnings to Harold and his companions (the other birds) prior to their departure from England, that over the years, William (the flax, a lowly plant), the bastard son of Duke Robert, had grown into a formidable opponent who was able to destroy him and his followers. However, in spite of William's strength, like the birds flying away from the stone flung by the man's sling shot, Harold escaped William once. In the border above Scene 15, the fable of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw*, seemingly questioned Harold's status once more, perhaps intimating that Harold was aiming for a position beyond his reach. Like the jackdaw in the fable, the ambitious Harold who lusted after the English crown was rejected by William (the peacock), and disowned by his own relative (the bearded Englishman, either Hakon or Wulfnoth) who expresses his anger by making a fist in Harold's direction.

In addition, Guy de Ponthieu's changing hairstyles are worthy of note (Scenes 8 through 13). In Scenes 7 and 8, the hair covering the back of his neck may be indicative of Guy's Gaulish pride and of his reluctance to be William's vassal. Guy's adoption of the Norman haircut in Scene 9, where he receives Harold formally, shows the adaptability of a man who was little better than a brigand, who condoned or perhaps even participated in the lucrative, yet immoral, occupation of luring vessels to dangerous areas of the coast bordering his domain. Those who had money or influence, like Harold, were ransomed, others were imprisoned and/or killed. Perhaps anxious to remind the audience about the type of depredator with whom William associated, the patron did not hesitate to brand Guy. Indeed, Guy, whose pretensions were to pass for a courageous, strong, and loyal (lions) leader, was an aggressive and greedy (griffins) coward, a low

born, rancorous (camel) *canaille* (dog), and he and his men were but mere scavengers (vultures).

Lest the reader wonder if it was probable or even possible for such a reading to take place in medieval society, the answer is YES; since the Tapestry was probably not designed for William, nor especially to exalt the Norman cause, but to serve the purpose of the patron, whom most researchers believe to have been Odo. From what is known about Odo, one may deduce that the Tapestry provided an ideal medium to flaunt his (Odo's) wit and superior intelligence by covertly ridiculing, and even disparaging his powerful half-brother, with the intention of satisfying his personal political ambitions and those of Robert Curthose, his (Odo's) favorite nephew.

¹ Rudolph Arnheim, *The Power of the Center* (1988): 55-56.

² M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (1965): 96.

³ Jacques Le Goff, "Introduction, Medieval Man," in *Medieval Callings*, Jacques Le Goff, ed. (1990): 31.

⁴ For the symbolism of the dog, see Rowland (1973): 60-61, 66; Miquel (1992): 91; Voisenet (1994): 40; Voisenet (2000): 75.

⁵ For the place where Harold was taken prisoner, see Fowke (1913): 36; Simone Bertrand, *La tapisserie de Bayeux et l'art de vivre au onzième siècle* (1966): 61; Arnold Taylor, "Belrem," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 14 (1991): 1-23; McLynn (1999): 155-56.

⁶ For the quote, see McNulty (1989): 91. For Harold's status in Scene 8, see Bernard de Montfaucon, "La Conquête de l'Angleterre par Guillaume le Bâtard, Duc de Normandie, dit le Conquérant." *Les monumens de la monarchie française*, 2 (1730): 10; Fowke (1913): 38.

⁷ While incorrectly identifying Guy as Harold, Montfaucon implied correctly that the bird was held in this manner to prevent its taking flight, see Montfaucon, 2 (1730): 10.

⁸ Fowke (1913): 38.

⁹ Gameson (1997): 197.

¹⁰ Anne Payne, *Medieval Beasts* (1990): 63; for the vulture's rapacity, see Rabannus Maurus, *Allegoriae*, PL CXII: 1083; see also above Chap. 2, n. 73.

¹¹ For the symbolism associated with protruding tongues, see Garnier, I (1982): 135-36.

¹² Foys (1998): 240.

¹³ Nigel Saul, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England* (1997): 74-75.

¹⁴ Chefneux (1934): 14-20; Terkla (1995): 273-75.

¹⁵ Herrmann (1964): 25-28.

¹⁶ McNulty (1989): 91.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 34.

¹⁸ For griffins, see Bullfinch (1867): 178-79; Duchaussoy (1972): 213; PL CXI: 222; Rowland (1973): 87; Benton (1992): 129-130; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 486-87.

¹⁹ McNulty (1989): 71.

²⁰ Fowke (1913): 38.

²¹ For the meaning of this hand gesture, see Schmitt (1990): caption of Pl. XXIII, ill. 32, which represents the sculptures on the tympanum of the Portal of the Princes at Bamberg Cathedral (c. 1228); and Roger Axtell, *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World* (1998): 92-93.

²² McNulty (1989): 91.

²³ In February 1054, William won a decisive battle which helped consolidate the Duchy of Normandy. During this battle, Guy de Ponthieu fought on the side of the loser, i.e., King Henry of France. Taken prisoner, Guy spent two years in one of William's dungeons before being ransomed by his relatives;

- for this episode, see Wace, *Le roman de Rou*, A. J. Holden, ed., 2 (1973): vv. 4565-4902, vv. 4927-28; McLynn (1999): 89.
- ²⁴ For Harold's ransom, see Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed., 1 (1952): 40-41, partially translated in Lewis Thorpe, ed., *The Bayeux Tapestry and the Norman Invasion* (1973): 33-34.
- ²⁵ For the reversal of the scenes, see Gibbs-Smith (1957): 164; Parisse (1983): 74-75; Bernstein (1986): 199, n. 16; Grape (1994): 70; and especially, Richard Wissolik, "Duke William's Messenger's: An 'Insoluble, Reverse-Order' Scene of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Medium Aevium*, LL/1 (1982): 102-107.
- ²⁶ McNulty (1989): 95.
- ²⁷ For the rams, see Duchaussoy (1972): 88-89; Rowland (1973): 136; Payne (1990): 52; Duchet-Suchaux (1992): 22; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 113.
- ²⁸ McNulty (1989): 95.
- ²⁹ For the goose as psychopomp, see Duchaussoy (1972): 141-46, esp. 144-45; Voisenet (1994): 288.
- ³⁰ For the goose as newscarrrier and rumormonger, see Cazenave, ed. (1996): 471.
- ³¹ For the goose as symbol of the cautious man, see Aurelius Ambrosius, (St. Ambrose), *Hexameron*, V, XIII, 44, PL XIV: 225; Rabannus Maurus, *De universo*, PL CXI: 248B; Voisenet (2000): 130.
- ³² For William's lack of compassion, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 263-266; R. Latouche, *Histoire du comté du Maine pendant les Xe et XIe siècles* (1910): 34; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 193-194; Douglas (1964): 372, 408-415; Orderic Vital, Chibnall, ed. 2 (1969): 252, 259, 269; McLynn (1999): 102-103.
- ³³ McLynn (1999): 102-03, 226.
- ³⁴ Goldschmidt (1947): 48; Herrmann (1964): 32.
- ³⁵ For a discussion of the arcaded structure separating Scenes 10 and 11, see Fowke (1913): 44; Brown, in Stenton ed. (1957): 84; Wilson (1985): 217; Bernstein (1986): 43-46.
- ³⁶ For the cock and its symbolism, see Pliny the Elder, *Naturae historiarum*, III, 31; X, 24-25; XXXVII, 144; St. Ambrose (339-397), *Hexameron*, V, 24, 88, PL XIV: 240-241; Voisenet (1994): 115, 131, 189; Robert-Jacques Thibaud, *Dictionnaire de Mythologie et de Symbolique Celtique* (1995): 99-100; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 160-61; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 281-83; Voisenet (2000): 129.
- ³⁷ For the cock crowing against evil spirits, see C. Vogel, "Pratiques superstitieuses au début du XIe siècle d'après le *Corrector sive medicus* of Burchard de Worms (965-1025)," *Mélanges* (1974): 751-761 (Latin text in PL CXL: 971); Voisenet (1994): 191-93; Voisenet (2000): 129-130.
- ³⁸ Duchet-Suchaux (1992): 19.
- ³⁹ See the reference to Ambrose (St.), in above n. 36.
- ⁴⁰ McNulty (1989): 95.
- ⁴¹ Cazenave, ed. (1996): 109; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 188-189.
- ⁴² McNulty (1989): 38-39, 70, 93.
- ⁴³ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, XI, III, *De portentis*, PL LXXXII: 419-424; Rabannus Maurus, *De Universo*, VII, 7, PL CXL: 197-98; P. Diel, *Le symbolisme dans la mythologie grecque* (1966): 134; Voisenet (1994): 58, 299-300; Seringe (1995): 40-41; Voisenet (2000): 23-24.
- ⁴⁴ Goldschmidt (1947): 48.
- ⁴⁵ Herrmann (1964): 31.
- ⁴⁶ Wormald (1957): 32; Yapp (1987): 42; Wissolik (1979): 96.
- ⁴⁷ McNulty (1989): 95.
- ⁴⁸ McLynn (1999): 102.
- ⁴⁹ For Tuold's long-debated identity, see Fowke (1913): 41-43; C. Prentout, "Essai d'identification des personnages inconnus de la Tapisserie de Bayeux," *Revue Historique* 176 (1935): 14-23 (trans. & reprint. as "An Attempt to Identify Some Unknown Characters in the Bayeux Tapestry, in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 21-26); R. Lejeune, "Tuold dans la Tapisserie de Bayeux," in *Mélanges René Crozet*, 1 (1966): 419-425; P.E. Bennett, "Encore Tuold dans la Tapisserie de Bayeux," *Annales de Normandie*, XXX (1980): 3-13; Brooks and Walker, Gameson, ed. (1997): 68-69; Foy (1998): 247-49; Bridgeford (1999): 157; Musset (2002): 112.
- ⁵⁰ Bernstein (1986): 127.
- ⁵¹ For Abraham as a bird slinger see, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius B. IV, f. 26v; for the comparison see Wormald (1957): 32; and Bernstein (1986): 40-41, esp. 40.
- ⁵² Lancelot, 6 (1729): 755; Montfaucon, "Monument d' Harold," *Les Monumens de la Monarchie française*, 1 (1804): 371-379, esp. 373; Dibdin, in Jubinal, ed., 1 (1838): 14-15, esp. 16; Bruce

- (1856): 19; Marignan, *La tapisserie de Bayeux* (1902): 39-40, 103; Fowke (1913): 21; Tavernier, "The Author of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Archaeological Journal*, LXXI (1914): 171-186, esp. 184; Wilson (1985): 210.
- ⁵³ Chefneux (1934): 18-20; Herrmann (1964): 30.
- ⁵⁴ McNulty (1989): 34-35.
- ⁵⁵ Terkla (1995): 275.
- ⁵⁶ Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. (1964): 6.
- ⁵⁷ McNulty (1989): 34, 95.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 97.
- ⁵⁹ Gregory the Great (540-604), *Moralia in Job*, PL LXXV:536, PL LXXVI:770.
- ⁶⁰ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, Lindsay, ed., I (1911): 35; Rabannus Maurus, PL CXI: 211 A.
- ⁶¹ Benton (1992): 82; Payne (1990): 55; Rowland (1973): 48.
- ⁶² Benton (1992): 81; Payne (1990): 54; Rowland (1973): 49.
- ⁶³ Origen (after 244), *Sermo 20, Commentaries on Matthew*; and Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus*, VII, 6; for the quote, see Pierre Miquel, *Dictionnaire symbolique des animaux* (1991): 75; see also Euchèr de Lyons (5th cent.), *Liber formularum spiritalis intelligentia* 5, PL 50:75; Voisenet (2000): 51.
- ⁶⁴ Basil the Great, "Homely VIII," *Hexaemeron*, 1; for the quote see Miquel (1991): 76; for the camel as a symbol of conceit see, Eugène Droulers, *Dictionnaire des Attributs, Allégories, Emblèmes et Symboles* (no date): 37; as a symbol of "anger, sluggishness and narrowness," see Udo Becker, *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Symbols* (1994): 51.
- ⁶⁵ *ASC*, "E", years 1086, 1087; Freeman, 3(1869): 79-80; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 145.
- ⁶⁶ For Guy de Ponthieu, see above Chap. 2, n. 71; for William, see above n. 62; see also McLynn (1999): 95 and n. 44, 101-03 and n. 68.
- ⁶⁷ For the camel, see above ns. 61 and 62.
- ⁶⁸ Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 132-33; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 100-06; Gillingham, in S. Morillo, ed. (1995): 96-105, esp. 109; McLynn (1999): 89, 156.
- ⁶⁹ McNulty (1989): 35, 94-95.
- ⁷⁰ Herrmann (1964): 33.
- ⁷¹ For the quote, see La Rue, "Réponse aux Mémoires publiés à Londres contre les 'Recherches sur la tapisserie célèbre de Bayeux'," Reprinted in part in A. Jubinal. *Les anciennes tapisseries historiques*, I (1838): 20; for a similar explanation of nudes in the BT, see Bruce (1856): 120.
- ⁷² Cowdrey, in Gameson ed. (1997): 99.
- ⁷³ McNulty (1989): 38.
- ⁷⁴ Freeman, in Gameson ed. (1997): 15.
- ⁷⁵ Rabannus Maurus, *De Universo*, VII, PL CXI: 229-30; Wright (1841): 84; Gabriel Biancotto, *Bestiaires du Moyen Age* (1995): 90-91.
- ⁷⁶ *Exeter Book*, Mackie, trans., pt. II (1934): 63; McNulty (1989): 103.
- ⁷⁷ McNulty (1989): 97.
- ⁷⁸ Fowke (1913): 57; Lewis (1999): 81; Dragons are always represented in connection with Harold, in the main field of Scenes 7, 11, 13, 56 and 57; below Scenes 13, 15, 18, 39, 50; and above Scene 22.
- ⁷⁹ Cazenave, ed. (1996): 87-88; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 138-39; Voisenet (2000): 31.
- ⁸⁰ McNulty (1989): 97.
- ⁸¹ *Ibidem*, 96.
- ⁸² Bernstein (1986): 124.
- ⁸³ Lewis (1999): 85-86.
- ⁸⁴ Bruce (1856): 53; Lewis (1999): 85; for the quote, see McNulty (1989): 99.
- ⁸⁵ Hermann (1964): 34; Aesop, Kopito, ed. (2002): 54-55.
- ⁸⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, XII, VII, 35; Pline l'Ancien, *Naturae historiarum*, X, 77.
- ⁸⁷ Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things* (1986): 173.

- ⁸⁸ Herrmann's interpretation of the paired dogs as a fable, *Le loup médecin*, about a sow that refused the help of a perfidious wolf-doctor when about to give birth, cannot be retained because neither animal has porcine features, and because the fable cannot be related to the story, see Herrmann (1964): 36.
- ⁸⁹ For the meaning of the open palm, see Garnier, I (1982): 174; Girault (1992): 11-12.
- ⁹⁰ For the meaning of the index finger pointing at someone, see Garnier, I (1982): 170.
- ⁹¹ For the meaning of the combination of hand gestures, see *ibidem*, 209.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*, 125 & 142-43; and Girault (1993): 11.
- ⁹³ Wilson (1985): 179.
- ⁹⁴ Wissolik (1979): 90.
- ⁹⁵ D. J. G. Raraty, "Earl Godwine of Wessex: Origins of his power and his political loyalties," *History*, 74 (1989): 3-19, esp. 4-5; R. A. Brown (2000): 92-93
- ⁹⁶ Eadmer, Rule, ed. (1884): 6 "*Wulnothus itaque filius Godwini et Hacun filius Suani filii sui obsides dantur, ac in Normanniam Willelmo comiti, filio scilicet Roberti filii Ricardi fratris matris suae, custodiendi destinantur;*" Wissolik (1979): 91.
- ⁹⁷ For the open palm, see Garnier, I (1982): 174.
- ⁹⁸ For the Aelfgyva scene, see especially Freeman, 3 (1869): 708-71, (reprint. in Gameson, ed (1997): 15-18); Fowke (1913): 49-57; M. W. Campbell, "Queen Emma and Aelfifu of Northampton: Canute the Great's Women," *Medieval Scandinavia*, 4 (1971): 66-79; P. Stafford, "Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages," in *Medieval Women*, Derek Baker, ed. (1978): 79-100; Wissolik, (1979): 69-97, esp. 83-95; McNulty, "The Lady Aelfgyva in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Speculum*, 55/4 (1980): 659-668; M. W. Campbell, "Aelfgyva: The Mysterious Lady of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Annales de Normandie*, 34 (1984): 127-45; McNulty (1989): 53-58; P. Stafford, "The Portrayal of Royal Women in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Centuries," in *Medieval Queenship*, J. C. Parsons, ed. (1993): 143-167; Gerald Bond, *The Loving Subject* (1995): 18-41; C. Prentout, reprint. in Gameson (1997): 22-25; Caviness, in Jan M. Ziolkowski, ed. (1998): 155-175, esp. 167-168; Lewis (1999): 86-89; For the latest attempt at deciphering Scene 15, see Musset (2002): 126-128.
- ⁹⁹ For a summary of the various identifications of Aelfgyva and of the various interpretations of the Aelfgyva scene up to 1998, see Foy (1998): 269-272; for later attempts, see above n. 95.
- ¹⁰⁰ McNulty (1989): 57.
- ¹⁰¹ Musset (2002): 128 and n. 27.
- ¹⁰² Lewis (1999): 88.
- ¹⁰³ Garnier, I (1982): 174.
- ¹⁰⁴ Garnier, II (1989): 42-43, 120-23; McNulty (1980): 665; Caviness (1998): 155-175, esp. 167.
- ¹⁰⁵ Garnier, I (1982): 95-98.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, 185; Garnier, II (1989): 129.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bond (1995): 26.
- ¹⁰⁸ Fowke (1913): 50-57; Wissolik (1979): 87-88; McNulty (1989): 52-58; Freeman, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 15-18; C. Prentout, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 22-25.
- ¹⁰⁹ McNulty (1989): 57; Gameson (1997): xi.
- ¹¹⁰ Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed., 1 (1848): 190, sub-anno 1035; Fowke (1913): 53; McNulty (1980): 666-667; McNulty (1989): 55-56; Lewis (1999): 88-89.
- ¹¹¹ For this and other versions of Aelfgyva of Northampton's adulterous affairs, see *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, A. Campbell, ed. & trans., Camden Series 2, v. 72 (1949): 41; P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest* (1989): 77-79.
- ¹¹² Campbell (1971): 66-79; Stafford (1978): 93-94; McNulty (1980): 663-667; McNulty (1989): 55-57; Lewis (1999): 86-89.
- ¹¹³ Fowke (1913): 53; see also P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* (1997): 248-51.
- ¹¹⁴ For the English succession in the eleventh century, see Douglas (1964): 159-180; Michael Wood, *In Search of the Dark Ages* (1991): 198-210; M. K. Lawson, *Cnut, the Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (1993): passim; Saul, ed. (1997): 53-60; Rud (2002): 18-20.
- ¹¹⁵ Without foundation, Herrmann interpreted this nude as the fable, *L'accouchement*, the story of a woman about to give birth, see Herrmann (1964): 37.
- ¹¹⁶ Douglas (1964): 207-21.
- ¹¹⁷ Wissolik (1979): 83-84.

CHAPTER IV
THE BRITTANY CAMPAIGN
AND HAROLD'S FATEFUL OATH
SCENES 16 – 23

Un signe est une chose qui, en plus de l'apparence qu'elle porte aux sens, fait venir d'elle vers la pensée quelque chose d'autre.¹

St. Augustine of Hippo,
De doctrina Christiana, I

At a deeper level of analysis, the communication network operates on double lines, offering descriptive and narrative systems, both subjected to marginal glosses in the upper and lower strips... These two systems incorporate diverse codes representational and symbolic, connected vertically and horizontally in such a way that their apparent correlation depends on the continuing dominance not only of the central strip but also of the prominently named principals, primary agents of the actions depicted.²

Richard Brilliant
 "The Bayeux Tapestry: A stripped narrative for their eyes and ears"

Long ago St. Augustine noted that objects perceived by the senses often brought to mind something other than what they actually and superficially represented. Recently, in his analysis of the Bayeux Tapestry, Richard Brilliant discussed the interaction between the narrative in the center field, the inscriptions, and the borders. However, in spite of his accurate assumptions that the meaning of the center is affected by the borders and vice-versa in a constant exchange or osmosis, depending on, and influenced by the identity and the actions of the figures in the main field, Brilliant fell short of thoroughly examining the borders.

As McNulty already noted, a pattern in the representation of animal pictographs seems to emerge. But rather than being simply "the motif of balanced figures [that] continued" without specific purpose, it seems that the recurrence of some animals, pictographs and fables occurred within particular contexts. The lions, the first animals depicted in the borders, seem to be represented in connection with the main characters of the plot. Thus, depending on the context in the main field, a lion may symbolize a king,

Edward, two would-be kings, William and Harold, and by extension, men in a position of authority, such as William's vassal, Guy de Ponthieu. As Bernstein posited, winged lions are present when William is involved in a scene, either personally, or vicariously through the men who are fighting for him. Thus far, royal birds of prey, i.e., eagles, were present only in the proximity of Edward and a person directly connected with Edward, i.e., Harold, immediately after their first meeting. Other birds of prey such as vultures, with their negative connotation, are prevalent in the borders of the scenes in which Guy is involved, and continue to be illustrated when there is a need to focus on William's and Harold's rapacity, and on forebodings of doom. Dogs may have been brought in to characterize Guy, Harold, or even William as aggressive and greedy *canailles*. The dragons or fire-drakes were illustrated first in the main field in connection with Harold and his capture, then in the lower border when Harold found himself in a situation that he was powerless to change, such as his being handed over to William in exchange for a ransom paid to Guy.³ As will be pointed out in the analysis of Scene 16, as though mirroring Harold's inner feelings, angry dragons recurred at the very beginning of the Brittany Campaign, in which Harold had no choice but to participate. However, these dragons are somewhat restrained. While fire spewed from their mouths, their tails have been tied into a knot. Another dragon, forlorn and completely powerless, is depicted in Scene 18 during the Brittany Campaign, perhaps in an attempt to show Harold's complete submission and inability to fight back in this context. Once more, two agitated, constrained dragons are portrayed in Scene 22 in connection with Harold's predicament as he is being led to Bayeux where he will swear his fateful oath to William. As the dragons illustrate, while some animals recur throughout the Tapestry, their appearance, posture and gestures seem to vary according to the events befalling the individual they were probably meant to symbolize.

1. SCENE 16: "*HIC WILLEM DVX ET EXERCITVS EIVS VENERVNT...*"

Researchers have identified Scene 16 as the beginning of William's Brittany Campaign. Duke William, in resplendent armor adorned with the *diversitas* associated with his bastardry, is leading his men past Mont-Saint-Michel towards Dol, and an encounter with Conan, the Count of Brittany, a blood relative with whom the Dukes of

Normandy had an endemic feud.⁴ One may wonder why the Brittany Campaign was included.⁵ Was it perhaps as W. R. Lethaby mentions: “to amplify the Bayeux episode [the oath], to show how well Harold was treated by Duke William and to make his guilt plainer”?⁶ It seems more accurate to posit that perhaps the Brittany Campaign was included because powerful medieval leaders were identified and synonymous with undefeated warrior chieftains. To the question: “what truly dominates the Tapestry as a whole?” Gameson answers accurately: “war, war, war.”⁷ The Brittany Campaign that Lewis considers “as a dress rehearsal for the coming Norman invasion of England” is probably the most lengthy and detailed episode of warfare represented in the Tapestry prior to the final battle at Hastings.⁸

It is possible that the Brittany Campaign, discussed only by Guillaume de Poitiers, may have been introduced in the Tapestry at this particular time because it afforded Odo, the man who probably commissioned the Tapestry, a chance to promote himself and the cause he sponsored at the duke’s expense.⁹ As David Bates mentioned, Odo was a witness to “the disintegration of the Norman royal family...” In addition, “Odo ...cannot but have become involved in the quarrels between the Conqueror and his eldest son after 1077.”¹⁰ Thus the Brittany Campaign, like other parts of the Tapestry, may have been an excellent venue for Odo to direct the Tapestry designer to insert covert aspersions aimed at William and his rule. Other aspects of the Brittany Campaign appear to have no relevant relationship to the epic, unless and until they are thoroughly examined against historical events and by taking into account their symbolic importance. For example, Grape already noted that the depiction of the abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel which “is entirely irrelevant to the Tapestry,” was probably included because “monks from Mont-Saint-Michel set up the abbey of Saint-Vigor, founded by Odo in his cathedral city of Bayeux.”¹¹ Thus the representation of the Mont-Saint-Michel, represented “an indirect reference to the patron who commissioned the Tapestry.”¹² Additionally, Odo may have wanted to refer to the Mont-Saint-Michel and Duke Richard II (perhaps the little figure in the upper border), using them as a mnemonic device to remind the audience of Richard’s generosity towards the abbey, at a time when, from Odo’s standpoint, his grand-son, William, was proving most ungenerous towards the Church.

As the reader/viewer progresses through the Brittany Campaign, the probability grows that this part of the Tapestry may have offered Odo the perfect arena to present a version of events advantageous to himself, but not always to William. In fact, using subtle details, elements denigrating to William seem to have been integrated into the fabric of the Tapestry. One such element is provided by the checker pattern on William's elaborate suit of armor which not only sets him apart from the other men, but also is a convenient reminder of William's illegitimacy, checkers being another sign of *diversitas*. In view of Bates' argument, it appears that the Brittany Campaign provided a fertile environment to gloss the scenes with comical, satirical and perhaps even trenchant commentaries through the placement, posture and gestures of the participants in the main field, and of the animal pictographs and human figures in the borders.¹³ Indeed, the manner in which events are pictured in the Tapestry is unique. As illustrated below, the contents of the borders seem to support the idea of Odo's input in order to bring his point of view across to the viewers/readers.

1.1. SCENE 16: Paired Birds, *Canes* and *Amphisbaena* in the Upper Border

Continuing "the motif of balanced figures," two birds are represented above the structure that separates Scenes 15 and 16.¹⁴ Herrmann is of the opinion that the two birds represent the fable of *The Two pigeons*.¹⁵ This fable tells the story of two pigeons (perhaps Edward and Harold) who separated when one (like Harold) decided to make a long voyage. After several unfortunate happenstances, such as an encounter with a hawk (perhaps Guy), who is attacked by an eagle (perhaps William) desirous to get hold of the pigeon (Harold), the bedraggled, battered pigeon finally reaches home swearing that he will never leave again to seek adventure abroad (perhaps predicting Harold's return to England after the Brittany Campaign). Indeed, the fable of *The Two Pigeons* seems to provide a fitting comparison for Harold's adventures and ensuing predicaments. The two birds may also signify the beginning of a new episode in the exciting saga pictured below. However, the two pigeons are the only elements of the fable represented in the border, leaving the viewer/reader to wonder if there is not another, perhaps simpler, explanation for the inclusion of these two fowls.

Perhaps pigeons were represented in the upper border to announce the complete change of locale occurring in the main field. Similar birds are depicted in the upper

border at the beginning of Scene 4, when Harold left England for Normandy. In the case of Scene 16, adorsed pigeons may be included to signal William's and Harold's departure to fight Conan in Brittany. In this case, why are they represented going their separate ways? These two birds that are all aflutter have turned their backs on each other. Placed next to the dogs, which seem to be sharing a good laugh and making a sign of agreement as they touch paws, and paralleling the angry, yet constrained dragons in the lower borders, the birds may herald an end to the unstable *détente* established during the meeting between William and Harold. The posture and gesture of the pigeon on the left may be a latent expression of Harold's unstated wish to fly away in the opposite direction, thus breaking his shaky alliance with William. Conversely, William (the pigeon on the right) was ignoring Harold's reticence and hastening to fly into the fray. Probably wanting to keep a close eye on Harold's actions, and evaluate his skills on the battlefield, it is likely that a prudent William cajoled, flattered and perhaps threatened Harold in order to force him to enroll in the Norman ranks.¹⁶

As though to emphasize the feeling of regret and unease, a pair of predators was placed directly above the word *DVX* following *WILLEM* in the inscriptions. These hound-like beasts with sharp claw-like nails, turning away from each other, probably refer to William and to the person forced to accompany him, i.e., Harold. Rather than preening, they seem intent on biting their respective tails, perhaps to stifle an urge to growl and engage in a fight. It would not be surprising if these elements of design were meant to insinuate that the agreement concerning the English succession, which may have been reached between Harold and William in Scene 14, was superficial and ephemeral. Like the two beasts turning away, the two leaders probably distrusted each other instinctively and intensely. As a result, the situation in which they found themselves was untenable and was deteriorating rapidly.

The mythical amphisbaena, represented next, adds to the unease and foreboding of evil. Based on a real animal, whose tail resembles a second head because of its strange markings, the amphisbaena is a powerful serpent. In medieval imagery, the amphisbaena is sometimes represented with legs (as it is here in the Tapestry). In addition, it was believed that either head could bite; and that their bites were equally poisonous and deadly. Because of its appearance, venomous nature, and practice of feeding on decaying matter, the amphisbaena was associated with evil. Because of its two heads, it

was believed that the amphisbaena could easily run backwards and forwards, thus enabling it to make an easy escape.¹⁷ For the same reason, it was also believed that it could devour itself in a mad frenzy.¹⁸ McNulty posits that “metaphorically, this creature may be applied to both Conan and to Harold: Conan leads William on a chase back and forth from Dol down to Dinan and then back up to Rennes; and both Conan and Harold prove hard to catch and hold.”¹⁹ Indeed, as Lewis posits, the Brittany Campaign was probably made part of the Tapestry to give the audience a foretaste of the Battle of Hastings.²⁰

However, when taking the borders into account, one realizes that they also play an important role, as they seem to reiterate and reinforce some of the character traits of the main participants, as well as to pinpoint, for the audience, their moods, feelings and attitudes vis-à-vis one another, at a given moment in time. Thus, the placement of the amphisbaena directly above William’s Norman followers seems to indicate that the symbolism of the two beasts may also be applied to William. Indeed, it seems that both Harold and William were engaged in a cat and mouse game, one always attempting to evade the other until the final, inevitable battle.

Another unsettling element has also entered the upper borders. The two birds depicted after the amphisbaena are probably vultures, as their necks, shape of the heads, beaks and long talons seem to indicate. Their gestures, touching wings while turning away from one another, were probably meant to suggest William’s and Harold’s forced companionship. Their placement directly above William may have been meant to imply that the duke was not immune from rapacity and greed. A representation of the edifice built by Duke Richard on Mont-Saint-Michel interrupts the upper border and ends Scene 16.

1.2. SCENE 16: Dragons, *The Fox and the Crow*, Horses, and Winged lions in the Lower Border

In the lower border, below the two parting birds and the architectural structure, two dragons are intent on breathing fire in each other’s direction. However, as already mentioned, these two dragons are unable to spew fire from their back ends as their tails are tied in a knot, probably symbolizing Harold’s (the dragon of Wessex) inability to fight back, as he was not only bound by honor to follow his “host” but also because he knew that while William treated him as his “guest,” he was *de facto* a prisoner and must

accomplish William's bidding. The enraged dragons in the lower border may have been a picturesque manner to intimate Harold's ill-contained rage and impossible predicament.

Next, a fable, which Herrmann identified as *The Fox and the Eagle*, was inserted to the right of the dragons.²¹ However, this identification is most unlikely, and researchers concur that it is a second version of *The Fox and the Crow*.²² In this version, the fox is depicted on the left, and is paralleling William's movement from left to right. Thus, William may be identified once more as the fox. The piece of cheese (crown) is no longer in the crow's beak (in Harold's possession). On the contrary, it is firmly lodged between the jaws of the fox (William), who even appears to have a smirk on his face as he watches a visibly puffed up crow (Harold), squawk in anger at the fox (William). The fox is also portrayed in a strange position. The back part of his body, is cut by the diagonal bar that frames the scene on the left side. Such a *situation sécante* may have suggested that the fox was moving from one timeframe and from one place to another.²³ In this case, the *situation sécante* of the fox seems to indicate that the fox is entering the scene holding on to the "cheese" that he acquired earlier, probably during the animated meeting between William and Harold in Scene 14 where items of importance regarding the possession of the crown were discussed. As a result, like the fox holding the cheese, William felt confident that he had the crown in his possession. After all, Harold was in his debt, since William had saved him from Guy's clutches. As McNulty already stated, "William has Harold just where he wants him...".²⁴ In his comments on the second representation of *The Fox and the Crow*, Terkla, who was intent on proving the designer's Norman bias, stated that, "clearly, the Tapestry's designer saw William as the rightful heir to the English crown and the English earl as a scoundrel – as cunning and treacherous as a fox." However, Terkla's comment failed to explain why Harold, supposedly the fox, has the crown in his grasp when he is obviously in William's power, and, as the imagery in the border seems to convey, has perhaps conceded, albeit unwillingly and temporarily, that the crown should be William's.²⁵ The two dragons seem to express Harold's anger. But, Harold's hands were tied like the dragons' tails, and he was prevented from acting out his frustration.

Continuing to progress from left to right, two horses follow this second representation of *The Fox and the Crow* in the lower border of Scene 16. Because of their placement, posture and actions, it is possible to associate the horses with Harold and

William portrayed in the main field. The leftmost horse is placed below three knights, one of which, although unnamed, is probably Harold, riding forlornly behind William. The horse on the right, followed by aggressive, mocking winged lions, is located below William, mounted proudly on his horse.

The symbolism attached to the horse was of a complex nature, a fact that educated medieval individuals may have known and used to their advantage. Medieval culture was the recipient of negative and positive equine symbolism that had filtered down through the ages from Celtic, Greco-Roman, Viking and Germano-Frankish mythology and legends.²⁶ In this case, because of the uniqueness of their presence, placement, prone posture and actions, these two horses may have been symbolically multivalent, harboring various degrees of negative and positive symbolism.

On the negative side, according to medieval legends, like the "*Mesnie Hellequin*," derived from Northern European mythology, the horse was a chthonian symbol considered to be a nightmarish beast whose appearance was a prelude to grave events.²⁷ Indeed, its nefarious and macabre reputation often turned the horse into a harbinger of death, and by extension into the very beast that took its anguished rider to Hell.²⁸ Thus, the horse on the left, apparently engaged in trying to rid itself of pesky flies and other vermin lurking in its furry coat, may represent Harold attempting to destroy annoying external elements and influences (such as William's increasing power over him and his actions), which, if left unchecked, may lead Harold to the fulfillment of his worst nightmare, i.e., the loss of the English throne and of his life. The horse on the right, engrossed in the same occupation as the horse on the left, may have been illustrated directly below William to suggest that he (William) was trying to rid himself of another annoying "bug," i.e. Harold.

Medieval culture also considered horses to be symbols of virility, and associated horses with the ultimate symbol of masculinity, i.e., the warrior knight.²⁹ However, in the case of the lower border of Scene 16, the two horses have been gelded. Perhaps these horses were represented without sexual organs in order to satirize Harold by associating him once more with an animal that had "no balls," i.e., no courage. The position of the two gelded horses respectively below Harold and William leads one to wonder if the aspersion mentioned above, i.e., the lack of courage, was deliberately extended to William.

In addition, the horse was endowed with other symbolic meanings. Like the Greeks, Isidore of Seville linked the horse to water and springs.³⁰ Subsequently, the association of the horse to water and its sources remained strong, especially in the medieval culture of Northern Europe.³¹ Perhaps because of its dual connection with nightmares and water, the horse was also associated with Saturn, and by extension with the planet of the same name located in the zodiacal sign of Aquarius (20 Jan – 18 Feb), a water sign.³²

This mode of associating of ideas, and the subsequent correlation of meanings that was common in the Middle Ages, is prevalent in the Tapestry. Indeed, the horses are represented in close proximity to water, i.e., the river Couesnon, illustrated by wavy lines in the main field, above and slightly to the right of the horses. Horses, water, Saturn, and the zodiacal water sign, Aquarius, seem to set a timeframe for the beginning of the Brittany expedition. Close to water and connected to the sign of Aquarius (20 Jan – 18 Feb), the horses seem to mark the time of William's arrival in sight of Mont-Saint-Michel. The two fish in the lower border at the beginning of Scene 17 are depicted in a fashion similar to the sign of the zodiac, Pisces (19 Feb. – 20 Mar.), which comes directly after Aquarius, and may set the time of William's departure.³³

Thus, the two horses in the lower border represented before, and the two fish illustrated after a depiction of Mont-Saint-Michel, may have indicated a time frame, and were probably meant to suggest that William did not just pass through, but spent some time, perhaps even wintered at or around Mont-Saint-Michel between the end of January 1064 (?) or 1065 (?) and the end of March of the same year.³⁴ Such a stay can be easily explained, because battles were not fought customarily during the winter months. The horses and their symbolism demonstrate the richness of meaning that may be gathered from an examination of the borders in conjunction with the main field.

To the right of the horses, two winged creatures are represented in the lower border. Without comment, McNulty notes that, "Bernstein terms quadrupeds of this form 'winged lions.' He (Bernstein) suggests that winged lions may be part of a secret attempt of the designer to liken William's circumstances to those of Nebuchadnezzar."³⁵ Perhaps Bernstein made a correct assumption. However, it seems unnecessary to refer to Nebuchadnezzar to make a point. Horses, whose symbolism was ambiguous and could be interpreted on several levels, including their use as predictors of doom, were

juxtaposed with winged lions symbolizing William and, by extension, the Normans. This juxtaposition seems to reinforce the foreboding inherent to the borders of Scene 16. However, these winged lions are not ordinary. They are depicted with tongues protruding from their wide open jaws. Indeed, these monstrous beasts, displaying the vain, foolhardy attitudes of beings contemptuous of the sacred and overly sure of themselves, are not just engaged in a panting frenzy, but in performing a mocking, devilish gesture at Mont-Saint-Michel represented above, an action that is unnatural for an animal as it requires an act of will. By their actions, the winged lions, represented as deriding a holy place, may be metaphors for William and his men riding above, and may have been used to express the idea that William was contemptuous of the Christian Church.

The symbolic association of these winged beasts with the Duke entices the observer to look carefully at the proud figure of William, who is depicted on his horse in close proximity to one of the horses and the mocking winged beasts in the lower border. In fact, directly above the winged lions, William's horse is performing an action similar to Harold's mount in Scene 2. Outwardly, William's horse is represented as cautious, perhaps even fearful, as it approaches the crossing of the river Couesnon and the dangerous stretch of sand and silt that fills the bay around Mont-Saint-Michel. However, the combination of this representation in the main field and the pictographs in the borders may have introduced another latent meaning. Raising his gaze proudly toward the Mont-Saint-Michel where William's ancestor, Richard II, helped found the abbey church, William appears totally oblivious to his horse's concern, as though his (William's) actions vis-à-vis the Church were blameless.³⁶ However, the hesitation of his horse should have awakened William to the possibility that he was stepping on dangerous ground. In this manner, innuendos about William's dealings with the Church may have been incorporated in the design, insinuating that perhaps William was making a mockery of the sacred. Indeed, perhaps out of greed, William implemented new Church policies, imposing costly knight-service on Norman abbeys and bishoprics, shortly before the Conquest, and promoting the same policies in England after 1070.³⁷ It would be surprising if these changes, probably imposed to Odo's great chagrin, had been welcome, and were sitting well either with the secular or the regular clergies. In consequence, the adroit Odo may have attempted to use the discontent resulting from William's ill-

received policies to his own advantage and for his personal propaganda. Additionally, Odo may have also hinted at events that occurred in the late 1070s/early 1080s when William sided with Emperor Henry IV against Pope Gregory VII.³⁸

In summary, taking only the main field into consideration, Scene 16 appears uneventful as William is represented riding toward Mont-Saint-Michel. However, the borders add another dimension to the “normal” advance of the troops. They seem to comment on the events depicted and probably discussed in Scene 14, and on the resulting frame of mind and feelings of the main protagonists. They also alert the viewer/reader to the forebodings inherent to the symbolism latent in the serial combination of animals, such as the dragon, the fox, the crow, the horse and the winged lion.

William and Harold, the two *canailles* (laughing dogs in the upper border), probably believed that they had pulled the wool over each other’s eyes. But their mutual feeling of contentment may soon subside. In a manner similar to the pair of birds, probably pigeons trying to fly away from each other, it is likely that Harold (the bird on the left) wanted to have nothing to do with William (the bird on the right) and his plans. The pigeons in the upper border seem to make obvious Harold’s latent desire to flee William’s presence and William’s anxiety to start the Brittany Campaign. Ill-contained rage on the part of both William and Harold penetrated the scene with the large hounds biting their tails. Rage seems to be even more blatant on Harold’s part, as he may also be associated with the disabled dragons still attempting to breathe fire. Harold had a valid reason to harbor latent feelings of rage: he was trapped. In addition, as the amphisbaena, the vultures, the dragons with tied tails and the horses in the borders seem to predict, it would not be long before Harold was no longer able to evade his inevitable, unenviable fate at the hands of the Normans and their Duke. Perhaps reinforcing this interpretation because they were gelded, the horses may have warned the audience about the coming demise of the “ball-less” Harold at William’s hands, especially since they were placed between the enraged dragons and the mocking winged lions. Besides their evil portent, through their gelded status and their placement below Harold and William, the horses may have suggested that these two rulers lacked the virility necessary for a strong ability to lead. In addition, placed in close proximity to another water sign, Pisces, the horses associated with the water sign of Aquarius, may have been a sign indicating the timeframe for the beginning of the Brittany Campaign, informing the audience that

William and Harold probably waited for the end of winter at, or around, Mont-Saint-Michel, before engaging the Bretons.

With their heads raised and looking upwards toward the sacred precinct of the Mont-Saint-Michel, the winged lions were sticking their tongues out in a mocking gesture toward a holy place, already a famous pilgrimage site.³⁹ Thus, the audience was faced once more with wagging, mocking tongues, this time below William and the Mont-Saint-Michel. Overtly, the winged lions next to the horses may have hinted at Harold's predictable fate at William's hands. Covertly, the winged lions, taunting the sanctuary of the Mont-Saint-Michel with their extended tongues, may have been destined to remind the viewer/reader of William's new Church policies that mocked traditions, exemplified in the upper border by the Mont-Saint-Michel, founded by William's grandfather, perhaps symbolized by the small figure sitting on a bench similar to William's in Scene 14. Additionally, the disrespectful actions of the winged lions may have been latent reminders of William's disagreement with Gregory VII that reached its apogee in 1081. Thus, it was not a congenial group that left for Brittany, but one whose duke was probably content, while his so-called "guest" was highly disturbed by the events that had just taken place, and perturbed by the uncertain future looming on the horizon.

**2. SCENE 17: *"ET HIC TRANSIERVNT FLVMEN COSNONIS
HIC HAROLDO DUX TRAHEBAT EOS DE ARENA"***

Scene 17 is devoted to the crossing of the Couesnon river, after the stopover or stay at or around the Mont-Saint-Michel. William's men are portrayed as they wade through the estuary of the Couesnon river, accompanied by Harold in the process of saving two of William's men by steering clear of the quicksand that plagued, and still plagues, the area between the mainland and the Mont. Harold, who is straddling water and quick-sand physically, may have also been straddling metaphorically the political quicksand of the Duke's entourage, as his precarious situation of "guest/prisoner" at William's court may suggest. After the crossing, the soldiers regrouped and galloped toward the fortified city of Dol. The inscription clearly states that "Harold *DUX* pulled them from the sands," thus highlighting Harold's courage for the audience. While William was often labeled "*DUX*," it is only the second time that Harold is given this distinguished and distinguishing title. The first time in Scene 2, the inscription clearly stated *DUX ANGLORVM*. However, this time the title is empty since the audience is left

to wonder about the kind of “*DUX*” *Harold* was. Perhaps this omission was intentional and meant to insinuate that the title was just honorific and no longer reflected Harold’s status as the English *sub-regulus*. Led astray by feminist constructs and perhaps unfamiliar with the Tapestry as a whole, Caviness argues that “...his rescue of two foot soldiers from the quicksands near Mont-Saint-Michel must have made him look like a nanny in the eyes of the Norman military (caretaking being a woman’s job).”⁴⁰ In spite of Caviness, most researchers agree that “Harold’s rescue of soldiers ...cast him in the role of a larger-than-life epic hero.”⁴¹ However, it is legitimate to wonder why it was necessary to emphasize Harold’s bravery at this point in the Tapestry, when it is “not mentioned in any extant Norman source.”⁴² Once more, the borders may help elucidate this apparent paradox.

2.1. SCENE 17: Animal Pictographs and a Male Figure in the Upper Border

Resuming the examination of the upper border brings us to a seated male figure pointing with his right index finger to the architectural structure built atop Mont-Saint-Michel, while holding onto the one arm of his bench decorated by an animal head of an uncertain nature, which McNulty believed to be a lion.⁴³ In part because McNulty recognized a similarity between this particular bench and William’s throne, supposedly located at Rouen, illustrated in Scene 14, McNulty identified the male figure as Duke Richard II, who was responsible for starting the building of the Romanesque church atop the Mont in 1020.⁴⁴ Considering that the most likely patron was Odo, a bishop and a magnate, punctilious about church property, the beginning of the Brittany Campaign may have been considered as an occasion to remind the audience of two significant points: first, that Richard II, William’s grandfather, had been one of the most important benefactors of the Mont-Saint-Michel, and that, conversely, William, represented in Scene 16 attired in a suit of armor (probably meant to focus on his illegitimacy because of its checkered pattern), had promulgated reforms that both Norman and English clergy may have considered not only punitive but also offensive to the Church; secondly, that William had made the wrong choice when he sided with a secular prince against the Pope. In other words, from Odo’s point of view, William may have been a “true bastard” when it came to his interactions with the Pope and the Church.

The two birds of prey on the right look more like eagles than vultures with their larger heads and shorter, wider necks. With opposite wings extended, their beaks opened in mute shrills, both birds are gazing at the scene of the rescue below. The one on the left, placed directly above the name *HAROLD*, has one wing caught behind one of the diagonal bars that frames it. This eagle, a royal bird, was perhaps meant to suggest that, in this instance, Harold, the “caught” pretender to the English throne, is acting heroically, as should an earl who was hoping to become king. It is interesting to note that the birds of prey above William and his men seem to be a type of vulture, while the birds directly above Harold, performing his heroic acts, look substantially more like eagles. This difference, not easily seen unless one examines the Tapestry closely, may again indicate the penchant for making sardonic remarks, by the person who was behind the design of the Tapestry, and for debasing William’s image in subtle, almost unnoticeable ways, perhaps as a safety device against William’s possible retributions.

2.2. SCENE 17: Fishes, a Man, and Biting Creatures in the Lower Border

Biting animals and the prostrate man in the lower border have piqued the interest of researchers since the Tapestry was rediscovered in the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ Observers were intrigued by what Collingwood Bruce identified as “the draftsman’s little play of fancy.”⁴⁶ Yet, no solid explanation of this particular area of the border below Scene 17, and partly below Scene 18, has been expounded to date. As McNulty was inclined to write, without a doubt these “border figures have proven particularly troublesome.”⁴⁷ The latest mention belongs to Suzanne Lewis, who elaborated on C. R. Dodwell’s, David Wilson’s, and J. Bard McNulty’s interpretations, when she posited that, “eels swim in the border below not only to intensify the sense of danger threatened by the quick-sand but also to create a pause by moving in the opposite direction, so that the viewer can absorb the impact of Harold’s action before going on.”⁴⁸ Indeed, a number of eels, or perhaps water snakes or serpents, are swarming in the river and venturing onto the quicksand below Harold and the Normans. As Lewis accurately noted, this part of the border runs counter to the fast moving action in the main field, which seems to revolve around the figure of Harold in the process of saving the Norman soldiers. However, while Lewis posited that the border under Scene 17, was “creating a pause” to allow the reader/viewer to “absorb the impact of Harold’s action before going on,” it seems to play a greater role

than she assigned to it.⁴⁹ Indeed, the border pictographs appear to converge under the figures of Harold and the men he is saving from sure death. Because of the movement of the action and the placement of the figures and pictographs, it is probable that the elements in the lower border are related to Harold and his present condition at William's hands. A closer examination of this part of the border may shed some light on its meaning.

Thus, in the lower border, starting from the end of Scene 17, and progressing backward toward its beginning, a series of biting creatures were illustrated. After examining the often scant data provided by Stenton, Dodwell and Wilson, McNulty concluded that the "chain of beasts ... suggests a parody." The slippery eels, which gave birth to the adage "slippery as an eel," exemplify the difficulty of catching evil-doers, in this case Conan, who is later shown slipping down a rope, and by extension Harold, "whom William had unsuccessfully tried to bind with an oath."⁵⁰ However, McNulty did not delve any deeper, and presented a rather superficial interpretation of the creatures in the lower border. A more thorough examination that takes into account the fables and the symbolic associations presented earlier seems to lead to the retrieval of a symbolic meaning associated with the prone man and the series of animals, their placement, postures and gestures.

Working backwards from the end of Scene 17 to Scene 16, the designer depicted a centaur, an animal known in antiquity for its dual symbolism that is forever engaged in a struggle between good and evil.⁵¹ However, in the eyes of medieval individuals, the centaur was understood as "le contraire du noble chevalier."⁵² The centaur is holding by the tail what may be a hyena, an animal that feeds on corruption, and according to medieval bestiaries symbolized the duplicity of a covetous man.⁵³ The hyena is sniffing under the left wing of an eagle, a royal bird of prey, associated above with Edward and Harold, perhaps eager to take a bite. In the meantime, the eagle seems to be ready to bite or, conversely, to have released the tail of a wolf, a ruthless cruel animal who has represented William consistently thus far. In turn, the wolf is biting the foot of a prone man whose eyes are almost completely closed. This prone man, whose close proximity to Harold in the main field may suggest a symbolic association, is holding a short sword in his left hand and reaching forward to catch the tail of a snake or eel in his right, while a serpent/eel is escaping from his mouth.

In early medieval culture, animals biting a prostrate individual often signify the loss of his/her physical integrity, which is concomitant with physical death, and foreshadows the death of the sinner's soul.⁵⁴ In *Homilia C*, Bede (673-735), describes the sojourn of the damned as a river in which predatory animals, swimming like fish devour the souls of sinners.⁵⁵ One may wonder if this assortment of animals forming a living chain may have been introduced to qualify the defects, hidden desires, and inimical assaults that are "haunting/biting" the prostrate man, probably representing Harold, and to hint at the dilemma in which his current situation, as William's virtual prisoner, has placed him.

Taking the above question under consideration, the first two in the series of animals below Scene 17 may be interpreted differently according to one's political leanings. If the reader favors William, the centaur that "is contrasted with the noble knight, and is also often made to embody the vice of pride," may imply that Harold was an exceedingly proud man.⁵⁶ However, according to available sources, excessive pride was not one of Harold's defects.⁵⁷ Another of Harold's inner flaws may have been made manifest by the image of a hyena, an animal that feeds on corruption, and, according to medieval bestiaries, symbolizes the duplicity of the covetous man.⁵⁸ Yet, from near contemporary comments about Harold, one gathers that he had a "frank, open nature," which is difficult, if not impossible, to associate with duplicity and covetousness.⁵⁹

Conversely, if one disliked or resented William, the symbolisms attributed respectively to the centaur and the hyena may be applied to the Norman Duke. Perhaps because of his bastardry and the cunning necessary for his survival as a youth, William cultivated the outward image of a righteous man always moved by noble motives, even when he encroached on the lands of others and claimed them as his own by devious means.⁶⁰ In spite of an active post-Conquest propaganda in his favor, support for William was far from unanimous. Covert murmurs painted him as a ruthless, rapacious, avaricious, cruel, and vindictive potentate, and as "a master of political camouflage."⁶¹

After the hyena, there seems to be little doubt about whom the animals in the rest of the series were supposed to symbolize. The royal eagle, which follows the inquisitive, covetous hyena, was probably intended to designate the existing king, Edward, and, by extension, the royal power. The open beak of this eagle is barely touching the tail of the wolf biting the prone man's foot, as though the eagle had just let go of the wolf's tail. In

a similar manner, Scene 1 has already suggested that Edward was desirous to distance himself from William who is constantly associated with wild and ferocious predators, including the wolf, in the fables below Scene 4. Below Scene 17, the wolf (William), a cunning and cruel animal, par excellence, has a firm hold on the foot of the man (Harold) lying fitfully on the ground, while, in the main field, William holds a discontented Harold as guest/prisoner. The horizontal position of this man (Harold) is not only negative, as it represents a man who has fallen, and whose resistance has been severely compromised, but also unstable, as he is attempting to reach, with his extended right arm, the snake/eel that is slithering away from him, while being pulled backwards by the wolf (William) biting his left foot.⁶² Concerning the slithering snake/eel, human heads sculpted on capitals and on corbels on the inside and outside of Romanesque churches are sometimes depicted spewing serpents, symbolizing the evil that often comes out of the human mouth. The prone man's attempt to strike with a knife the snake/eel that has almost escaped from his mouth may symbolize Harold's future attempt to retract the careless and/or untruthful words that will later come out of his mouth when he swears a false oath. Thus, the representation of the series of animal pictographs below Harold's heroic rescue of William's men may be a commentary on Harold's actions and a review of what is leading Harold into the real and metaphoric quagmire in which he finds himself. Likewise, it may also be a warning about the dangerous position in which he finds himself because William (wolf), the man who pretends to be righteous, but is trying to restrain the dark side of his nature (centaur), especially his coveting (hyena) the English crown (eagle), holds Harold (prone man) prisoner, and will not release him until he (Harold) pronounces the words of an oath which turn out to be spurious (snake).

3. SCENE 18: "...*ET VENERVNT AD DOL - ET CONAN FVGAVERTIT - REDNES*"

Following the depiction of Harold in the process of saving some of William's men, Normans are depicted as they approached Dol, not fully dressed for battle, as though they were expecting no fighting and no resistance. In fact, Rivallon, who was the lord of Dol, handed the city over to William, an action for which Rivallon later paid dearly at Conan's hands.⁶³ Perhaps in an effort to reveal the lack of fighting at Dol, as Fowke remarked, the choice was made to use the verb *VENERVNT* in the inscription above William's men riding toward that city, while the verb *PVGNANT* was used in

Scene 19 in connection with William's men riding in full battle gear to attack Dinan.⁶⁴ In addition, probably reflecting on what Fowke classified as "the peaceful meeting of William and Rivallon," two birds, identified as cockatoos by Fowke, and as phoenix birds by Brunson Yapp, because of their strange plumage, are exchanging signs of friendship on the mount below Dol. While Herrmann identified the two birds as yet another fable, *The Two Roosters and the Hawk*, he did not explain why fables suddenly invaded the main field, and did not show any relationship between this so-called fable and its context.⁶⁵ Perhaps these two birds were meant to symbolize Rivallon's willing surrender of Dol to William.⁶⁶

Conversely, Dol may have been included in the Tapestry in order to remind a post-Conquest observer that William suffered a vexing and "rare defeat at the hands of the king of France" at Dol, in the autumn of 1076, which is within the accepted time frame for the Tapestry's production.⁶⁷ Thus, at first glance, the inclusion of Dol in the Tapestry may be characterized as clumsy, if not un-diplomatic. Indeed, any reminder of a place where William suffered a vexing defeat would have been a bitter pill for William to swallow, if he ever saw the Tapestry. Additionally, an allusion that William was having difficulty maintaining his rule on the Continent may have been detrimental to William who was trying to establish his rule over the newly conquered Anglo-Saxons. Such an allusion may have pleased Odo who was supporting Robert Curthose's efforts to take possession of Normandy as promised to him by William.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, Conan, represented as a small background figure, is portrayed while escaping from the opposite side of town by sliding down a rope. However, doubts remain about Conan's whereabouts, as he was the one besieging the city (Dol).⁶⁹ With fully armed soldiers in hot pursuit, Conan fled and took refuge in Dinan where he met with defeat at the Normans' hands.⁷⁰ Rennes is not mentioned in contemporary written sources in relation to a battle fought around 1064-1065 between William and Conan. In the Tapestry, the sheep grazing peacefully in front of Rennes seem to indicate that the passing soldiers left the city undisturbed. Additionally, Rennes is located far inland and considerably out of the way of either Dol or Dinan, while Dol and Dinan are relatively close to the Channel and to one another, being only about twenty-five kilometers apart.⁷¹ Probably being wrongly informed of Conan's retreat to his capital city (Rennes), William

and his men may have first ridden southward to Rennes. Not finding Conan, and having received new intelligence, they turned northward and rode to Dinan.

Why then showcase Dol, a place where William had suffered a bitter defeat after the Conquest? Why portray Conan as escaping from Dol when, from all accounts, he was besieging the city? And why include Rennes at all, except to insinuate that William was wrongly informed and subsequently had to ride out of the way to accomplish his goal? Only the person who commissioned the Tapestry and was instrumental in supervising its design could answer these questions accurately. These inclusions are characteristic of the subtle method of disinformation achieved with the use of satire, sarcasm and innuendos, which are found in the Tapestry. From the circumstantial evidence provided by the representation of the Brittany Campaign, one may deduce that William was an ill-informed, ill-prepared leader, who went into battle with less than accurate intelligence, and that he was a cruel and greedy megalomaniac who could not stand opposition. To disparage the opponent is an old method often practiced and still in use today by politicians. Indeed, by reminding the audience of William's faults, failures, and evil deeds, the patron, most likely Odo, was advancing his own personal agenda, and the cause of those whom he (Odo) supported, at the expense of his older half-brother, William. By picturing Dol, the intention may have been to minimize William's accomplishments. Indeed, for a post-Conquest audience, Dol was probably synonymous with William's bitter defeat of 1076. By having Conan portrayed while escaping from Dol, it is likely that a similar audience would have been reminded of the part that William was rumored to have played in Conan's murder by slow poison which occurred around Christmas 1066. It was whispered that William was infuriated when, in the Summer of 1066, Conan put in a claim to the throne of England, basing his pretension on a convoluted and obscure treaty passed in 1035 between his father Alan III, and William's father, Duke Robert.⁷²

Additionally, by placing innuendos harmful to William in a Breton setting, a reference was made to the detrimental role played by the Breton contingent at the Battle of Hastings. Indeed, the Battle of Hastings was almost lost when William's motley crew of conquerors, which included Bretons, "wavered and fell back," starting a panic among William's men and "a rumor that William was killed."⁷³ A perusal of the border

pictographs may be beneficial to try to unravel the potential meanings of this scene beyond the obvious battle scenes.

3.1. **SCENE 18: Badgers, *Genettes*, Dogs and Birds in the Upper Border**

As the soldiers rode furiously below, the first and only representation of badgers was introduced in the upper border.⁷⁴ Following Michel Parisse's lead, McNulty made an accurate identification of these two beasts gnawing at the bars that frame them as though attempting to break free.⁷⁵ Badgering was practiced as a "sport" in the Middle Ages. Badgers were caged, then released in an enclosed area with dogs, and had to fight the dogs to survive. When the strength of the badgers seemed to wane, they were pulled out. Once rested, they were thrown again into the midst of the dogs. Usually, the process was repeated until, no longer providing entertainment, the badgers were killed. As McNulty proposed, the badgers were germane to the Brittany Campaign. William and his men "badgered" Conan at Dol, and then at Dinan, where Conan finally abandoned the fight and surrendered.⁷⁶ However, Conan's escape from William may have reminded a post-Conquest audience of William's ruthlessness and cruelty since it was rumored that Conan was one of William's notorious victims.⁷⁷

However, the placement of the badgers next to the eagles may point to another meaning. William and his men may have badgered Conan in this particular area of the Tapestry, but they had been in the process of badgering Harold ever since Guy, William's vassal, and his men had first captured and detained Harold, only to release him to William who was now engaged, and would be engaged in some badgering of his own, until an exhausted Harold would be killed at Hastings. Thus, a pattern in William's behavior is suggested by the presence of the badgers in the border above Conan, since the badgering seems not only to apply to Conan's treatment by William and his men, but also probably to Harold's treatment by William, his vassal, Guy, and their men.

Of the next pair of carnivorous mammals, nothing is said except McNulty's short notice that they are "one of three pairs of beasts in a row, breaking for no obvious reason the usual scheme of alternating pairs of beasts and birds."⁷⁸ Similar animals were encountered at the end of the upper border of Scene 4, in which they were tentatively identified as *genettes*, predatory beasts used as hunting animals in the Middle Ages. Placed next to the badgers at the beginning of Scene 18, and above William's men riding

to Dol in an apparent attempt to catch the escaping Conan, these cunning animals were probably meant to leave no doubt as to William's intention to hunt Conan, and by extension to "hunt" Harold to the very end. In fact, like Harold, the hunter who had unwillingly joined the hunt for Conan and was probably desirous to escape, the *genettes* in the upper border were pushing up with their head on the outer limits of the frame as though trying to free themselves from their keeper.

A pair of yapping dogs, barking at each other, is found next to the *genettes*.⁷⁹ Then, two birds with one wing raised and squawking or singing at the top of their lungs, seem to laugh at William's men riding past below. In a manner similar to other animals in the borders, these animals seem to be engaged in mimicking the feelings which may have pervaded William's army as they were about to corner Conan. Undoubtedly, the Normans must have felt excitement. Therefore, it is not surprising that the dogs in the upper border seem to be "all bark and no bite" as they move away from one another, yelping playfully, the dog on the left pointing at the other dog in a mocking fashion with the tip of its tail. Additionally, it seems perfectly fitting to represent birds laughing so hard that the bird on the left, apparently unable to control its laughter, is in the process of losing its balance, maintaining it only with the tip of its right wing. In the upper border of Scene 18, the aggressiveness inherent to the battlefield has mingled with laughter, and the hunter's position is being subverted by captive hunting beasts, laughing *canailles* and birds rocked by laughter, perhaps a confirmation that the Dol battlefield never existed. Indeed, in a parody of what probably took place between William and Rivallon, the two flamboyant birds are secretly exchanging signs of friendship in a hidden place within the city walls. Rivallon had already turned Dol over to William and his men without a fight.

3.2. **SCENE 18: A Dragon, Winged Lions and Birds in the Lower Border**

Below the affronted exotic birds in the main field, a lone dragon, rendered powerless by a knot in its tail, is meekly looking down at the ground, completely subdued. Proposing that "dragons occur only in the borders of episodes in which William is directly involved," McNulty posited that the single dragon at the beginning of Scene 18 and the single bird in the lower border at the end of Scene 20 serve to bracket the part of the Breton episode in which Conan is involved.⁸⁰ However, there seem to be two caveats to McNulty's proposal. First, while William may be involved in the Brittany

Campaign, he is nowhere to be seen in Scene 18, except perhaps symbolically through the winged lions in the lower border. Secondly, this single dragon was probably inserted after the series of animals in the lower border to indicate Harold's (the dragon of Wessex) attitude after encountering his private demons personified by the biting animals, and struggling in vain against William's hold, which led him to take stock of his personal situation. At this point in the story, the posture and appearance of the dragon probably symbolized Harold's complete submission, enforced by his inability to act (the dragon's tail is tied). Contrary to the dragon, the winged lions, that Bernstein already associated with William, are howling lustily at the riders in the main field, inciting them to battle, perhaps implying that, while not named in the inscription of Scene 18 and apparently absent from the battlefield, William was acting "behind the scenes" to bolster the morale of his men as they were sent into the fray.⁸¹ The birds in the next frames appear undisturbed as they peck at the branches of a bush, reflecting the peaceful attitudes of the grazing sheep in the main field.

In summary, the borders may function once more as commentaries on the events taking place in the main field. The badgers, genettes, and yelping dogs in the upper border seem to remind the audience of the excitement arising from the chase associated with the war that is taking place below. However, the imprisoned status of the badgers and genettes insidiously undermines their function as hunting animals, reminding the viewer of Harold's predicament as hunter/hunted. Placed directly above the structure on the mound that the inscription identifies as *REDNES*, the squawking, laughing birds seem to be enjoying a good laugh at the expense of William's men who rode all the way to Rennes only to find out that Conan was not there, and, perhaps, had not been there at all after he left Dol. In the lower border one lone, forlorn dragon rendered helpless by a knot in its tail, seems to comment on Harold's state and status. He is alone and powerless, and he seems to have turned his back on the chase. In fact, Harold is nowhere to be found from Scenes 18 through 20. From all appearances, the Brittany Campaign was not Harold's fight. Harold was forced to participate because of his position as William's "guest," perhaps to witness William's power, and to be warned not to tangle with William in the future.

Next to the dragon, the winged lions, which are linked to William and the Normans, appear agitated as they howl, perhaps in an attempt to galvanize the group of

William's men charging above. It is interesting to note that the choice was made to place the howling winged lions next to the captive, subdued dragon. Perhaps such a placement was a reminder to the viewer/reader that, while Conan was sliding down a rope and escaping above in the main field, no such possibility existed for Harold. Undisturbed by the racket, large birds are pecking at bushes, perhaps to emphasize the peacefulness of the city of Rennes, already hinted at by the two grazing sheep.

4. **SCENE 19: "HIC MILITES WILLELMI DVCIS PUGNANT CONTRA DINANTES"**

Leaving Rennes behind, William's soldiers turned northward and rode toward the coast, hurrying to Dinan. Following the same pattern as Scene 18, neither William nor Harold is portrayed in this scene. Closing in on Dinan, William's fully armed men finally engaged in battle. Similar to Dol and Rennes, the written version of the events, found solely in William of Poitiers' *Gesta*, differs from the representation of the Brittany Campaign depicted in the Tapestry.⁸² It is remarkable that in the inscriptions, William is not mentioned as a direct participant in the battle scenes. However, it would seem that the *diversitas* of the design of the walls and roof tops of the three Breton cities allude to William's presence and to the capture of these cities. Additionally, the imagery in the borders, especially the two lions below the charging men, allude to the presence of William and Harold. An exploration of the borders may shed some light on this subject.

4.1. **SCENE 19: Winged Lions and Birds of Prey in the Upper Border**

As a counterpart to the winged lions in the lower border of Scene 18, excited, howling, winged lions, linked to William and the Norman cause, were placed directly above the fighting men and seem engaged in cheering them onwards. The one on the left has its tail and hind legs separated from the rest of its body by a diagonal bar, perhaps to remind the audience of the movement and the speed of the chase (a *situation sécante* often means a change of place and time).⁸³ Conversely, this restrained winged lion, placed directly above the name *WILLELMI*, may be an attempt to disparage William's actions, since the *situation sécante* may also suggest that William was somewhere else when the fighting actually took place. Next to them, carrion birds with open beaks, apparently feasting on the letters of the inscriptions were probably reminders of the inner desires of William's men to plunder the city.

4.2. SCENE 19: Lions and Birds of Prey in the Lower Border

Below William's knights, two lions with protruding tongues seem to be licking their chops in anticipation of the results of the battle being waged above. Lions, symbols of royalty, have been linked to the two pretenders, William and Harold, in other parts of the Tapestry. Perhaps, these lions were introduced to comment on William's and Harold's behaviors. Under the guise of the royal beasts, William and Harold are depicted as waiting "in the margins" away from the fray, while anticipating victory (licking their chops). However, their actions may also be construed as taunting gestures. The beast on the left probably symbolizes Harold, since, like Harold, this lion was not entirely free but was caught by the tail. Additionally, this lion appears to be sticking its tongue at the fighting men above, as though Harold was intent on making a mockery of the accomplishments of William's men because he was forced to fight as one of William's subordinates. The beast on the right, probably the other pretender, William, is sticking its tongue in Harold's direction, as though taunting the man (Harold) whom he (William) held against his (Harold's) will. The representation of William and Harold as scornful royal beasts may have been a way of depicting both men as not quite fit to rule, especially in view of their obvious absence from the battlefield.

Birds similar to those in the upper border, but with one wing raised as though to shield themselves from the battle raging above, are pecking the ground below the mound on which the fortified city of Dinan was built. One wonders if they were introduced to reinforce the meaning of the birds above and were also waiting patiently for the end of the battle to feast on the carcasses of the dead, insinuating the intention of William's men to engage in plunder.

An examination of Scene 19 and its borders has suggested that the borders were used to gloss over the events in the main field. As the battle raged in the center field, a mixture of excitement, anxious waiting, and taunting permeated the upper and lower borders. Fowke suggested that the birds of prey were representative of the submission of the town above because of their obvious passivity.⁸⁴ However, it seems more likely that the birds waiting to prey on the dead were symbolic of William and his men waiting to reap the reward of battle and loot the city.

5. **SCENE 20: “*ET CVNAN CLAVES PORREXIT*” – Main Field and Borders**

Scene 20 is short, but it is an important scene since it marks the end of the Brittany Campaign, symbolized by Conan surrendering the keys of the city of Dinan to one of William’s men. Whether Conan actually performed this gesture is still open to discussion.⁸⁵ It was probably included in the Tapestry because it is a quick and certain way to express surrender. Once more, neither William nor Harold are mentioned in the inscription of Scene 20, and neither one is anywhere in sight. Lewis posited that the patron’s inclusion of this expanded version of the Brittany Campaign, amounting to “a gross distortion,” was “probably intended to promote the Conqueror’s reputation as an unbending warlord and to stand as a warning that he will brook no rebellion from his new English subjects.”⁸⁶ Indeed, this could be the overt conclusion expected from such a representation. However, William’s absence from the battle scenes seems to preclude any personal benefit he could have drawn directly from this representation of the Brittany Campaign, especially in view of the Tapestry’s audience which probably included the restless and discontent knights and courtiers of post-Conquest England and Normandy.⁸⁷

As a matter of fact, William’s vicarious and marginal presence was probably implied in the guise of the winged lions in the lower border which appear to be stifling a yawn with one of their wings, as though bored at the scene taking place above. The attitude of the lions in the upper border mirrors the comportment of the winged lions in the lower border. They also appear to be engaged in stifling a yawn with the tips of their tail, confirming the general ennui provoked by the ending of the Brittany Campaign. The last animal below Scene 20 is a lone bird. As McNulty remarked, it probably was used as a bracket to close the parenthetical Brittany Campaign. However, this bird is more than a sign that the Brittany Campaign is over. In fact, it is pointing at the next scene with one wing as though to attract the attention of the reader/viewer to the reappearance of William and Harold and to the interesting developments stemming from the campaign, which are depicted in Scene 21.

6. **SCENE 21: “*HIC WILLELM DEDIT HAROLDO ARMA*” - Main Field and Borders**

This short scene is important to the overall comprehension of William’s and Harold’s actions vis-à-vis one another, since it raises the question of feudal allegiance and the conditions under which Harold became William’s vassal, if in fact he did. While

it may have been intentional, the unclear portrayal of the event depicted in this scene may have raised questions then, as it does now.⁸⁸ One must remember that a line of distinction, however fuzzy, existed between dubbing (conferring arms) and vassalage (expecting someone's services and fealty in return).⁸⁹ In this case, the inscription only mentions the giving/conferring of arms; but it may have intended to mean more since, as Wilson, McNulty and Lewis have argued, the Tapestry was made for a post-Conquest audience immersed in a feudal culture.⁹⁰ Despite the many questions about Harold's true status, it is prudent to follow O. K. Werkmeister's lead when he posits:

...at the very minimum, the scene would imply a bond between the two men in legally unspecified chivalrous terms, especially as it is followed by the oath, the legal confirmation of the bond.⁹¹

It is remarkable that Guillaume de Poitiers, Guillaume de Jumièges, and Orderic Vitalis were careful not to imply any form of dubbing or vassalage, only mentioning that Harold carried many gifts back to England.⁹² And rightly so, since Harold was English; he was also Edward's man, and one of the highest ranking members of England's ruling class. He had received Edward's mark of confidence in Scene 1, where Edward demonstrated his faith in him by the touch of his right index finger on Harold's, and entrusted him with a mission. Therefore, any action that William took to reduce Harold to vassalage may have been considered as a direct attempt to usurp Edward's prerogatives before he was dead, and would have been moot in the eyes of Harold's English peers. This scene may have been intended to suggest that William was cunning, like the fox of the fable, and that Harold's status, vis-à-vis William, was fraught with irregularities.⁹³ While the act William performed may have been meaningful in terms of a post-Conquest audience, it would have been illicit prior to the Norman Conquest.⁹⁴

Examined closely, the placement, physical appearance, postures and gestures of the figures of William and Harold, as well as an examination of the border motifs may shed a different light on the scene, reinforcing, while subtly modifying, the above assessment of the situation. In Scene 21, a solemn William stands at arms' length from Harold. Strangely, and perhaps to confer the atmosphere of doubt that surrounds this scene, Harold is depicted without a mustache, as though he had lost one of the most compelling marks of his "Englishness." This omission was probably not accidental. On the contrary, as indicated earlier, hair and facial hair, or lack thereof, seem to have played

an important role as signifiers of anxiety concerning the legitimate exercise of power.⁹⁵ Thus, Harold's lack of facial hair may infer that it was not as an Englishman that Harold received arms. It may also imply that William's actions were valid only from a Norman standpoint. In the Tapestry, William is touching Harold's helmet with his left hand, while gripping Harold's right arm with his right hand. From the weird angle of Harold's right arm, it seems that he was attempting to disentangle himself from William's grasp. Additionally, while William stands squarely on the ground, Harold appears to be standing on tip toe, perhaps reflecting the unstable position, both physical and political, in which he found himself.

Thus, according to his appearance, gestures and posture, Harold was a reluctant participant and may have been trying to extricate himself from this untenable situation. In the upper border directly above Harold, a frightened bird (one of a pair, the other being part of Scene 22) is flapping its wings in an attempt to fly away, while in the main field, like the bird, an uncomfortable Harold is trying to liberate one of his arms. In the lower border, directly below William, probably symbolizing him, one of a pair of adorsed lions has stuffed its tail in its mouth. A cursory glance may only evoke the act of preening in the viewer's mind. Overtly, this lion with its tail crammed between its jaws may indicate that very few, if any, words were exchanged between the two leaders.

However, another covert meaning may have been introduced into the scene. A closer look at the lion shows that the lion appears angry and that, notwithstanding the fact that lions have no noticeable lips, much less full lips, this particular beast was given thick lips. It is highly probable that the distorted appearance of the lion was meant to reflect on the man whom he symbolized, namely William, who stood directly above. According to Garnier, overfull lips are physical characteristics that indicate a person who is not trustworthy and who is "un défenseur d'une mauvaise cause."⁹⁶ Thus, another side of the Duke may have been displayed through the lion's defective appearance, which cast doubts on his good faith when asserting his right to the English throne.

7. SCENE 22: "HIC WILLELM VENIT BAGIAS"

A contented William proceeded on horseback towards Bayeux, where the episode of Harold's oath may or may not have taken place.⁹⁷ Several details merit special attention. While William is riding a stallion, Harold's horse is a gelding. This detail is

similar to others found in earlier scenes, which may have been inserted to question the rider's manhood, in this case Harold's, and by extension his ability to be a strong and worthy ruler. Viewed closely, as he rides towards Bayeux, followed by Harold and his companion, William has a cunning, self-satisfied half-smile on his face – the visible corner of his mouth is upturned, and his brow is raised over rounded, fully open eyes. At this point in time, William probably felt confident that the first part of his plan to ensnare Harold had been successful. Conversely, Harold and his companion have all the markings of sadness and resignation on their faces -- the visible side of their mouths are turned down, Harold's mouth is open as though he were ready to emit a cry, and his brow curves slightly down over a deeply lined eye. These are the features of someone who is tired and dejected. Additionally, Harold and his companion are portrayed once more without a mustache. Gibbs-Smith attributed Harold's lack of facial hair in this scene to damage.⁹⁸ However, a close examination *in situ* revealed no trace of a mustache on Harold in either Scenes 21 or 22. Perhaps, Harold's portrayal without facial hair was meant to rob Harold of his "Englishness," turn him into one of William's men, and as a result, convey a sense of doubt as to the validity of the proceedings. The borders might prove helpful in sorting out and clarifying the various elements of this scene.

7.1. SCENE 22: A Lion, Birds and Dragons in the borders.

In the upper border, the second of a pair of birds with upraised wings was placed directly above Harold in a position similar to the bird above Harold in the previous scene. Once more this agitated, frightened bird, visibly off-balance, may reflect the way Harold felt as he rode towards Bayeux, apparently dejected and forlorn. Next to the birds with flapping wings, two dragons, their wings extended in disarray, appear greatly disturbed. Perhaps the dragons were distressed because, despite their open mouths, they seem to be unable to breathe fire, and because they have respectively a twist (the left dragon) and a knot (the right dragon) in their tails which hinder their ability to spew fire from their tail, i.e., to use their most significant weapon. McNulty was of the opinion that somehow dragons were associated with William.⁹⁹ Because of the role of firedrakes/dragons as "guardians of treasure," McNulty posited that "perhaps, by analogy, they suggest William's role as a safe keeper of institutions and things of value."¹⁰⁰ This argument is possible. However, so far dragons have been present only in scenes which involve both

William and Harold, and which depict Harold either angry at (Scene 13), or apparently subdued by William (Scenes 18 & 22). As Fowke commented accurately, it seems that the dragon makes a direct allusion to the dragon of Wessex, i.e., Harold.¹⁰¹ At this point, the architecture of the city of Bayeux was made to pierce the upper border, interrupting the sequence of the pictographs.¹⁰²

Directly below Harold and his companion, the second of a pair of adorsed lions, presumably symbolizing Harold, since it is placed directly below him, appears to be biting on the tip of its tail. Contrary to the first lion, the second one has no lips, his eyes are closed, and his nose is pointed upward. The whole demeanor of this beast, probably symbolizing Harold, seems to reflect pride and contentment; in contrast, Harold appears despondent as he rides toward Bayeux. Perhaps the depiction of this beast reveals Harold's inner feelings. While appearing subdued in the main field, Harold may have been already scheming and contemplating the best way to beat William at his own game.

Directly below William, two birds, probably vultures with all the negative association that can be inferred from their presence, seem to be in the process of pulling on a fruit attached to a branch. Like these reviled birds of prey, a rapacious William was in the process of bringing Harold to Bayeux (pulling on the branch) to pick the fruit of his labors, i.e., to detach Harold (the fruit) from his former attachment to Edward (the otherwise barren tree) by making him swear an oath of allegiance.

The borders have again demonstrated their usefulness in grasping the subtleties of meaning and innuendo that pervade the Tapestry. In the main field, sadness and discontent seem to subdue Harold and his companion, while a quiet contentment permeates William's facial features. Yet, the borders bring their own twist to the interpretation of the main field. The upper border with its squawking bird and constrained dragons with fluttering wings seems to emphasize Harold's dejection and inner turmoil. Conversely, the lion in the lower border seems to address another aspect of Harold's personality: his enormous conceit, which led him to believe he could and would find a way, any way, to defeat William at his own game. Ahead of Harold, William was also plotting his way to success. He probably knew that his actions depicted in Scene 21 had enraged Harold (the dragon of Wessex above him). Yet, like the birds ready to pick a fruit from a barren tree, he was ready to pluck the fruit of his labors from a barren branch (the childless Edward).

8. SCENE 23: “*VBI HAROLD SACRMENTVM FECIT WILLELMO DVCI*”

An architectural structure built on a mound and representing Bayeux was interposed between Scenes 22 and 23 to separate the two scenes. Decorated with stripes and checkers, this structure was undoubtedly Norman in appearance, and, because of its elements of *diversitas*, was probably intended as a reminder of William's illegitimate origin. Below the mound, two birds are holding a horizontal bar/branch with a three-petal fleuron or fleur-de-lis apparently growing from each end.¹⁰³ As René Lepelley mentions, “historians who specialize in the study of the Tapestry interpret these birds as two eagles, and regard them as the prototype of what was subsequently to become the arms of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Bayeux – namely a two headed eagle.”¹⁰⁴ There is little doubt that these birds are eagles, recognizable by their beaks, shape of body and sharp talons. Notwithstanding the possibility that they might be a prototype for the coat of arms of the Chapter of Bayeux Cathedral, these two regal birds seem to summarize the scene, cautioning the observers about the continuing tug of war between William and Harold. In the scene of the oath taking, William and Harold were akin to the two royal birds standing back to back and occupying the same space, each one holding on firmly to the English crown/throne, symbolized by the bar/branch sprouting a fleur-de-lis, which was already a well-known symbol of royalty and the power of God in human affairs at the end of the eleventh century.¹⁰⁵ This significant and informative item may have been used as a symbolic prologue to the scene and as one indicator of the enduring tension and conflicting desires that occupied the two royal pretenders to the very end.

Forewarned about the abiding strain between William and Harold, the observers were presented with the full scene of the oath. Frank McLynn is probably correct in assuming that “there is no need to labour the point that the entire story about the oath is a tissue of confusion, a mélange of different propagandist traditions.”¹⁰⁶ As usual, the vague inscription is of no help, indicating only that an oath, *sacramentum*, was sworn, without any indication of its content. To the casual observer, Scene 23 represents Harold as he swears on relics, witnessed by William seated on a higher level, his sword pointed upwards, which, contrary to the other scenes in which both (William and Harold) are represented, marks William's status as superior to Harold's. McNulty reminds the researcher that, in spite of the uncertainty concerning the actual location of the oath, it is probable that because Odo is the most likely patron, he chose Bayeux for the purpose of

the Tapestry's design, "to enhance the importance of the relics of Bayeux," and thus of himself, "as the bishop of Bayeux."¹⁰⁷

Scene 23 represents William seated in state on a bench decorated with the head of a single, apparently smiling dog. Behind William, his men are pointing to the word *SACRAMENTVM* in the inscription above, bringing the word to the attention of the onlookers in order to emphasize the magnitude of the event about to take place. At the same time, William is pointing directly at Harold who stands between two reliquaries. The reliquary on the right appears to be stationary and looks like it may have been resting on an altar. As the carrying poles indicate, the reliquary on the left was apparently brought especially to this area of Bayeux for the purpose of Harold's oath.¹⁰⁸

In a manner similar to Scene 14, Scene 23 reminds the viewers/readers of the forewarnings contained in the fable of *The Wolf and the Lamb*. William again had Harold within his immediate sphere of control. Odo, the most likely patron, may have had ulterior motives when directing the designer to depict the scene of the oath in the way that it is represented in the Bayeux Tapestry. First, Odo may have looked forward to ingratiate himself to the members of the ruling class that were disappointed with William's rule. As Lewis posited:

The ruthless and illegitimate seizure of the lamb's watering hole can be seen as the kind of flagrant abuse of power that seems to have more relevance to the fate of the English after the Norman conquest than to any purported tyrannies committed by Harold during his brief rule.¹⁰⁹

Secondly, when he commissioned the Tapestry, the ultimate goal of the astute Odo may have been to deride William in order to promote himself by showing how easily William (the cruel, cunning wolf) could be tricked by Harold (the naïve lamb) who was in the process of swearing a false oath, as the details of the scene examined below seem to demonstrate. It is probable that, in post-Conquest England, some members of the nobility, who were discontented with William's rule, embraced wholeheartedly such snide innuendos, mocking a man they had learned to fear and not likely to despise.

An examination of a few details of Scene 23, and of William's and Harold's physical appearances, stances, postures and gestures may emphasize these findings. First, the smiling dog head adorning William's bench may be another sarcastic comment, alluding to William being a sly dog who was enjoying a good laugh at Harold's expense.

Secondly, William's hair has grown down his nape, thus losing its peculiar style, which made it easy to identify its wearers as Normans or as Norman sympathizers. The removal of this blatant, distinguishing mark, may have been intended to show that, from this point onwards, the line between legitimate and illegitimate power in England became blurred, thus questioning the legitimacy of William's takeover of England, and reflecting badly on his current rule.¹¹⁰ Thirdly, William's bench/seat of power is supported by two bars adorned with zigzag patterns, a detail which escaped neither Bernstein, nor McNulty.¹¹¹ Indeed, like the stripes, the zigzag pattern may have been a direct reference to William's origin as a bastard.¹¹² Such a placement may have reinforced the inference that William had not acquired his power from a legitimate source. Indeed, he was but the lowly bastard son of Duke Robert.

Fourthly, Harold was portrayed once more with a mustache, perhaps an allusion to his regained status as the powerful Anglo-Saxon Earl, bound to King Edward. In this case, the emphasis on Harold's being Anglo-Saxon may be a double-edged sword. Harold's reacquired facial hair may imply that it was as an Anglo-Saxon noble, whose liege was King Edward, that Harold was swearing an oath to William, casting doubt on the trustworthiness of an individual who was willing to swear allegiance to another person while his liege still lived, albeit on foreign soil. Conversely, if one considered Harold to be an Anglo-Saxon, faithful to his lord, then the value of his oath of fealty to a foreign duke was highly questionable, perhaps even moot, a fact upon which Lewis remarked, "such an oath ...could not annul a prior oath of fealty to King Edward."¹¹³ Either way, the shadow of doubt permeates this scene.

It seems obvious that the designer, probably instructed by the patron, played on this latent uncertainty. Harold standing uneasily, with outstretched arms, is touching both sets of relics. Researchers have focused on the relics, their sacredness, and on Guillaume de Poitiers's report that William wore the Bayeux relics when he fought at Hastings.¹¹⁴ Lewis gave great importance to the placement of Harold and the relics in this scene, but like earlier researchers, she did not focus directly on Harold's stance or gestures. As in other scenes where Harold's status is in doubt, his posture seems to have been deliberately destabilized.¹¹⁵ Thus, as previously depicted in Scenes 12, 14, 21, and later in this scene and in Scene 33, Harold's precarious stance on his tip toes, seems to reflect his ambiguous, fragile status vis-à-vis William.

The position of Harold's hands, engaged as they are in a sacred act, are also worthy of note. As Jean-Claude Schmitt clearly stated "le double geste symbolise peut-être la duplicité du duc, qui pose la main gauche sur un reliquaire, ce qui n'est pas de bon augure..."¹¹⁶ Indeed, no truthful oath is sworn with one's left hand; the *sinistra* in Latin or *senestre* in old French was known to be singularly evil.¹¹⁷ An oath made with the left hand – "the symbol of the adverse, baleful, and perverted" should be considered *de facto* deceitful and productive of evil against the person who performed the oath.¹¹⁸ This consideration did not escape J. C. Schmitt who posited that, "tout défaut dans la forme ruine l'efficacité du geste or, pis encore, produit des effets contraires qui se retournent contre le fautif."¹¹⁹

Harold's right hand should also attract the attention of the viewer/reader. Harold is touching the reliquary on his right (our left) with only two extended fingers resting on the reliquary. E. H. Gombrich interprets this gesture as the usual hand movement accompanying an oath.¹²⁰ However, one may wonder if Harold's gesture might be the one used in the Middle Ages, and still used today, to ward off evil.¹²¹ While the words of the inscription clearly state that Harold swore an oath to Duke William, the figure of Harold in the main field, his stance, posture and gestures seem intent on thwarting the validity of the oath. Perhaps an investigation of the borders will reveal additional clues concerning the scene of the oath that have remained unobserved to date.

8.1. SCENE 23: Winged Lions, and Eagles in the Upper Border

It has already been noted that the winged lions were found in scenes where William's and, by extension, Norman interests were involved. At first glance, the two aggressive beasts, located above William, seem engaged in uncommonly sedate actions, preening one of their wings, as though satisfied with the scene taking place below. However, a closer look reveals that, instead of preening themselves, the winged lions were probably engaged in biting the tip of one of their wings as though checking their impatience, perhaps reflecting William's impatient, hushed silence at the beginning of the ceremony. In similar fashion, the birds of prey, probably eagles because they lack the long slender neck of the vultures below Scene 22, appear to be intent on smoothing their ruffled feathers, perhaps in imitation of Harold below who was trying to smooth

William's "ruffled feathers" by attempting to defuse by any means, in this case by swearing an oath, the intense situation that William had imposed on him (Harold).

8.2. SCENE 23: Lions, Birds and Yapping Dogs in the Lower Border

Below the eagles that are perched on a stand in the center field, and are engaged in a desperate tug of war over the English succession (the branch with a fleur-de-lis at each end), two lions are facing each other, separated only by one slanted bar. Again, the two lions at the beginning of Scene 23 probably symbolize the two pretenders to the English throne, William and Harold, who are about to meet in the main field. Like the lions in the lower border of Scene 2, these beasts seem to be engaged in a fight over territory, only now another ingredient has been added to the scene. Tails raised in anger, the lion on the left is advancing towards the retreating lion on the right. Similarly, in the main field, William is in a position of strength. He is metaphorically pushing Harold to accomplish his bidding, i.e., to swear an oath to protect his (William's) interests. However, the two lions are engaged in sticking out their tongue at each other, an unnatural gesture considering that unlike humans, animals are not capable of willfully extending their tongues. Thus, this gesture is *de facto* symbolic and probably expresses William's and Harold's mutual disdain, spite and evil intent.

Interestingly, in the main field William is seated on his bench of office with his feet resting directly above an inverted V decorated with stripes. Notwithstanding the symbolism of stripes, the inverted V protects a tiny, deformed fleur-de-lis, perhaps a comical comment on William's ability to reign and a taunting remark on the status of statesmanship (remember that the Tapestry was post-conquest).

After the inverted V, the trunks of two trees, each with a branch ending in a type of leaf seem to be growing from, or up to, the bottom of the stand on which the portable reliquary was laid out, seemingly acting as its support. No longer content to pick and pull at the fruits of the tree, like the two birds of prey below Scene 22, these two birds are pecking at the branches which seem to support the stand for the portable relics. Perhaps it was an attempt to intimate that William and Harold, probably symbolized by these two birds, were each in his own way subverting/attacking the very institution of swearing on relics: William was undermining this sacred act by forcing it on an unwilling subject (Harold); in turn, Harold was subverting the oath by acting in a manner that would nullify its worth (his gestures and posture); and both men, because they were probably

motivated by ambition, conceit, and greed were subverting the notion of an oath, as the fables and pictographs in the borders have already warned the audience. Next to the birds, another inverted V contains a wilting fleur-de-lis. The tip of Harold's left foot rests on the top of the inverted V, above the withering flower, as though indicating Harold's collapsing power as he engaged in a pledge that, as Eadmer maintained, was forced upon him.¹²²

Of the pair of dogs that follows, only the left one is part of Scene 23, the other belonging to Scene 24. The left dog turns backwards to stick a large tongue straight out - - an unnatural act for an animal -- in the direction of Harold who is in the process of swearing his oath to William. Within the context of the Tapestry, it seems appropriate to emphasize Harold's disregard for this sacred act. Thus, it was probably Harold, represented under the guise of a lively dog, a *canaille*, who directed a derisive glance and defying tongue at the oath. By his gestures in the main field, Harold had already demonstrated that he was a dog, a conniving *canaille* who was inwardly challenging the oath. Interestingly, the lower border of Scene 23 begins and ends with animals involved in the same taunting behavior, i.e. sticking their tongues out in a daring, evil defiance of the sacred.

Harold's journey to France and Chapter 4 end with the much talked about oath to William. As the borders of Scene 23 come to an end, the animal pictographs in the upper border (the two lions and birds of prey unable or unwilling to speak) intimate that, William may have been impatient to get on with the swearing. For different reasons, both pretenders may have been pleased that Harold's stay was coming to an end; William because he probably believed that he had succeeded in cornering Harold and in extracting a binding oath from him; Harold, because he had managed to extricate himself from a bad situation as guest/prisoner of William by an oath that, as his placement, posture and gestures in the main field seem to demonstrate, he did everything in his power to render devoid of significance. Below, the pair of lions engaged in evil mockery seems to indicate that the two royal pretenders (William and Harold) met and departed, animated with mutual sentiments of spite. The birds tearing at the wood supporting the reliquary stand probably symbolized both William and Harold, since each one attacked the sacred institution of oath making in his own way: William by forcing the unwilling Harold to swear on relics that he would uphold him (William) as king of the English; Harold by

intentionally swearing a false oath. As a result, neither participant was mentally nor morally engaged in the act, rendering valueless Harold's sworn statement. The dog below the stationary altar was probably meant to symbolize Harold, the *canaille*, who like the dog was probably looking back at the scene of the oath and metaphorically sticking out his tongue at the scene in a supreme attempt at demonstrating his contempt.

II. CONCLUSION

The marginal imagery of Scenes 16 through 23 may be seen to continue to serve as a device to clarify the disposition and temperament of the main characters. Additionally, pictographs in the borders may be read as a gloss of the epic depicted in the center field, replete with forewarnings to keep the attention of the audience engaged in the drama evolving in front of their eyes. The borders harbor comical, cynical and downright caustic innuendos directed indiscriminately at the participants, whether Norman or English, while the most damaging implications are kept for William and his ability to govern, which seems to have been at the core of patron's propagandistic visual agenda. Additionally, the reader/viewer witnesses the recurrence of particular animal pictographs in conjunction with the main participants in the central field. Thus, as already noted by Bernstein, winged lions probably symbolize William and the Norman cause. Royal predators such as lions and eagles may be associated with either Edward, William, or Harold, depending on the context. Dragons seem to be related to Harold, as the dragon of Wessex, while the variations in the dragons' placements, stances and actions were probably meant to comment on Harold's predicament at a given moment in time.

The first repeat of the fable of *The Fox and the Crow* is illustrated below Scene 16. However, several subtle differences were implanted to modify its meaning. By representing the *genettes* in Scenes 4 and 18, a link was suggested between the events narrated in these scenes. New animals and two human figures were introduced in the marginal menagerie, i.e., amphisbaena, prone horses, a lone seated figure next to the roof of a building supposed to represent the Romanesque abbey church at Mont-Saint-Michel, fishes/Pisces, eels/snakes that are part of an interesting series comprised of several animals (including a hyena) and a prostrate man, and finally badgers. Additionally, multiple animals sticking out mocking tongues were probably depicted to enhance the

suggestion already expressed in the main field by Harold's placement, posture and gestures, that Harold was making a mockery of a solemn act.

Contrary to the first illustration of the *Fox and the Crow*, the second rendition probably suggests that when Harold fell into William's hands the balance of power and the status of the succession of England were changed. Indeed, at the beginning of the Brittany Campaign while Harold was William's unwilling guest, his devious rival, William, had the English crown firmly in his grasp. It is obvious from the number of repeated animal pictographs that certain character traits of the main participants were meant to be emphasized. In Scenes 16 through 23, the *genette* represented only twice in the whole Tapestry is one of the animals that stands out from among the lions, dogs and birds. Similarly to Scene 4, the *genettes* (upper border of Scene 18) identify the person(s) that they symbolize as hunters, and may have served to confirm the status of the Norman men warring below. However, in Scene 18, the *genettes'* attempt at escaping the boundary of the upper frame, seems to expose their status as captive hunters. Additionally, the *genettes'* attempt mimics Conan's, who is shown escaping from Dol below. By association, the *genettes* may have reminded the audience of Harold, another "hunter" who was "hunted" and caught; and as he followed William to war, was probably planning on a way to extricate himself from his present condition at William's hands.

Contrary to the *genettes*, the *amphisbaena* are only represented once above William and his men departing for Brittany. Linked especially to William by their placement, the *amphisbaena* were probably a sly way to suggest William's double nature, outwardly good but decidedly bad underneath, and his inimitable knack for slipping out of problematic situations. As well, because their symbolism was linked to their potential ability to run backwards and forwards, it is possible that the two affronted *amphisbaena* were meant to illustrate that Harold and William were engaged in a cat and mouse game, one always attempting to evade the other until the final, inevitable battle.

The Mont-Saint-Michel, which may have been the ideal place to wait out the winter months, offered the perfect arena to make a few deprecatory suggestions about Harold and especially William. Via the prone position and the gelded state of the horses, the auspicious association of the horse with virility, and by extension, with the might of the ruler, was subverted, probably to insinuate that neither Harold, nor William, was lacking the necessary virile strength to rule England. In addition, by combining the

symbolism of the aforementioned horses with the seated figure in the upper border, which has tentatively been identified as Richard II, founder of the abbey church at the Mont-Saint-Michel, with the Mont-Saint-Michel, and with the winged lions extending their tongues mockingly upward toward the Mont, Odo, the most likely patron, may have hoped to remind a post-Conquest audience of William's "manipulation of the Church for his own purpose," and of his "cynical attitude toward the Church temporal" which included his post-Conquest anti-papal, pro-imperial position in the dispute with Pope Gregory VII over investitures. The linked fish in the lower border of Scene 17 only seem incongruous below the shifting quicksand if one does not understand their function as a zodiacal sign indicating the approximate time of year (19 Feb. – 20 Mar.), when William and Harold crossed the Couesnon river on their way to fight Conan of Brittany.

The eels/snakes, linked to a prostrate man, seem to have little to do with the linked fish. Indeed, they are part of the series of animals, running counter to the general movement of the narrative. Because of the countermovement to the left, of the animals and man, this series, ending with eels/serpents below Harold's feet, probably qualifies the events that have led Harold to his present situation, as William's prisoner/guest in the process of saving the lives of two of William's men. William's eagerness to appear righteous at all costs, pretending to act nobly for the good of all, while determined to grab power by any means available to him whether lawful and moral or not (centaur and hyena), seems to be expressed through this series of animals. Edward's (eagle's) detachment from William (wolf), led William to hold on to Harold (prostrate man) in a debilitating position. As guest/prisoner, Harold was obliged to fight on William's side during the Brittany Campaign. While Harold may have been wondering how he might escape his predicament, the eels/snakes coming out of his mouth and his attempt to grab and kill one of them, go a long way to allude to the words that were about to escape from his mouth when he was forced to swear an oath to William, and to the terrible consequences of his words. The badgers biting the restraining posts of their "cage," above Harold and William's men, departing toward Dol, may reflect Harold's reactions to his status while in Normandy. Since his arrival on the continent, Harold had been badgered, first by Guy de Ponthieu, then by William. Thus, the badgers offered the perfect opportunity to suggest the nefarious game being played out not only against Conan, but especially against Harold.

In Chapter 4, I have attempted to demonstrate that the commentary one may harvest from the borders enriches and enlarges the epic, probably making it more palatable to a contemporary audience aware of current gossip. Additionally, I have shown that this commentary provided a sub-text that informed the reader/viewer in whispered tones about the latent propensities and inner workings of the main participants. The new elements inserted in the border point again to the patron's (Odo's), cleverly hidden, yet decipherable propagandistic scheme. Indeed, to be abstruse was a necessary precaution if, like Odo, one was close to the persons who, for political and propagandistic reasons, one was trying to bring down to size, mock, satirize, or otherwise ridicule.

¹ St. Augustine of Hippo, *De doctrina Christiana*, I, quoted in Schmitt (1990): 375.

² Brilliant, Gameson ed. (1997): 135.

³ McNulty (1989): 70.

⁴ For the Brittany Campaign, see esp. Douglas (1964): 178-79; McLynn (1999): 156-57; for the Brittany Campaign in relation to the Bayeux Tapestry, see Freeman, 3 (1875): 712; Fowke (1913): 62; Gibbs-Smith, "Notes on the Plates," in *The Bayeux Tapestry, A Comprehensive Survey*, F. Stenton, ed. (1957): 162-176, esp. 166-67; N. Brooks, H. E. Walker, "The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry." *Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1978* (1979): 4; S. A. Brown "The Bayeux Tapestry: History or Propaganda?" in *The Anglo-Saxon; Synthesis and Achievement*, J. Douglas Woods and David A. E. Pelteret, eds. (1985): 19; Bernstein (1986): 174; Grape (1994): 57-58.

⁵ Guillaume de Poitiers is the only contemporary author to mention the Brittany Campaign, and his account differs from the representation in the Tapestry, see Foreville, ed. (1952): 106-112.

⁶ W. R. Lethaby, "The Perjury at Bayeux," *Archaeological Journal*, 74 (1917): 136-138, reprint. in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 19-20, esp. 19.

⁷ Gameson (1997): 207.

⁸ Lewis (1999): 93.

⁹ For Odo's actions during the 1070s up to his incarceration in 1082, see Bates (1975): 12-19.

¹⁰ For the quotes, see Bates (1975): 16; see also Brown (2000): 165, 172.

¹¹ Grape (1994): 58.

¹² *Ibidem*, 58.

¹³ For the Brittany Campaign, see above note 4.

¹⁴ McNulty (1989): 99.

¹⁵ Herrmann (1964): 38.

¹⁶ McLynn (1999): 156, uses the verb "beguiled" in connection with Harold and the Brittany Campaign.

¹⁷ For the amphibaena, see Rowland (1973): 3-4; Claude Lecouteux, *Les monstres dans la pensée médiévale européenne* (1993): 165; McNulty (1989): 99.

¹⁸ Foy (1998): 277.

¹⁹ McNulty (1989): 99.

²⁰ Lewis (1999): 93.

²¹ Herrmann (1964): 39.

²² Abraham and Létienne (1929): 504; Chefneux (1934): 21; Bernstein (1986): 133-34; McNulty (1989): 28, 99.

²³ Garnier, I (1982): 95-98.

²⁴ McNulty (1989): 28.

²⁵ Terkla (1995): 269-270.

- ²⁶ Duchaussoy (1957): 23-46; Voisenet (1994): 124-25, 146.
- ²⁷ For the symbolism of the horse, see Duchaussoy (1957): 34; Voisenet (1994): 146-47, 18; Seringe (1995): 37-38; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 128-29; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 222-32. On the subject of the "Mesnie Hellequin" (i.e., the "Wild Horde"), and of its connection to William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis, see Richard Bernheimer, *Wild Men in the Middle Ages – A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (1952): 64, 200 n. 40; see also, Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages – The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (1994): 93-94, 109-109. For the meaning of chthonian symbols, see Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 248.
- ²⁸ A. H. Krappe, *La genèse des mythes* (1952): 228; Voisenet (1994): 80, 91, 183; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 225;.
- ²⁹ Rowland (1973): 103.
- ³⁰ Krappe (1952): 203; Isidore of Seville, PL LXXXIII, 1058, "Tibi fons equi genitor," quoted in Voisenet (1994): 181-82 and 182 n. 226.
- ³¹ Voisenet (1994): 147.
- ³² Seringe (1995): 37; Voisenet (1994): 183.
- ³³ Fowke (1913): 60; A. Levé, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux* (1919): 120-25; Abraham and Létienne (1929): 500-1.
- ³⁴ For 1064, see Stenton (1957): 14; H. R. Loyn, *The Norman Conquest* (1982): 42; C. Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (1986): 20; Lewis (1999): 93. For 1065, see Levé (1919): 120-25; Abraham and Létienne (1929): 501.
- ³⁵ Bernstein (1986): 192-193; McNulty (1989): 93.
- ³⁶ For a discussion of the Mont-Saint-Michel and the role of William's grandfather, Duke Richard II, who started building the abbey church in 1020, see McNulty (1989): 42, 101.
- ³⁷ Douglas (1964): 325-26; *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, Darlington and McGurk, eds. (1998): 11, sub anno 1070.
- ³⁸ For William's interactions with Pope Gregory VII, see Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1971): 675; Zumthor (1978): 411-412; Brown (2002): 221, and n. 256.
- ³⁹ Grape (1994): 58; Lewis (1999): 90.
- ⁴⁰ Caviness (1998): 173.
- ⁴¹ Lewis (1999): 90.
- ⁴² *Ibidem*, 90.
- ⁴³ McNulty (1989): 42.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, 42.
- ⁴⁵ Lancelot, VIII (1730): 620.
- ⁴⁶ Bruce (1856): 62.
- ⁴⁷ McNulty (1989): 40.
- ⁴⁸ Lewis (1999): 90.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 90.
- ⁵⁰ For a representation similar in style to Conan sliding down a rope, see the AElfric Hexateuch (mid 11th cent.), St. Augustine Abbey, Canterbury, in the British Museum, Cotton MS Claudius B. IV, f. 141v., a copy of which may be found in Bernstein (1986): 41; for the quote, see McNulty (1989): 41-42.
- ⁵¹ For the symbolism of the centaur, see Droulers (undated): 37; C. Käppler, "Le monster medieval." *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 58 (1978): 253-264, esp. 258; Becker (1994): 55; Voisenet (1994): 58; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 109-10; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 188-89.
- ⁵² For the quote, see Cazenave (1996): 109.
- ⁵³ For the hyena, see Bianciotto (1995): 36-37; Cazenave (1996): 316; Payne (1990): 34; Rowland (1973): 112-113.
- ⁵⁴ Voisenet (2000): 197-199.
- ⁵⁵ Bede, *Homilia C*, PL XCIV: 501, "Postea vidit flumen horribile, in quo multae bestiae diabolicae errant quasi pisces in medio maris, quae animas peccatorum devorant;" Voisenet (2000): 199, n. 51.
- ⁵⁶ For the centaur, see above 173, n. 51. For the quote, see Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism* (1992): 62-63.
- ⁵⁷ For sources for Harold's character, see above Chap. 2, n. 122;.

- ⁵⁸ Rowland (1973): 112-113; Payne (1990): 34; Bianciotto (1995): 36-37; Cazenave (1996): 316.
- ⁵⁹ For Harold's character and personality, see above n. 57; For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 135.
- ⁶⁰ McLynn (1999): 92-95, esp. 93.
- ⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 95.
- ⁶² Garnier, I (1982): 116-117; Schmitt (1990): 123.
- ⁶³ Fowke (1913): 63; Douglas (1964): 178; Grape (1994): 57.
- ⁶⁴ Fowke (1913): 62.
- ⁶⁵ Herrmann (1964): 41.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 63; Wilson (1985): 181; Yapp (1987): 31-32.
- ⁶⁷ For the quote, see Douglas (1964): 234; R. A. Brown (2000): 174.
- ⁶⁸ Zumthor (1978): 373-378.
- ⁶⁹ S. A. Brown (1985): 18; Grape (1994): 57; Lewis (1999): 92; for a full account of the Brittany Campaign, see Douglas (1964): 178-179.
- ⁷⁰ McNulty (1989): 101; Lewis (1999): 91.
- ⁷¹ For a discussion of the events at Rennes, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 712; Fowke (1913): 61-63; Wilson (1985): 180; Grape (1994): 57-58; Lewis (1999): 91.
- ⁷² For Conan, see; C. Fahlin, ed., *La Chronique des ducs de Normandie*, 2 (1854): 489; A. de la Borderie, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 3 (1914): 14-23; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 193-94; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. and trans., 2 (1969): 312; McLynn (1999): 186-87.
- ⁷³ Bishop (1966): 26; R. A. Brown (2000): 147; McLynn (1999): 221.
- ⁷⁴ Hallé (1987): 65, identifies wrongly these two beasts as boars.
- ⁷⁵ McNulty (1989): 101; Parisse (1983): 125.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 101.
- ⁷⁷ For Conan's death, see above n. 72.
- ⁷⁸ For the quote, see McNulty (1989): 101.
- ⁷⁹ Bernstein (1986): 87, noted the action of the two *généttés* without identifying them.
- ⁸⁰ McNulty (1989): 103.
- ⁸¹ For the winged lion, see Bernstein (1986): 126-28; McNulty (1989): 93, 103.
- ⁸² Thorpe, ed. (1973): 35-37.
- ⁸³ Garnier, I (1982): 95-98.
- ⁸⁴ Fowke (1913): 65.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 64-65; Grape (1994): 57-58; Lewis (1999): 91-92.
- ⁸⁶ For the quote, see Lewis (1999): 91-92.
- ⁸⁷ R. A. Brown (2000): 167, 171-173; Foys (1998): 292.
- ⁸⁸ Neither Guillaume de Jumièges nor Guillaume de Poitiers mentioned such a ceremony, see Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): *passim*; Guillaume of Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): *passim*.
- ⁸⁹ For information on dubbing and vassalage, see Jean Flori, *L'essor de la chevalerie, XIe et XIIIe siècles* (1986): frontispice; Schmitt (1990): 209-210.
- ⁹⁰ Wilson (1985): 180; McNulty (1989): 104; Lewis (1999): 93-95.
- ⁹¹ For the quote, see O. K. Werkmeister, "The Political Ideology of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Studi Medievali*, 17/2 (1976): 568-76. For other interpretations, see Dodwell (1966): 554; Wilson (1985): 180; McNulty (1989): 104; Grape (1994): 115; Lewis (1999): 93, & 148 n. 61.
- ⁹² Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 132-133; Guillaume of Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 104-106; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., II (1969): 134-36.
- ⁹³ Lewis (1999): 94.
- ⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, 94.
- ⁹⁵ For the symbolic meaning of changes in hairstyles, see Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque*, John France, ed. and trans. (1989): 164-67 and 254-99, esp. 290-91; Geary (1994): 3.
- ⁹⁶ Garnier, II (1989): 95.
- ⁹⁷ For the potential locations of the oath, see esp. Douglas (1964): 176-177; Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 69; see also, McLynn (1999): 162-163; and Musset (2002): 150-152.

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- ⁹⁸ Gibbs-Smith (1957): 167.
- ⁹⁹ McNulty (1989): 97, 103, 105.
- ¹⁰⁰ For the quote, see McNulty (1989): 97.
- ¹⁰¹ Fowke (1913): 57.
- ¹⁰² See Scenes 13, 15, 18 and 22.
- ¹⁰³ For the type of birds, see Lepelley, Gameson, ed. (1997): 39-62, esp. 39; for the meaning of the fleur-de-lis associated with an object such as a stick or a scepter, see Garnier, II (1989): 220-222.
- ¹⁰⁴ René Lepelley, "A Contribution to the Study of the Inscriptions in the Bayeux Tapestry: *Bagias* and *Wilhelm*," in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Gameson, ed. (1997): 39.
- ¹⁰⁵ For the comment in French, see Garnier, II (1989): 222.
- ¹⁰⁶ McLynn (1999): 162.
- ¹⁰⁷ Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., II (1969): 134-136, places the oath at Rouen; for Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed., II (1952): 102, 104-06; Guillaume de Poitiers, Thorpe, ed. (1973): 34, the oath took place at Bonneville-sur-Touques; for a summary, see Douglas (1964): 176-177. For the quote, see McNulty (1989): 73.
- ¹⁰⁸ For the reliquaries, see Wilson (1985): 218; Bernstein (1986): 168; Foy (1998): 301, 571; Lewis (1999): 99.
- ¹⁰⁹ Lewis (1999): 69.
- ¹¹⁰ For changes in hairstyles as indicators of concern about legitimate vs. illegitimate use of power, see above n. 95.
- ¹¹¹ Bernstein (1986): 125-126; McNulty (1989): 105.
- ¹¹² For the meaning of *diversitas/ varietas*, see Pastoureau (1991): 43; Pastoureau (1995): 20-21, 131, n. 6.
- ¹¹³ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (1961): 124; For the quote, see Lewis (1999): 102.
- ¹¹⁴ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed., II (1952): 180-82; Guillaume de Poitiers, Thorpe, ed. (1973): 47; S. A. Brown (1979): 346; Lewis (1999): 99.
- ¹¹⁵ See Scenes 12, 14, 21, 23, 33.
- ¹¹⁶ Schmitt (1990): 16.
- ¹¹⁷ Garnier, I (1982): 88-89; Girault (1992): 8-9; Bouttier (1995): 16.
- ¹¹⁸ For the quote, see Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 102.
- ¹¹⁹ For the quote, see Schmitt (1990): 323.
- ¹²⁰ E. H. Gombrich, *The Image and the Eye* (1982): 66.
- ¹²¹ Desmond Morris, et al, *Gestures, Their Origins and Distribution* (1979): 143; Schmitt (1990): comments on Plate XXIII, ill. 32; Axtell (1998): 92-93.
- ¹²² Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. and trans. (1964): 8.

CHAPTER V

HAROLD'S RETURN TO ENGLAND;THE DEATH OF KING EDWARDANDHAROLD'S SHORT REIGNSCENES 24 – 34

Even today, one either studies details, or 'runs' with the flow of the story. Ideally the patron or designer had to satisfy both types of viewers: providing sufficiently bold and blatant images for the uninformed, with sufficient nuance, subtlety and accuracy for the knowledgeable.¹

The Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry
Richard Gameson

Each group of marginal images demonstrates, via its interaction with the main panel narrative, the permeability of the Tapestry's inscribed borders and the need for an inclusive reading, one which recognizes the futility of imaginal separation and the representational richness possible when the urge toward such narrative divisiveness is overcome.²

"Cut on the Norman Bias: fabulous borders
and visual gloss in the Bayeux Tapestry"
Daniel Terkla

Indeed, in order to get his message through, the patron, most likely Odo, aided by a designer, had to satisfy a variety of viewers/readers: The literate who could read the words as well as the images; the illiterate and "uninformed" who could not read the written words but "read" only the most salient traits of images; and those who could not read the words but were particularly adept at reading even the minutest details of images and seeing the relationship between inscriptions, narrative images in the center, and pictographs in the borders. As an intelligent, witty, and learned man, Odo could have easily satisfied the need of all three, perhaps with a marked preference for indulging those who could read images most thoroughly. Increased knowledge of medieval culture seems to have rendered absurd an allusion that a complete, thorough, coordinated reading

of the epic in the main field, together with the inscriptions and the borders would have been irrelevant to a late eleventh-century audience. On the contrary, with medieval culture being immersed in symbolism, it is likely that an inclusive reading of the Tapestry was meant to be achieved. Thus, in Chapter 5, I will continue my attempt to demonstrate how such a reading may have been accomplished shortly after the Tapestry was completed in the late eleventh century.

I. HAROLD'S RETURN TO ENGLAND

I.1. SCENE 24: "HIC HAROLD DVX REVERSVS EST AD ANGLI..."

In Scene 23, Harold swore his fateful oath to William. Harold's placement, position, and movements – especially the movements of his hands – may suggest to the readers/viewers that Harold intended all along to assuage William and deceive him with a phony oath in order to achieve his aim of finally returning to England. Contrary to the voyage to France, the journey back to England was not a painstakingly represented event. In fact, the Tapestry only shows one vessel, the sail of which was in the process of being hoisted hastily in an apparent effort to depart quickly. One may wonder if the diminished size of Harold's fleet was supposed to be an ironic reflection on Harold's diminished status from a Norman point of view.

In Scene 24, a figurehead with a dog face, its large black tongue curling back towards the scene of the oath, adorns the aft of Harold's vessel. The dog, looking ahead toward England has a smirk on its face as though enjoying a private joke, perhaps at William's expense. As discussed earlier, dogs were probably used to symbolize first Guy, then Harold and William when they were involved in cunning and disreputable activities. Thus, it is fitting that Harold, who has knowingly sworn a false oath, be symbolized by a double-crossing, mocking *canis*, i.e., a *canaille*, with the negative baggage that was often attached to this animal, especially when portrayed with such a large, black tongue protruding from its mouth.³ Interestingly, the prow of the ship is adorned with a fleur-de-lis, perhaps to anticipate the royal prize towards which the boat was sailing, i.e., the English crown that is finally coming within Harold's grasp.

A look-out, perched on a quay adorned with a monstrous bird-like head, is witnessing the arrival of Harold's vessel. From each window of the tower guarding the port, an expectant head peers out at the returning ship. This tower has a remarkable

appearance; it is decorated with a checkered design. On one level, the variegated design may have been simply the designer's way to relieve the monotony of a plain surface. On another level, it may refer to one of the *diversitas* which seems to be attached to William and the Norman cause. In this case the symbolism of the variegated surface may have been threefold: first, it is possible that it was a reminder of the persistent Norman influence among the English ruling class; secondly, it may have reminded a particular audience of the symbolic presence of William (the bastard), whose influence seems to have reached across the Channel; thirdly, as a result, it may have served as an evil omen portending William's future invasion of England. Beyond the tower, two sad looking individuals, the most elaborately dressed of which is probably Harold, ride toward London and the meeting with the old king. The horse on which Harold is riding is once again a stallion, perhaps reflecting positively on Harold's renewed power after he stepped on English soil.

Another interesting detail needs to be noted. From Scene 24 onwards the differentiation between Anglo-Saxon/English and Norman hairstyles and facial hair, or lack thereof, becomes blurred. One may argue that these modifications reflect a different embroiderer. However, there is nothing in the general fabric of the Tapestry to indicate such a change, which does not seem haphazard if one takes into account the following remarks. In Scene 23, Harold is portrayed with a long mustache. In the next scene (Scene 24), all signs of facial hair have disappeared from Harold and Anglo-Saxon/English men. Additionally, starting in Scene 23, i.e., the scene of the oath, William's hair were no longer shorn in the back. As indicated in early eleventh-century writings, changes in the way men wore their hair and/or grew facial hair were used as latent signs of anxiety concerning the legitimate exercise of power.⁴ Consequently, changes in Harold's and William's appearances were probably significant considering that the Tapestry was produced during troubled times when the Normans had not completely asserted their rule and discontented nobles fomented rebellions, questioning the legitimacy of Norman rule in England.⁵ Perhaps these changes were meant to suggest that the line between legitimate and illegitimate power in England had become blurred after Harold's oath, and that it still remained unclear during William's reign, close to the time of the Tapestry's production. Thus, the patron's aim may have been twofold. If one considers that Odo was the patron, he may have ostensibly cast doubts

about the legitimacy of Harold's actions starting with the oath. Conversely, perhaps frustrated by the way William governed England, and in order to enhance his own standing, Odo may have covertly contributed to sow doubts in the minds of his contemporaries regarding the legitimacy of William's rule as well as the choice of William Rufus, as heir to the throne of England. Indeed, probably aware of Odo's underhanded rebellious activities, in 1082, William accused Odo of betrayal and jailed him.⁶

An architectural structure, presumably the gate to Edward's palace serves as a transition between Scenes 23 and 24. While the main field has already given the viewer/reader significant clues about Harold's changing status, via his facial hair or lack of it, the border may provide additional information to further the observer's understanding of this scene.

I.1.1. SCENE 24: Old Lions, a Bird, and Two Fables in the Upper Border

Above the vessel ready to sail back to England, another pair of affronted lions was introduced. McNulty assimilated these lions to heraldic figures and was of the opinion that they were associated with Harold because of the six *guardant* lion's heads that were on Harold's arms.⁷ McNulty's findings can be questioned first, because the presence of heraldry in the Tapestry is highly debatable. Secondly, if McNulty's assumptions are correct, why are these lions given extraordinary facial features similar to those of the old bearded King Edward in the next scene? If, as McNulty presupposes, these lions refer to Harold, it is perhaps because the vicarious presence of King Edward may have pervaded Harold's conscious mind while he sailed back to England, and set him (Harold) wondering how the king might react to his (Harold's) recent behavior while in Normandy.

The lone bird following the lions is almost identical to the one below Scene 20, perhaps marking the end of another set of scenes. McNulty posits that "one effect of its placement is to move the next border scene, the fable of *The Wolf and the Crane*, to a position precisely above the landing dock."⁸ But it may have another symbolic meaning. Perhaps the bird's depiction denotes the reactions of the Englishmen, and especially those of the king, when Harold's vessel is seen approaching the quay. The posture of the bird indicates that he is literally taken aback. His gestures -- wings raised, beak open, and the

tip of his right wing about to cover his beak imitating a hand about to stifle a cry of astonishment -- suggest complete surprise. While King Edward was probably already informed about the events that took place prior to Harold's departure from Normandy, the bird may be indicative of the confusion and perhaps even dismay that the circumstances surrounding Harold's return may have caused.

The two familiar fables that follow the lone bird may explain the dilemma resulting from Harold's return.⁹ In the previous representation of *The Wolf and the Crane*, the crane (Harold) was removing a bone stuck in a wolf's (William's) throat, while the wolf was crouched on the ground as though completely disabled by his mishap. As already shown, the location (below Scene 4) of the first installment of *The Wolf and The Crane*, prior to Harold's arrival in Normandy, and its placement between *The Fox and the Crow* and *The Wolf and the Lamb* (also below Scene 4), were probably meant to qualify William (the wolf) as underhanded and ungrateful, and Harold (the crane) as gullible, and perhaps "over-trusting," traits which ultimately led Harold to his demise.¹⁰

In the representation of *The Wolf and the Crane* above Scene 24, the position of the two animals is reversed. The wolf is now on the left, and the crane is positioned on the right. These changes in the positioning of the animals in the fables seem to follow the changes in the movement of the figures in the main field. At this point Harold has left William behind in Normandy, and in the next part of the Tapestry, William comes from Normandy to England, a forward movement depicted on the Tapestry from left to right. One of the other, more subtle changes that occurs, concerns the crane raising its right wing in an attempt to liberate itself from the wolf's grasp, which was perhaps meant as an ironic reminder of Harold's raising his arm to swear an oath in an attempt to regain his freedom. Another change concerns the wolf (William) that is no longer crouching, but standing up and in the process of moving forward (toward England and his goal). Yet another change affects the representation of his jaws that seem to be locked tightly around the crane's beak. Similarly, in spite of Harold's hasty departure from William's presence in Scene 24, William (the wolf) probably retained a psychological hold on Harold (the crane) because of the oath.

The final change is related to the addition of a dividing diagonal. The bar set between the two animal pictographs, and the *situation sécante* of the crane, not only indicate a difference in location, similar to William's and Harold's, but may also suggest

that while Harold (the crane) attempted to perform the removal of the “bone of contention” from William’s throat, i.e., came to Normandy to try to reach an understanding with William regarding their mutual claims to the English throne, the arrangement to which both had agreed came to naught. Thus, this second rendition of *The Wolf and the Crane* probably suggests that, because Harold had sworn an oath (mimicked by the crane raising its right wing), William’s psychological hold on Harold (expressed metaphorically by the crane’s beak held tightly between the wolf’s jaws) was stronger than ever.¹¹ Additionally, it is possible to discern a sarcastic element at play in this second rendition of *The Wolf and the Crane*, suggesting William’s (the wolf’s) intention to keep Harold’s (the crane’s) mouth (beak) shut for good once the oath was taken, even if he had to use force.

The third installment of *The Fox and the Crow* is illustrated in the upper border next to *The Wolf and the Crane*. Previous versions were placed below Scenes 4 and 16, at pivotal points in the narrative: first, when Harold was about to leave for England; and secondly, when William left for the Brittany Campaign with Harold in tow. Finally, in Scene 24, the third and last version of the same fable is depicted above Harold, back in England and riding to see Edward for the second time. All three depictions make use of subtle differences. Similarly to *The Wolf and the Crane*, *The Fox and the Crow* was probably intended to comment on elements of William’s and Harold’s characters, to preview their future actions, and to forewarn the audience of the effects of their actions on the development of the narrative. In this third version of the *The Fox and the Crow*, the fox is on the left. Once more following the movement of the narrative from left to right, the fox is probably meant to symbolize William who remains in Normandy and who will be moving from left to right in the main field when he crosses the Channel later in the narrative. The crow (Harold) is on the right, out of reach of the fox and safely back in England. Each protagonist is encased in its own compartment in the upper border. The idea of space between the two pretenders is expressed by the inverted V that separates the fox from the crow. However, this time, the cheese (the English crown) is in the crow’s (Harold’s) beak, and well out of reach of the fox (William) that is howling in discontent.

In spite of their being easily identifiable as *The Wolf and the Crane* and *The Fox and the Crow*, Herrmann proposed three fables instead of two. Ignoring the evident

connection between the wolf and the crane in the Tapestry, and mistaking the beak of the crane for a piece of meat, Herrmann argued for the presence of two unlikely fables from Phaedrus: *The Dog with the Meat* and *The Gander and the Stork*.¹² Instead of the third version of *The Fox and the Crow*, and again ignoring a key element of the depiction, i.e., the cheese in the crow's beak, Herrmann identified the second fable as *The Fox and the Meadowlark*.¹³

Because Herrmann did not take into account fundamental elements of the fables' depiction, his identifications cannot be retained. Chefneux's position that the repetition of *The Wolf and the Crane* and *The Fox and the Crow* was due to the artist's finding himself "short of inspiration," impelled McNulty to comment that, "the Tapestry's intellectual content, its brilliance as a narrative charged with precisely suggested ideas, has largely gone unrecognized or undervalued."¹⁴ Indeed, Chefneux's position, which completely ignored the symbolic significance of variances in repetitive depictions, is indefensible. For his part, Bernstein recognized the possibility of linking Harold to the crane and William to the wolf, but only from an Anglo-Saxon/English viewpoint.¹⁵ Always hostage to his "Norman bias," and glossing over important details, Terkla was adamant that "the wolf is Harold" in *The Wolf and the Crane*, and that "the fox must represent Harold" in *The Fox and the Crow*.¹⁶ Conversely, when McNulty acknowledged the importance of these two fables and the significance of the changes in the way they are illustrated at different places in the Tapestry, he recognized accurately, if not in detail, that the wolf and the fox may be identified with William, and the crane and the crow with Harold.¹⁷ Influenced by Bernstein, and by Terkla's biased findings, Lewis posited that the way the fables were read depended largely on the audience. Referring only to *The Fox and the Crow*, Lewis remarked that for a Norman or pro-Norman audience, "William becomes the crow victimized by Harold's cunning and duplicity;"¹⁸ however, "from the Anglo-Saxon side, Harold can be perceived as the crow, a foolish dupe who is tricked by the cunning William (fox)..."¹⁹ In the case of the third representation of *The Fox and the Crow*, Lewis' dual interpretation ignored important details of placement, position and gestures of the animal pictographs vis-à-vis the movements of the figures in the main field, and the overall movement of the narrative. However, there is little doubt that the third version of *The Fox and the Crow* mirrors the development of the narrative. Indeed, historical events concur with the following reading: Harold (the crow), now safely in

England, was about to receive the crown (the cheese) from Edward's hands, leaving William (the fox) to rant and rave, and the crown (the cheese) out of his reach.

I.1.2. SCENE 24: A Dog, Birds and Lions in the Lower Border

Probably reflecting Harold's inner feelings of contempt for an act that was forced upon him and that he (Harold) regarded as devoid of meaning, the dog located in the margin below the altar sticks out its tongue in a mocking gesture at the scene of the oath, while walking away from it. Contrary to this dog engaged in evil mockery, the second dog with its mouth open and seemingly barking at the scene, is crouched below the vessel taking Harold home to England. Perhaps, the second dog's pose was meant to insinuate that having performed his evil deed, Harold, the *canaille*, was catching his breath after the tense, stressful moment of the swearing ceremony in the previous scene. However, its barking may have been meant as a forewarning of Harold's return home.

The set of birds pecking the ground below the undulating lines symbolizing the Channel, are covering their heads with one wing lifted as though overcome by shame, and pretending not to see Harold's vessel passing by. Immediately following the birds, adorsed lions are performing different tasks. The one on the left is sticking a large, red tongue out as he looks back toward the scene of the oath. The lion with the proud bearing on the right has turned his head away from the scene of the oath. His eyes are closed and the point of his tail is barely touching his open jaw, as though turning away from the past in contempt.

Below Harold and his companion approaching Edward's castle, birds are performing a strange gesture. With their heads bent backwards, and the tip of one of their wings in front of their respective beaks, they seem to be engaged in stifling a cry of astonishment at contemplating Harold and his companion approaching the entrance to Edward's castle in the main field, perhaps anticipating the mutual reaction of Edward and Harold as they were about to meet again. Indeed, the physical appearances of both men changed while Harold was away: Edward became a lot older, and more sickly, and Harold had shaved his distinctive mustache. Edward may view the latter as a sign of treachery since it may imply that he (Harold) had become William's man.

In summary, once again the succession of animals and the two fables in the borders, above and below Scene 24, seem to play an important role, clarifying the events depicted in the main field, and qualifying the participants through their positions,

postures and gestures. As a result, the audience is bombarded with a plethora of innuendos concerning the feelings, thoughts, behavior, and endeavors of the participants. At the beginning of Harold's journey back to England, old lions, probably symbolizing Edward's watchful presence, stand guard impassively as Harold's vessel sails back to England, their brooding presence looming heavily over the returning Harold.

The other pictographs in the borders seem to express a variety of feelings and doubts that may have besieged Harold and his companions as they made their way back to England and Edward. Harold may be described as impertinent, cynical, and spiteful towards the oath (the dog with its tongue sticking out); Harold's insolence seems to affect his surroundings, making the birds (the people who are witnessing the events) hide their heads shamefully, dreading the consequences of Harold's actions. The pair of lions following the birds seem to indicate that William was evaluating his future course of actions in view of the recent events in Normandy. The lion on the left with the protruding tongue, performing the same gesture as the dog below the altar in Scene 23, seems to indicate that Harold was still looking back at the oath scene with scornful impertinence, glad to have escaped William's snares through trickery. The lion on the right with his eyes closed, barely holding the tip of his tail between his jaws, in a position similar to the lion's below Scene 22, suggests that a conceited Harold still held the belief, probably reinforced by his successful escape from Normandy, that he could best William. However, Harold seems unnerved as he approached Edward's castle. Like the birds stifling a cry below, perhaps in a moment of anxiety, Harold admitted to himself that he had made a big mistake. Riding with his companion while pointing to the next scene, a resigned Harold had time to reflect on the recent events. Indeed, Harold (the crane) should not have stuck his neck between the wolf's jaws in an attempt to remove the "bone of contention," from William's (the wolf's) throat, i.e., to settle existing differences concerning the succession to the English throne. In spite of William (the fox) ranting and raving at the top of his voice, Harold (the crow) was safely removed and far away from him. Rocked by these pendulous sentiments, Harold was preparing to face Edward.

I. 2. SCENE 25: "...*ET VENIT AD EDWARDV[M] REGEM*"

Harold followed by a companion carrying the typical Anglo-Saxon broad ax, advances towards a markedly aged Edward, whose man-at-arms holds a similar

weapon.²⁰ A completely different set of circumstances surrounded this second meeting between Edward and Harold illustrated in Scene 25. Harold's appearance, posture, gesture, and placement vis-à-vis Edward seem to reflect these changes.

In contrast to his depiction in the scene of the oath, and perhaps as a warning sign to Edward, Harold appears to be clean shaven, as though no longer a true Anglo-Saxon/Englishman, perhaps because the oath was meant to turn him into a pro-Norman vassal. However, the presence of the broadax brings ambivalence to the scene as it may have been intended to help identify Harold as an Anglo-Saxon/English earl. Ostensibly, Harold had sworn allegiance to William, the Norman duke, with whom he was supposed to work out a deal concerning the English succession. So far, a thorough reading of the main field and borders seems to suggest that William tricked Harold into swearing an oath of allegiance to him, but that Harold was also a trickster, intentionally deceiving the Normans with a spurious oath.

In Scene 25, the closeness evident in Scene 1 between Edward and Harold has disappeared. On the contrary, Harold's placement vis-à-vis Edward seems to reflect a breach between the two men. Indeed, empty space and a column, part of the frame delineating Edward's stateroom, separate the standing Harold from the seated Edward. Additionally, the ceiling above Edward is decorated with a striped pattern, perhaps to intimate that William is vicariously present in the discussion. It is possible that an aged and declining Edward, pointing at Harold and his companion, uttered admonitory words to an apparently subdued Harold.²¹ Eadmer suggests that Edward expressed his dissatisfaction to Harold when he (Edward) reminded him (Harold) of his (Edward's) warnings about the kind of man William was.²² Conversely, Orderic Vitalis proposes that Harold lied to Edward about accomplishing his mission successfully.²³ While it is impossible to determine the exact content of their discussion, neither Edward nor Harold seems to be overjoyed at the encounter.

Other factors, such as gestural expressions, may enter into an accurate interpretation of Scene 25. Despite Harold's submissive stance, the conjunction of Harold's and Edward's hand gestures seems to reflect the mutually accusatory tone of the encounter, and the dilemma facing Harold. Indeed, with the open palm of his left hand facing the audience, Harold was accepting Edward's rebuke and admonishments, probably for his recent actions on the Continent.²⁴ Conversely, Harold, mimicked by his

attendant performing an identical gesture, was pointing the index finger of his right hand at Edward.²⁵

Another point needs to be brought up before examining the borders. Because of several details, such as overly hunched shoulders, slightly bent knees, and the use of the left hand to perform his acquiescing gesture, one may wonder if Harold's humble stance, when he approached Edward, was genuine or fake.²⁶ Along the same line of inquiry, Lewis raises the possibility that "Harold's hunched and twisted stance [may] be perceived as a visible sign of his moral perversion."²⁷ But signs of perversion in Romanesque imagery are more blatant than hunched shoulders, and usually include distorted body movements and exaggerated and often misshapen facial features.²⁸ In his portrayal in Scene 25, Harold's facial features show no sign of distortion. Another detail merits mention. If one follows the diagonal formed by Edward's scepter (or walking stick?), it directs the viewer's/reader's gaze toward the distorted beast, sticking out a bright red tongue gracing the upper border. A perusal of the borders may clarify these points and provide a better understanding of the scene.

I. 2.1. SCENE 25: Beasts and Elements of *Varietas* in the Upper Border

So far, the pictographs in the upper border of this scene have not been the subject of inquiries. Two round turrets and a square structure belonging to the roof of Edward's castle interrupt the representations of animal imagery in the upper border, separating a black dog from another black beast, apparently neither dog nor lion, but a mixture of both. Additionally, a lone, wilting, scrawny fleur-de-lis adorns the top of the square structure, as though to give one more indication about the declining state of health of the royal person seated below. The two animals, flanking the upper part of the roof of Edward's stateroom, probably refer to the two most likely candidates vying for the throne, namely William and Harold. On the left side, above the overtly subdued Harold, the black animal, identifiable as a dog because of its floppy ears, elongated muzzle embroidered in a contrasting color, and body type, appears to be proudly moving forward with its head raised, oblivious to the obstacle set in its way. Because of its placement above Harold and the words *VENIT AD*, this dog on the left advancing in the upper border was probably meant to symbolize Harold who "*venit ad*" Edward's castle. By extension, the dog's placement, conceited appearance, posture and gesture seem to confirm that in spite of his overt meekness in the main field, Harold may have nursed the

latent belief that he was on his way to become the next king. In this instance, it appears that Lewis assumed correctly that Harold's performance in front of Edward was not entirely genuine.

Indeed, Harold lusted for the throne, and probably believed inwardly that, like the dog taking proud steps in the upper border, he was advancing in the right direction. However, the dog's advance was barred by an inverted V decorated with a zigzag pattern, a Norman distinguishing sign on an obvious obstacle. Similarly, Harold's way to the throne was barred by William. Explored earlier, the *diversitas* or *varietas* of stripes, checkers and zigzag patterns, with their negative connotations of bastardry, seems to be attached to William and, by extension, to the Norman cause.²⁹ Bernstein commented on this "distinctly Norman motif" that "reinforces the Norman presence."³⁰ Accepting Bernstein's suggestion, Terkla stated that the zigzag pattern reminded the audience of the Normans' "offstage presence."³¹ Indeed, the zigzag pattern on the legs of an inverted V, protecting a type of fleur-de-lis, may have acted as a reminder of William's latent presence and of his attempt to bar Harold's way to the throne. Yet, the dog in the upper border seems to suggest that, in his conceit, Harold probably felt over-confident. In fact, perhaps believing that, as head of the Witan, he, and only he, held the key to the royal succession in England, Harold, the foolhardy *canaille* imbued with his own worth, may have felt a latent pride at his accomplished trickery while in Normandy, and was ignoring the Norman impediment placed in his way.

At the end of the upper border of Scene 25, a predatory beast with both canine and leonine features is placed above an architectural structure, possibly a gate to Edward's castle, which is set between the castle and the abbey church, and above the word *REGEM*. This peculiar looking animal seems to be in the process of proudly marching in a leftward direction. Its ultimate destination is probably beyond the architectural structures of Edward's roof, and beyond the diagonal poles adorned with the familiar zigzag pattern/Norman identifier. Indeed its ultimate destination is probably the black dog, approaching from the opposite direction, apparently unaware of the advance of the peculiar looking beast. Additionally, this questionable animal is performing a taunting gesture with its bright red tongue in the general direction of the approaching black dog. This beast with a distorted appearance may simply be construed as a deliberate mockery of Harold. However, it is remarkable that this animal is neither

completely a dog, nor a lion; that it is placed directly above the word *REGEM*; and that it is performing an irreverent gesture towards the black dog which, because of its placement, posture and gestures, may be safely identified as symbolizing Harold. Instead of being a stand-in for Harold, it seems that the beast, neither truly a dog nor a lion, was someone's -- most probably Odo's -- idea of poking fun at William, suggesting that, as this animal lacked the physical integrity to be true to its kind, so William lacked the moral integrity to be a truly regal man. Indeed, William (lion/dog) may have been portrayed as a *canaille* in disguise who, with his mocking gesture, derided the pretensions of another *canaille*, Harold (the black dog). Perhaps the pictographs in the lower border will bring their own subtle comments to the narrative.

I. 2.2. SCENE 25: More Beasts and an Eagle in the Lower Border

While McNulty noted the difference in the arrangement of the animal pictographs in the lower border of Scene 25, he only stated that the "unique border arrangement" of "eight alternating beasts and birds (which continues under the following scene)," was "perhaps intended as an expressionistic touch, sympathetically interrupting the usual border pattern at the point where the reign of King Edward is interrupted by death."³² Indeed, it is highly probable that the change in the pattern of representation is meaningful. However, these beasts may not only have been meant to depict the subjective emotions of the most likely patron, Bishop Odo, as McNulty suggests with his use of the word "expressionistic," but also to express the patron's understanding and interpretation of the emotions, sentiments and mindsets of the participants in Scene 25.

In the lower border two affronted beasts are separated by an angry, squawking eagle flanked on both sides by inverted V's. Worthy of note, the inverted V located under Edward does not contain the usual three-petal fleuron or fleur-de-lis but a cruciform shape, perhaps an attempt to remind the viewer that Edward was not only a king, but also a man reputed to be holy. The first predator on the left resembles a dog proudly marching forward in the direction of the inverted V, and sticking its tongue at an eagle responding angrily to its taunting behavior. Because of its placement below Edward, the irate royal bird was probably meant to symbolize the king and reflect vicariously the anger and disappointment the king may have felt because of Harold's apparent failure in Normandy. With its raised wings engaged in meaningful pointing, the

eagle, looking with a dissatisfied and irate gaze at the black dog facing it on the left, is attempting to direct the attention of this animal and the audience. The eagle's left wing leads the eye toward the red predator behind it in the lower border, which is extending its tongue mockingly in the direction of the eagle, and toward the equally spiteful black dog on the left. The eagle's right wing directs the gaze through Edward and, via the diagonal line formed by Edward's stick, toward the black predator with the exposed red tongue in the upper border. While the general appearance of the beast on the right in the lower border, reminds the observer of a lion, it suffers from an obvious infirmity: it has no ears. This particular lack was not accidental, as it probably suggested to the audience that the person whom the beast was meant to symbolize was unable or perhaps unwilling to listen. In addition, both animals are sticking large tongues out not only at each other but also in the direction of the eagle caught between them. It is interesting to note that the black dog stands directly below Harold advancing toward Edward in Scene 25, while the second animal, "the predator with no ears" stands to the right, not quite below the lion/dog in the upper border.

Because of its placement and symbolism, the eagle in the lower border of Scene 25 probably symbolized Edward. In past scenes, lions seem to have portrayed repeatedly the two royal pretenders, William and Harold. A few times, William, and more openly and frequently Harold, were symbolized by dogs. However, two of the beasts included in the borders of Scene 25 are either defective or deformed, being neither truly leonine nor canine. Because of their placements, it is safe to link Harold with the two dogs on the left (upper and lower borders). To a post-Conquest audience, the two beasts, i.e., the taunting lion/dog in the upper border and the beast/lion with no ears in the lower border, paralleling each other, above, below and to the right of Scene 25, and above and below the word *REGEM*, are probably meant to symbolize William who lent a deaf ear to Edward's proposal delivered by Harold. Additionally, equating the beasts' physical deformity with moral and/or psychological distortion and impairment, may have been a way of surreptitiously questioning William's fitness to rule at a time when the relationship between William and Odo was deteriorating rapidly.³³

Having performed a detailed analysis of the main field, the inscriptions and the borders, Scene 25 may now be summarized in its entirety. One may not only imagine, but also decipher through the placement, stances and directed movement of the figures in

the main field, the inscriptions, and the animal pictographs in the borders, what may have been the subject(s) of conversation between the old king and Harold. As he approached the old King Edward, whose holiness may be suggested by the cross directly below him, Harold, (the conceited black dog), probably believed that he was on the winning track, and that he had duped William. In fact, Edward probably knew that the seemingly penitent and subdued Harold, approaching with bent knee, and with apparent respect, was a vainglorious *canaille* in disguise (like the conceited black dog above). However, it is difficult to know if Edward was angry at Harold because he had made light of a sacred oath, or because Harold had not been cunning enough and had been tricked into swearing an oath in the first place. While pointing his finger at Harold, Edward probably stated that he had warned Harold about William and his Normans, symbolized by the V-shaped overhead posts adorned with zigzag; that, as the posts are stopping the advance of the proud black dog in the upper border, so will William and his Normans stop Harold when they have the chance; that William's character was warped by the evil he endured in his youth (the distorted appearance of the black beast with its extended red tongue in the upper border); and that Harold (the mocking black dog with protruding tongue below) can deride and taunt William as much as he likes, but William will not listen -- in fact he is incapable of listening (the lion with no ears), and is enjoying a good laugh at Harold's expense (the protruding tongues of both animals on the right in the upper and lower borders), as he is about to close in on Harold and proceed, unhindered, toward the throne.

The irate eagle, placed directly below Edward and caught between the two predators, seems determined to get his point across. This royal bird was probably meant to symbolize Edward caught between the two pretenders who, as the two taunting beasts seem to express, were beyond caring about what the dying Edward did or said. Via the eagle, Edward was also expressing his anger and disappointment at Harold (the mocking black dog) who stupidly neglected to assess the true character of William (the physically distorted beast in the upper border to whom the eagle points), a man who, from his youth, "was familiar with plots, bloodshed, torture, and death."³⁴ Also through the eagle, Edward was pointing out that William had not changed, contrary to what Harold (in the main field) may have been telling the king in his counter argument, expressed by Harold's hand gestures. Harold (symbolized by the two dogs on the left in the upper and lower borders) may not have fooled William (symbolized by the two defective royal

predators in the upper and lower borders on the right) with his oath. Through the same angry eagle, pointing toward the “lion with no ears” with its left wing, Edward seemed determined to explain to Harold that William would not listen to any further plea (lion/dog with no ears). As already mentioned, not only the beasts, but structural elements also implied that Scene 25 is replete with William’s unseen presence. Indeed, the stripes and zigzag markings that have penetrated the design suggest William’s latent, yet pervading influence during the ongoing meeting.

In addition, the border pictographs seem to warn the reader/viewer that, blinded by their respective ambitions and each having already decided independently on a course of action, William and Harold had made the choice to ignore and deride Edward’s advice, privately if not publicly (illustrated vicariously by the beasts with their protruding tongues). In fact, the urgency of the situation seems to be emphasized by Edward’s man-at-arms who seems to be brushing the left arm of the king with the index finger of his right hand while, with his left hand, drawing the king’s attention toward the next scene in which a man is putting the finishing touch on the church by adorning it with a weathercock. As Lewis suggested “he [the man-at-arms] makes an effective transition to the next episode (represented in reversed order at the left), of the king’s burial by surreptitiously reminding Edward of his impending death...”³⁵ Yet, the weathercock may have served another purpose. It may have been another attempt to poke fun at William, and act as a subtle reminder of William’s fretful wait for the weather to change so he could set sail towards the English shore, and continue his quest. As Frank McLynn reports, historical records allude to William’s impatience. Indeed, they mention that: “once at St. Valéry, William incessantly watched the weathercock on the minster tower, which for fifteen days pointed resolutely south, while the Norman troops shivered under a cloudy sky, beset by rain and cold weather.”³⁶ This fact would have been known within Norman ranks and among William’s entourage and close allies. Perhaps, by the bias of the installation of a weathercock, and through a mode of association common in medieval culture, the apparently normal and accepted ritual, indicating the completion of a church, was meant to associate Edward’s impending death, with William’s impatience to see Edward dead. This association is supported by the representation of taunting winged lions in the upper border of Scene 26, which are examined below.

While continuing to examine the Tapestry, it is important to note that, for the second time, the order of the scenes is reversed. Thus, after examining Scene 25, the observer needs to jump to Scenes 27 and 28, and then go back to Scene 26 to read the narrative in correct order. Stenton posited the impossibility to find “a convincing explanation” for this “curious dislocation of events.”³⁷ However, Wilson commented that, “the reversal of the death and burial scenes is interpreted by many as emphasizing the hurried nature of the accession.”³⁸ Besides the sense of urgency that it conveys, the shift of the scenes was probably meant to clarify the narrative, since it established a causal link between Scene 27 (in which Edward placed his trust and his kingdom in Harold’s hands) and Scene 29 (in which Harold is offered the crown, probably by members of the Witan).³⁹ Scene 26 is devoted to Edward’s burial with an emphasis on one of his accomplishments, the newly built church of St. Peter, part of Westminster Abbey, where Edward’s body was interred. In Scenes 27 and 28, there is little doubt that great care was taken to in represent Edward’s dying moments and death, according to the contemporary accounts recorded in the *Vita Edwardi Regis*.⁴⁰

II. THE DEATH OF KING EDWARD

II. 1. SCENE 27: “HIC EADWARDUS REX IN LECTO ALLOQVIT FIDELES”

Following the *Vita Edwardi*, the four individuals attending the dying Edward have been tentatively identified as Robert fitz Wimarc, otherwise known as Robert the Staller, holding Edward in a seated position; Bishop Stigant or perhaps Bishop Ealdred attending to Edward’s spiritual needs; Harold, as the faithful servant, kneeling before the king and receiving his trust once more; and Edith (Edward’s wife and Harold’s sister) crying at the foot of the bed, while pointing to Harold.⁴¹ More germane to this dissertation than debating the identity of the participants in Scene 27, are their placement, postures and gestures. Edward appears physically spent. Yet, he is able to stretch out his right hand and touch the tip of his fingers to those of Harold’s right hand. This gesture is similar to the one in Scene 1, and intimates Edward’s renewed trust in Harold who, for once, was humbled, perhaps because he was witnessing the impending death of a king who had placed his trust in him (Harold). In the meantime, with the open palm of his left hand turned toward the audience, Harold acknowledged and accepted the king’s mandate, a

gesture that was witnessed and repeated by the bishop standing behind Harold, probably in an effort to show that the mandate was recognized by the Church.⁴² Reinforcing the concept of mandate and acceptance, Queen Edith designates her brother, Harold, with the pointed index finger of her right hand.⁴³

As always, the inscriptions are mute about the exchange. Thus, while it is clear that an important mandate was given to Harold, an accurate explanation of this mandate remains nebulous. Did Edward symbolically bequeath his kingdom to Harold, as McLynn and Wilson believe, and as reported in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle?⁴⁴ Or did Edward only entrust his kingdom to Harold until William could claim it, as R. A. Brown suggests, based on a new interpretation of the *Vita Edwardi*?⁴⁵ Scene 1 and its borders, especially the upper border where the old lion (Edward) was trying to free himself from William and the Normans, symbolized by the striped posts, seems to suggest that Edward intended all along to nominate Harold as heir to the throne. Thus, Harold would not only have *claimed* to be Edward's heir, as Guillaume de Poitiers wrote, but he would have been *nominated* by the king to be his heir.⁴⁶ The placement of Harold to the right of the king -- his good side -- in front of the figure of the cleric (bishop?) making identical gestures known as "double silhouetté," serves to give more weight to the accepting gesture performed by the figure in the front, in this case, Harold.⁴⁷ Thus, it would seem that Harold was nominated by the king, a nomination accepted by Harold and recognized by the Church, since both Harold and the attending bishop(?) are represented with their palms turned toward the audience.

However, an element of taunting and evil mockery was also part of this scene. The post, adorning the foot of Edward's bed, ends in the shape of a dog's head with floppy ears and wide open mouth that is extending an enormous tongue toward Scene 26, as though mocking the dead king being carried to his last resting place. Perhaps the animal is sticking out its tongue because the curtain around Edward's bed was tied tightly around its neck in a sort of a noose. Was this a cynical joke, a final act of mockery directed at Edward? Or was it meant rather as a caustic comment on Harold's situation? Indeed, whether Edward nominated Harold to be the next king, or entrusted the kingdom into his hands until William could take over, Harold had put his neck in the noose by accepting the dying king's mandate. Whether Harold turned England over to William or not, once he (William) took over, he probably would have found a way to get rid of a

man as powerful as Harold because he (Harold) would have been a permanent threat to William's authority if he were allowed to live.

II. 2. SCENE 28: "*ET HIC DEFUNCTVS EST*"

A dead Edward is being wrapped in a shroud. The cleric's gestures seem to be the only significant detail of this scene. With his left hand, the bishop is presenting the dead king to the audience. Meanwhile, with his right hand, he is pointing to Harold, immediately above him, probably to designate him as the dead king's choice of an heir. In essence, the bishop is proclaiming "the king is dead, long live the king."

II. 2.1. SCENES 27 and 28: Pictographs in The Upper Border

Except for a lonely griffin, the inscription claims the upper border above Scenes 27 and 28. Perhaps the placement, posture and movements of this monstrous animal in close proximity to the dying king below may indicate its possible meaning. Its tail tucked between its hind legs and its wings fluttering, the griffin appears to be agitated, perhaps because it was stopped by a black diagonal post, and prevented from advancing closer to watch the coming death of the king with anticipatory greed. Similarly below, Harold, who appears respectful as he kneels before the king, is watching and waiting for Edward's death, perhaps with latent anticipatory greed, in order to claim the throne. Mistaking the griffin for a winged lion, Bernstein wondered if the Tapestry was "engaging in a delicious bit of irony" by depicting a beast associated with William and the Norman cause above the scene in which Edward is believed to have bequeathed the crown to Harold.⁴⁸ However, as mentioned above, this beast is a griffin, a predatory beast, eager for gold and loot, which has been associated consistently with William, his vassal Guy, and their men. In this case, the griffin, probably symbolizing William, is watching with anticipatory greed the imminent death of the king whom he hopes to follow on the English throne.

II. 2.2. SCENES 27 and 28: Pictographs in The Lower Border

In the lower border, plants with tortured limbs seem to imply the pain caused by Edward's death, and the turmoil prevailing after he died. Similarly, two small birds below the two scenes, are represented without legs. Fowke posited that "the species of birds in the lower border is, perhaps, emblematic of the [Edward's] soul, stripped of all that rendered it fit to remain an inhabitant of earth, rising heavenwards."⁴⁹ In turn,

McNulty, who did not indicate his sources, compared these birds to the martlets that were ascribed later to Edward's shield.⁵⁰ In spite of the absence of any sign of water, Yapp is of the opinion that the birds are ducks floating on water, which, according to him, explains the invisibility of their legs and feet.⁵¹ Close observation of the Tapestry in situ confirms that the birds have no visible legs. However, in early drawings of the Tapestry, the birds were provided, perhaps incorrectly, with legs.⁵² It may be that these two birds were not given legs to differentiate them from any of the others in the Tapestry. Indeed, such birds may be the famed mythical *caladrii*, whose behavior was believed to indicate if a person beset by ills would recover or die.⁵³ Whether or not they are *caladrii*, these two birds, and the bushes with the twisted limbs, seem to express the heartfelt sorrow of Edward's *fideles*, and the distress caused by his agony and death. However, there is little doubt that the lone griffin lurking next to the inscription in the upper margin acts as a reminder of the aggressiveness and greed of one of the two pretenders.

**II. 3. SCENE 26: "HIC PORTATVR CORPVS EADWARDI REGIS AD
ECCESIAM S[AN] C [T] I PETRI AP[OSTO]LI"**

The structure, probably a gate tower, at the beginning of Scene 25, and a similar structure bordering the room in which Edward is dying in Scenes 27 & 28, serve as brackets delineating a parenthetical phrase encapsulating the relatively short time that elapsed between Scenes 25, 26, 27 and 28.⁵⁴ According to the reversed movement of Scene 26, a procession composed of pall bearers and clerics, probably Edward's old *fideles* -- as the sticks that some of them are using to walk seem to indicate -- accompanies Edward's bier to the newly built Church of Saint Peter Apostle. From a cloud, the presence of God, latent in the representation of the many fleur-de-lis and cruciform plants, is finally demonstrated openly by the hand of God blessing the newly finished church, and the saintly person whose relics were about to find rest within its walls.⁵⁵ Yet, the striped design adorning the ridge of the church's roof, and the wilting fleurs-de-lis with a black center, placed at each end of the same ridge, add a discordant note to this image reflecting Edward's final accomplishment. Like the striped ceiling in Scene 25, the striped ridge suggests William's latent and persistent presence in this part of the Tapestry at the time of the king's death. While the stripes probably indicate the lingering Norman influence at Edward's court, and the wilting fleurs-de-lis may suggest the lamentable results of this influence, one may also wonder what statement(s), if any,

were being made to a post-Conquest audience. Was the patron suggesting that English kingship was doomed (wilting fleurs-de-lis) after Edward's death, because of the influence exerted by William and his Norman followers? Or was he implying that William, the bastard (stripes on ridge of roof), caused the Church's institutions to wither (the wilting fleur-de-lis with a black heart), because of the changes brought about by the demands, quotas and varied assessments that he (William) made on bishops and abbeys, first in Normandy, then in England after becoming king?⁵⁶

II. 3.1. SCENE 26: Vultures and Winged lions in the Upper Border

At the beginning of Scene 26, the finial ending in three knobs that adorns the dome of the Church of St. Peter Apostle penetrates the upper border. The vulture on the left is pecking contentedly at the finial, while the vulture on the right is pulling at a knobby growth rooted in the border directly above the letter P of the word *CORPUS* in the inscription below. McNulty is of the opinion that the left bird is not only a "drollery," but is also associated "with themes of resurrection and salvation."⁵⁷ Indeed, being a cleric, Odo, the most likely patron, may have entertained the idea of Edward's salvation. In this case, why did the patron choose to depict unsightly carrion eaters? And why is the vulture on the left intent on nibbling at the finial shaped like a fleur-de-lis? It seems plausible that these two vultures symbolize the two rapacious pretenders (William and Harold) who, perhaps unwittingly, are tearing at the very substance of English kingship because of their insatiable appetite for the royal succession and the power and wealth associated with it.

Accompanying the vultures, two winged lions, sticking their tongues aggressively at each other, stand in the border above Edward's bier and the procession taking it to the church. As already mentioned, Bernstein and Terkla commented on the winged lions as symbols of "the offset presence" of William and the Normans.⁵⁸ There seems to be little doubt that these two beasts imply the latent nagging and irreverent presence of William and his followers, and suggest that they are involved in some deceptive talk of their own, as they await the last installment of Edward's life.

II. 3.2. SCENE 26: Birds, a Lion and a Howling Hound in the Lower Border

Fittingly, as though to mark the death of Edward, a dark blue, perhaps originally black cross, occupies the inverted V separating the mocking, defective lion with no ears

in the lower border of Scene 25, from the bird with one wing raised, in the lower border of Scene 26. Upon close examination, the bird with one wing raised does not appear to be an eagle or even a small bird of prey. Its appearance reminds the viewer of a carrier pigeon. In this case the pigeon was pointing back with his right wing raised at the mocking lion with no ears to its left, at Scene 25, and at Edward. It was also using its left wing as one would use a hand, to express its sorrow at witnessing Edward's burial taking place above. Meanwhile it was facing a lion engaged in an act of derision with its black tongue pointed in the bird's direction, and in the direction of the other lion to which the bird is pointing with its right wing. Placed below the church that Edward founded, this lion probably symbolized the continued uncaring attitude and contempt of the royal pretenders. The bird illustrated on the right, next to the mocking lion, seems unable to believe its eyes, as it gazes upon the lion performing its grotesque demonstration of spite. Immediately after this bird, a dog, perhaps one of Edward's hounds, is howling while contemplating his dead master being carried to this final resting place. On the right of the dog, another bird turns away as though unable to look at the disturbing scene. With wings all a-flutter, twisted necks and beaks open in mute shrieking, the three birds in the lower border seem to express the sorrow that Edward's demise may have provoked, in spite of the odd half-smiles on some of the clerics' and attendants' faces carrying or following Edward's dead body to its place of last repose. This ambiguity is demonstrated further by the curious combination of the mocking lion and howling dog in the border. The lion, with a black tongue protruding straight out of its jaws, has turned its back on the dead king, perhaps to express the cocky boldness of one of the pretenders, perhaps Harold, although he is nowhere close. Indeed, under the guise of the taunting lion with a black tongue, Harold may have demonstrated his spite towards William, symbolized by the lion with no ears. With the death of Edward and Edward's deathbed pledge, Harold had finally achieved his aim and was now king of England. Thus, as the lion with a black tongue indicates, at this moment in the story, he could mock William with impunity, or so Harold believed. The behavior of the lion is contrasted to that of the naturalistically rendered dog, probably the king's faithful companion howling in plain view of his master's bier.⁵⁹ Perhaps, one may add that Harold fostered ambivalent feelings with regards to Edward's death. On the one hand, Harold (the lion with a

protruding black tongue) may have been brashly uncaring. On the other, Harold (the howling *canis*) may have deeply regretted the passing of his master.

III. HAROLD'S SHORT REIGN

III. 1. SCENE 29: "HIC DEDERVNT HAROLDO CORONA[M] REGIS"

Two English earls, probably members of the Witan, are handing over the insignia of kingship to Harold.⁶⁰ One of them is also pointing back to Scene 27, where Edward's pledge to Harold is illustrated, while he is indicating Harold with the index finger of his right hand, compellingly linking the king's consent in Scene 27 to the actual presentation and bestowing of the royal attributes on Harold in Scene 29. The *HIC* at the beginning of the inscription of Scene 29, is located partially below the word *FIDELES*, effectively correlating the two words, and associating the word *FIDELES* to the men who are handing over the English crown to Harold. Indeed, the gestures of the two men in Harold's company seem to imply that they have brought the crown to Harold to fulfill Edward's last wish.⁶¹ Despite the importance of the news with which they have been entrusted, perhaps by the dying Edward himself, these two men remain unidentified, leaving the observer to wonder if they belonged to the Witan, or were simply English "partisans" of Harold, as S. A. Brown, who bases her opinion on Guillaume de Jumièges and Guillaume de Poitiers, seems to favor.⁶² Meanwhile, Harold is performing an odd gesture, pulling something, perhaps a purse, from behind his belt with his right hand. Was this surreptitious and easily missed gesture meant to imply that Harold was rewarding those who had helped him, i.e., his *FIDELES*, to become king, casting further doubts on the validity of Harold's claim by adding a venal ingredient to the scene, and thus supporting the above mentioned claim that Harold was given the crown by his followers?

III. 1.1. SCENE 29: Distorted Lions in the Upper Border

At the beginning of the upper border of Scene 29, two fleurs-de-lis, growing from the same stem, seem to be wilting, while two large black petals, or pieces of foliage with a black center, appear to grow from the same stem. Placed above the scene in which Harold is offered the implements of kingship, the two wilting fleur-de-lis were probably meant to imply that neither Harold, nor William, the other would-be king whose latent presence permeates the scene, was a good choice to replace Edward. The distorted black

foliage growing from the same stem seems to insinuate further that whoever replaced Edward had a black heart like the foliage. Similarly, remembering once more that the Tapestry was a post-Conquest production, perhaps linked to Odo's propaganda, the twisted lions with distorted facial features, looking away from each other in the upper border, seem to reinforce the idea that both would-be kings, William and Harold, were disgruntled and that the conduct of both had been less than honorable in trying to achieve their goals.

III. 1.2. SCENE 29: **Birds Caught by the Neck and Zigzags -- Lower Border**

The twisted position of the birds, with their neck caught behind the bars separating the pictographs, appears to be a further indication of the trouble that was about to befall Harold if he accepted the English crown, which he had not yet touched in Scene 29. The representation of the second bird is particularly remarkable. Bernstein focused on the peculiar aspect of this pictograph, noting that "a bird (perhaps a symbol of Harold) strains, apparently in vain, to escape the confines of its compartment," delineated by two posts adorned with a zigzag pattern.⁶³ Bernstein's observations did not escape McNulty who mentioned Bernstein's interest in the zigzag pattern as a "Norman linked design."⁶⁴ Leaning heavily on Bernstein's comments, Terkla declared in no uncertain terms that "the bird must signify the treacherous Harold – soon to be 'pinned' himself by the Conqueror for breaking his oath and assuming the English throne."⁶⁵ Lewis also astutely remarked on Harold's conflicting posture, i.e., frontal body stance, profile head to the left, and arms directed toward the right.⁶⁶ Indeed, Harold's posture seems to suggest his dilemma about the path he should follow, and to reflect the stance of the bird with the neck caught behind a post decorated with *diversitas* represented directly below him. Harold was probably and understandably afraid that William would view his acceptance of the crown as a slap in the face and would proceed to render him (Harold) as helpless as the bird held prisoner by the posts decorated with the zigzag pattern placed directly below him.

Researchers who are interested in the meaning of the borders of the Bayeux Tapestry seem to concur without reservation in linking the pictograph of this particular bird, and the two posts that frame it, respectively to Harold and William. Assuredly, this pictograph is an excellent example of a clear association of two vertically aligned images,

the human figure in the main field with the animal in the border. In this case, the deprecatory comments affecting Harold did not need to be hidden in the same way as the ironic, sardonic or even perfidious connotations, which laced some of the pictographs aimed to symbolize William and the Norman side. Indeed, ambiguity and ambivalence, which were meant to render the reader's task purposefully difficult in order to protect the individuals involved in the design and production of the Tapestry against possible retribution, were needless in this case since this particular pictograph was linked to William's opponent.

III. 2. SCENES 30 & 31: *"HIC RESIDET HAROLD REX ANGLORVM STIGANT ARCHIEP[O]S[COPVS]"*

Edward died on 5 January 1066 and was buried the following day in his newly built church of St. Peter Apostle.⁶⁷ According to Guillaume de Poitiers, Harold was crowned on the same day as Edward's burial.⁶⁸ A coronation ceremony on 6 January, the day of the Epiphany according to the Church's calendar, may have been viewed as a good omen indeed. However, it seems that the Tapestry does not represent the actual coronation ceremony; it only depicts the presentation of the newly crowned king to his subjects and to the audience. In a room with horizontal, scalloped stripes decorating its ceiling and two towers decorated with a few checkered designs, a crowned Harold is proudly seated in full regalia, holding the insignia of kingship, i.e., the orb surmounted by a cross in his left hand and the scepter in his right. Two men, representing English magnates, are hailing Harold on the left (his right). Meanwhile, a cleric placed on the right (his left), identified as Archbishop Stigant, is presenting the new monarch to the onlookers.⁶⁹ The officiating cleric, identified as Stigant in the Tapestry, was most probably Ealdred, the Archbishop of York, who performed Harold's coronation in order to prevent any semblance of illegitimacy.⁷⁰ Mustachioed once more, Harold seems to have regained his quintessential Englishness. This small detail is probably meant to illustrate Harold's independence from William and by extension from anything Norman, including the oath, with all the innuendos that such a manner of representing Harold may have generated in the minds of the various members of a post-Conquest audience, be they English or Norman. Perhaps Harold's renewed Englishness, via the re-grown facial hair, made it easier for a viewing audience to recognize him as a legitimate king. Yet, even at Harold's coronation, William's lingering presence is made visible in the form of checkers

and stripes in the structural design of the room, perhaps in order to show Harold's inability to escape William's influence and his (Harold's) subsequent fate. In addition, the patron's genius in producing stealthy insinuations seems to have shined once more when he chose to place Archbishop Stigant next to the newly enthroned Harold. While Guillaume de Poitiers and Orderic Vitalis mention the presence of Stigant at Harold's coronation, it remains unclear who the officiating bishop really was.⁷¹ Stigant's legitimacy as the Archbishop of Canterbury was a subject of concern, since he labored under the weight of several excommunications ordered by successive popes. In 1066, Alexander II, who supported William and the Normans, excommunicated Stigant for the last time.⁷² Thus, his presence in the Tapestry in close proximity to Harold, was probably meant to cast a shadow on the legitimacy of Harold's coronation.⁷³ However, H. E. J. Cowdrey pointed to the interesting detail of the maniple that Stigant is holding in his left hand. Prior to saying Mass, the priest puts a maniple over his left wrist as one of his vestments, while pronouncing Latin words that may be translated as follows: "Give strength, O Lord, to my hands to wipe away every unclean blemish."⁷⁴ This prayer seems to be very appropriate and even necessary within the context of Harold's hotly debated coronation by an excommunicated bishop.

Thus, a depiction of the complete ceremony was not necessary at this point. Outwardly, Harold seems to have become a recognized, full-fledged king. In Scene 31, five men are standing in an anteroom and watching Harold as he sits in majesty. They are hailing the new king with their raised left hands.⁷⁵ However, while the open palm gesture is a sign of acceptance, the use of the left hand, i.e., *sinistra*, seems to pervert its significance. It is probable that their placement outside the king's stateroom and their use of the left hand, instead of the right, to hail the king, together with the disquieting elements discussed above, are indications that Harold's reign is thwarted and doomed from the start.⁷⁶ Indeed, the apparent legitimacy of the new king is subverted by the details of Scenes 29, 30 and 31. Perhaps as a propagandistic act, the patron harbored the ultimate goal of debunking Harold and his kingship. Indeed, if Harold was not truly king, where was William's glory in defeating a man (Harold) who betrayed his king (Edward), his country (England) and the person he "swore" to uphold as king (William)? However, if William ever set eyes on the Tapestry, one may wonder how he would have reacted to the portrayal of Harold as an anointed king in full regalia. Perhaps, the inclusion of the

excommunicated Archbishop Stigant, standing next to Harold, was meant to cast a doubt about the validity of Harold's kingship, and mitigate William's angry reaction.

The upper border of Scene 30 is taken up entirely by the top of Harold's stateroom, as though the scene representing King Harold needed no commentary.

III. 2.1. SCENES 30 & 31: Lions and Birds in the Lower Border

In the lower border, familiar beasts follow a bird caught by the neck and a scrolling plant. Again, no comments have been made so far about the pictographs in the borders of Scenes 30 and 31, beyond McNulty mentioning the resumption of "the motif of balanced figures."⁷⁷ As in previous scenes, the two adorsed lions biting their tails and walking in opposite directions were probably meant to represent William and Harold whose paths were diverging. These two lions have been deprived of the possibility of making any sound because their respective tails were stuffed between their jaws. As they walk away from each other, the lion on the left (William) seems angry, while the one on the right (below Harold) wears a contented smile. Perhaps these two lions, symbolizing the two would-be kings, were meant to parody William's and Harold's respective states of mind and feelings once Harold was made king. Indeed, after the ceremony had been performed, the time was past for exchanging words, promises and other diplomatic verbal platitudes. By his actions, Harold had angered William to the point that only action could remedy the situation; and within the context of late eleventh-century Europe, powerful men understood action to mean physical conflict, in other words: war.

Next to the lion, presumably symbolizing Harold, a distorted fleur-de-lis was introduced directly below Stigant. This particular three-petal flower is black, seemingly intimating Stigant's "dark state" as an excommunicated man barred from entering Heaven -- a dark omen, indeed. Additionally, from the same stem, large, distorted leaves/petals are growing, as though a tainted Stigant can only produce deformed fruits. The proximity of Harold and Stigant adds one more doubt regarding the validity of Harold's kingship. Indeed, if it is Stigant who officiated and presided at Harold's coronation, the "bad tree" cannot possibly have produced a "good fruit." Thus, the readers/viewers remain in the dark about Stigant's actual participation, and are left with persisting doubts.

On the right of the distorted fleur-de-lis, and mirroring the actions of the men in Scene 31, a large bird, perhaps an eagle, has lowered its right wing and raised the left one, while staring angrily at the men above. If one omits the fact that the men are using their left hands to hail Harold, this bird can be construed as symbolizing William and his feeling of anger at being upstaged by Harold whom the men are in the process of recognizing as king. However, once the reader/viewer takes the symbolic meaning of the “left” into consideration, this bird may be interpreted as Harold, angry at being slighted by the men above who are falsely acknowledging his accession to the English throne by using their left hands to signal their recognition. The blighted fleur-de-lis below the men in Scene 31 is not as large or as distorted as the one below Stigant, perhaps indicating that they play a lesser role than Stigant with their doubtful acknowledgement of Harold as successor to Edward. Harold is now king of England. However, details of the main field such as the placement of the Englishmen vis-à-vis Harold, the placement of pictographs in the borders, and the gestures, actions, and appearances of men and beasts, concur to cast the shadow of doubt on the manner Harold acquired the throne. The appearance of the *STELLA* in the next scene is bound to cast additional aspersions on Harold and his newly found kingship.

III. 3. SCENE 32: “*ISTI MIRANT STELLA*” – Main Field and Upper Border

Scenes 31 and 32 are separated clearly by an architectural structure, indicating not just a change of locale, but also elapsed time.⁷⁸ Indeed, the comet appeared a couple of months after Harold became king. In Scene 32, five men in a group similar to those in Scene 31 are represented within a room with a striped ceiling, once more hinting at the hidden, yet pervasive presence of William and the Normans. These five men seem to have been called to look at a passing object in the sky by a sixth man who is pointing upward to the word *STELLA*, and to the comet crossing the sky into the next scene. Except for the one man who noticed the comet first, and who is now drawing the attention of the others toward it, all are glaring with fear in their eyes at the *stella* that we know today as Halley’s comet, which “first appeared in February, reached its perihelion in March, attained maximum brightness in April, and remained visible well into May [1066].”⁷⁹ For contemporaries, the apparitions in the sky of strange celestial bodies almost always presaged hardship.⁸⁰ In retrospect, it would have been simple enough for

the patron to equate the appearance of the comet with the unhappy fate that awaited Harold. Additionally, it was commonly believed that if the comet had “streaming hair, and threw it off, as it were,” it augured great afflictions, such as those that befell England as a result of the Conquest.⁸¹

III. 3.1. SCENE 32: A Distorted Fleur-de-Lis and an Eagle - Lower Border

Below Scene 32, the second eagle of a pair (the first being below Scene 31) is squawking angrily at the group of men engaged in pointing at the comet, which may be seen in the distance (upper border, Scene 33). This royal bird of prey is pointing up with its right wing at the men directly above, while turning its head to the left. At the same time, this bird is gazing up at this group of men with fearful anger. Each eagle seems to be protesting in a similar manner the two groups of men. Like the first eagle, this royal bird probably represented Harold, now a king, but at a later time in the narrative, when the comet was first noticed, and fear could be seen in the eyes of the men watching it. Like the second eagle, fearful of the evil portent represented by the comet, King Harold was looking back to the recent past, perhaps with regret. Another strange-looking light-colored fleur-de-lis with two extra large, dark petals, not quite open, and growing from the same stem separates the eagles from the representation of a fleet of ghost ships. Perhaps this fleur-de-lis signified the now defunct king, and, because of their dark color, the two black petals not yet completely spread out from the center symbolized Harold, the new king whose legitimacy was questioned, and William who, although he was king by the time the Tapestry was produced, had acquired his kingdom in a manner that some probably regarded as not quite legitimate. Indeed, considering the strong possibility that Odo was the patron, he may have wanted to foster this assumption, since any disturbance would have been helpful to show William at a disadvantage and himself as a possible solution to the problem. In fact, one may even argue that Odo, who, according to contemporary writings, was ambitious and restless, and whose relationship with William was deteriorating, may have enjoyed any acerbic barb which attacked in subtle ways the quality and integrity of William’s royal rule.⁸²

III. 4. SCENE 33: “*HAROLD*”

The inscription in Scene 33 is succinct; it is but a single word: the name, *HAROLD*. The omission of Harold’s title was probably meant to show the growing

instability of Harold's status as *REX*, a designation that was part of the last two inscriptions.⁸³ In fact, it is the last scene in which Harold is represented enthroned as king. In the main field of Scene 33, a clean shaven Harold is represented sitting in majesty in his palace, listening to a man who probably came to give him a report about the ghost fleet in the lower border. Grape identified the man as a seer brought in to interpret the monarch's dream, represented in the lower border as a fleet of ghost ships.⁸⁴ However, the man standing next to Harold is carrying an easily missed two-toned sword in his left hand. Seers do not usually carry swords. Additionally, the posture of the man indicates swift movement, as neither of his feet seems to be touching the ground. The man was obviously running to inform Harold, indicating the urgency of the news. As Guillaume de Poitiers mentioned, Harold had sent men to Normandy to spy on William.⁸⁵ Doubtless this man was an English informer who, after gathering intelligence concerning William and his reaction to Harold's coronation, was reporting his findings to Harold. By the gesture of the man's hands, the viewer/reader is made aware that, as Dodwell already mentioned, the information regards a future crossing that will involve a fleet, probably in the planning stages.⁸⁶ From future crossing to invasion, it is but a small step, and William was about to take it.

Beyond the unsettling awareness of a menace looming on the horizon, some elements of Scene 33 were probably introduced to establish ambivalent readings of the scene. First, Harold's lack of a proper title and lack of facial hair in the Norman fashion, may have been a ploy to encourage the reader to view Harold as William's man, a mere pawn who was supposed to hold the throne in trust for William, yet betrayed him, and became king in his (William's) stead. Secondly, confirming the negative impact of his missing title and facial hair, his position appears somewhat twisted and unstable.⁸⁷ Harold is portrayed bending to his right, in an apparent attempt to listen more closely to the words of the spy bringing his report. Harold's reaction to this information is expressed vividly. The new king of England sits askew on a wobbly throne decorated by two monstrous birdlike heads (not unlike those usually adorning the prow and aft of ships). Harold appears visibly shaken, with eyes wide open in fearful amazement as he gazes downwards at the ghost fleet in the lower border. However, Harold's insecure position is first and foremost a natural reflex, caused by his obvious concern, bordering on physical revulsion, at his growing understanding of the scene below.⁸⁸ The patron's and/or the

designer's genius shines once more when he endows Harold with reactions that may either be viewed as natural and normal, or be interpreted as containing the symbolic meaning that researchers have given to this particular scene, positing, like Lewis, that "Harold can already be seen as proleptically unseated from his throne."⁸⁹

Thirdly, the room in which Harold sits is far from ordinary. It is supported on one side by a wall symbolized by a diagonally striped column. The top of the room, poking into the upper border, stands in the way of the comet, as though Harold's castle, i.e., his kingdom, is its target. Additionally the upper part of the roof is adorned with diagonal stripes. Are these devices another insinuation that Harold continued to be surrounded by the unseen presence of the bastard duke and his Norman followers?

III. 4.1. SCENE 33: Halley's Comet and Birds in the Upper Border

The comet in the upper border is one more example of the importance of the borders to a full understanding of the main field, a fact that did not escape McNulty who used the representation of the comet to assert that "the claim that the borders cannot be related to the main story...is demonstrably unsupportable."⁹⁰ Indeed, the men in Scene 32 are pointing at the comet, and the comet is heading directly toward the top of Harold's stateroom, as though its imputed malevolence was aimed straight at Harold himself.

Adding no explanation, McNulty posited that the two birds above Scene 33 "mimic the posture of other, full-scale birds – perhaps a bit of parody."⁹¹ However, it is difficult to assert that these fowls were meant to be birds of ill-omen as Yapp suggested.⁹² The two small birds, chatting nervously above the scene and standing on the striped roof of Harold's stateroom, seem to support what was already made explicit in the main field, i.e., that the man/spy came to bring news of William's intention to build a fleet and invade England in order to take by force what he believed was promised to him.⁹³

III. 4.2. SCENE 33: The Ghost Fleet in the Lower Border

So far the upper border has proven valuable in refining the reader's understanding of Scene 33. The lower border contains only one theme: a fleet of ghost ships, perhaps anticipating the building of William's fleet in Scene 36. Besides the obvious symbolism attributed to Harold's physical appearance, posture, position (*vis-à-vis* the ghost fleet below), and placement within his stateroom metaphorically pervaded by William's hovering presence, an accurate reading of the gestures of both men in the main field in

conjunction with the fleet of ghost ships in the lower border seems to influence, and, to some extent, alter the reading of Scene 33. Harold's spy, pointing to the ghost fleet with the index finger of his left hand, is designating Harold with the index finger of his right hand, thus connecting himself to Harold, and both to the pictographs represented in the border. With the index finger of his left hand, Harold points to his spy, while in the same hand he holds a lance directed at the object of his fears, as though meaning to strike the ghost fleet below. Yet, contrary to the spy's sword pointing toward the ships, the tip of Harold's spear is pointed up, away from the fearsome apparition.

The combination of the movements of hands and objects forms a vortex that increases the malaise inherent to this scene. From the gestures of Harold's man, one may deduce that he was advising Harold to strike now when the ships were only an idea in the Norman Duke's head. However, the direction of Harold's spear seems to indicate that he did not take the spy's advice. Instead, perhaps confused, and/or too stupid and/or too cowardly to literally know which end was up, a shortsighted Harold probably decided that now was not the time to solve a problem that did not yet exist. Meanwhile, with the gesture of his right hand poised on his lap, Harold manifested his will and determination to act, perhaps not immediately, yet in a manner befitting a king.⁹⁴ Thus, while visibly afraid and trying to move away from the evil portent below, Harold was resolved to act. However, he probably intended to wait for the proverbial "right time," which never came, as the reader/viewer already knew. Again, the message that the reader/viewer gathers from an examination of the Tapestry is ambivalent, as though the patron wanted to blur some aspects of the representation to cloud the issue, perhaps hoping to conceal from William that, by turning Harold into an unworthy opponent, William's worth is also diminishing.

A reading of Scene 33, main field, inscription and borders as a whole, seems to demonstrate that it was outwardly designed to ridicule Harold and point him out as an unworthy, unstable king racked by superstition and fears. However, one small duplicitous element of spite – symbolized by the strange looking fleur-de-lis with two extra black petals – was probably directed not only at Harold, but also at William, whom the jealous and ambitious Odo (the most likely patron) may have always viewed as the bastard duke of Normandy, unworthy to rule as a king.

III. 5. SCENE 34: “*HIC NAVIS ANGLICA VENIT IN TERRAM WILLELMI...*”

Scene 34 is framed by two trees, one on the English shore and the other in Normandy. Thus, Scene 34 is a parenthetical, yet pivotal scene linking two different parts of the Tapestry, and marking the end of an era for both England and Normandy. The past that included Edward, the saintly king, Guy, the *canaille*, William the bastard duke and Harold, the pretender-become-king, is now over. The future belongs to the group of men represented in Scene 35, among them William, and for the first time, Odo, whom the majority of researchers recognize as the one who commissioned the Bayeux Tapestry.⁹⁵

Scene 34 represents an English vessel arriving on the Norman shore with three men on board and the fourth in the process of anchoring the ship. A few details of the main field seem worthy of note. First, except for the man about to set the anchor, the men on board ship are wearing their hair in the English fashion, which seems to designate them as Englishmen. As Fowke mentions, perhaps these men were some of Edward's “Norman favourites” who, having refused to accept Harold as king, were returning home, full of gossip and eager to share their “news” with the Norman Duke.⁹⁶ Second, two monstrous figureheads adorning the ship's bow and stern are extending their tongues in the direction of Normandy. In fact, the figurehead adorning the stern seems to be licking the back of the head of the man who is steering the vessel. As mentioned earlier, when included in a medieval design, protruding tongues may be signs of mockery, disorder and evil portent.⁹⁷ Extended tongues also point to unrestrained speech and its dangerous consequences. In this case, the tongues seem to mock the men arriving in Normandy. It seems fitting that, while a comet crossed the sky, a boat, transporting men about to report their embellished findings to William, is adorned with symbols of disorder and evil portent, especially since their report was about to entice William to start his campaign against Harold.

III. 5.1. SCENE 34: An Archer, a Sail, and Messenger Birds -- Upper Border

Perhaps the pictographs in the upper border may enlighten the viewer/reader further. Indeed the little man carrying a bow, his left hand protecting his eyes as though he were attempting to see far into the distance, while kneeling behind a diagonal bar, seems an appropriate figure to accompany a boat transporting spies. He may be “a watchman” or “an informant,” carrying “news of Harold's usurpation... to William.”⁹⁸

Giving another twist to the story, and bent on finding fables throughout the Tapestry, Herrmann identified this kneeling archer as “l’Oiseleur,” i.e., *The Bird Catcher*.⁹⁹ Perhaps this so-called bird catcher is one of Harold’s men trying to stop the tiny bird with fluttering wings (a carrier pigeon) flying above the swelling sail of the ship, probably symbolizing the men below who, like the bird flying above their vessel, have departed England to bring their news to William.

A fleur-de-lis on the left and what seems to be a deformed fleuron on the right, flank the ship’s sail. The fleuron is followed on the right by two adorsed birds, perhaps the newly arrived carrier pigeons that also may symbolize the men bringing news below. However, these two birds are adorsed. The bird on the left is turned back towards Scene 33. With its right wing raised and pointing at the birds above Scene 33, at the sail, at the archer/bird catcher, and finally at the tiny bird above the sail, the bird on the left effects a connection between the events depicted in Scenes 33, 34 and 35. Additionally, the squawking bird on the right, pointing downwards with its left wing at Scene 35 and at the meeting in which the decision was made to build a fleet to invade England, effectively continues the association, as it appears to be repeating what it has heard being discussed in the previous scenes.

If this hypothetical bird catcher was sent to stop the carrier pigeons/news mongers from reaching Normandy, the heated palaver that is taking place in the next scene seems to indicate that he failed. Between the two messenger birds above Scene 34, and again on the right of the second bird, fleur-de-lis are drooping and wilting, perhaps reflecting God’s dwindling support and the sad state of affairs that affected England, upon the accession to the throne of a king (Harold) who had essentially mocked God by either deviously swearing a spurious oath on relics, or by breaking a sacred oath. However, the wilting and/or ghostly fleur-de-lis intruding in the part of the Tapestry connected with William and his men, may also have been intended as a latent criticism of William’s rule at the time of the Tapestry’s production.

III. 5.2. SCENE 34: Canines, Ghostly Fleurs-de-lis and Birds - Lower Border

Two fish below the tree separating Scenes 33 and 34 introduce the pictographs in the lower border. Several researchers look upon these two fish as the zodiacal sign, Pisces, indicating the time of year when the boat with the informants (the carrier pigeons) sailed to Normandy, in this case between mid-February and mid-March 1066.¹⁰⁰

However, denying meaning to the borders of the Tapestry and rejecting medieval symbolism once more, Hicks considered the fish as “an appropriate space filler.”¹⁰¹ In spite of Hicks’ denial, the task of deciphering such a complex set of symbolic meanings is challenging, yet rewarding, as it probably tends to reveal the inner workings of the Medieval, and proto-Machiavellian mind of an intelligent individual, i.e., the ambitious, ruthless and sophisticated Odo. Indeed, besides indicating the time of the current year, the zodiacal sign, Pisces, may have been included to act as a mnemonic cue, referring the audience to the prior year (Scene 17) when Harold acted as a hero, struggling to save Norman men and experiencing his own personal epiphany while struggling not only with his personal demons, but also with outside forces embodied primarily in William, his ultimate foe.

The affronted animals in the next two pictographs are difficult to identify. A process of elimination leaves but one option open: their general appearance, paws, ears, and muzzle suggest a type of canine. Outwardly, because of their placement below the boat taking informers to Normandy, the two *canes* could suggest the inherent and necessary qualities, or more precisely defects needed to spy, i.e., to be *canailles*, in other words, despicable persons imbued with the necessary “qualities” to obtain information. However, another latent interpretation comes to the surface if one examines the lower border closely taking into account that the patron was probably Odo. In this case, it would not be surprising if the two *canes* were meant to represent William and Harold, once more identified as *canailles* probably because of their respective covert actions. Following the movement of the narrative, the “smiling” *canis* on the left pawing at the diagonal bar, was probably meant to symbolize William, who was metaphorically knocking at Harold’s door.

Between these two animals, three fleur-de-lis grow from the same stem. Because the one in the middle is stunted as though dying, this strange looking plant may have been meant to represent Edward, the king who just died; and the two plants growing from opposite side, the two men, i.e., Harold and William, who yearned to succeed him as king of England. Separated by a bi-colored diagonal bar, from the three fleurs-de-lis stemming from one root, the *canis* on the right, which is prevented from backing away by another bi-colored bar directly behind him (perhaps another allusion to William and the Normans) may symbolize Harold, who, from the moment he became king, tried with little

success to back away from anything connected to William and the Normans. In essence, the individuals arriving from England were about to report that Harold was cornered, and that William should act now.

Because of their beaks and large talons, the pair of affronted birds following the dogs may be identified as eagles. Between the dogs and the eagles, between the two eagles, and also between the last eagle on the right of Scene 34 and the next pictograph, a preponderance of ghostly and deformed fleurs-de-lis were inserted in the design of the Tapestry. Perhaps, the patron used this device to further his propagandistic agenda. Indeed, it is possible that, at the time of the Tapestry's production, Odo (the most likely patron) insinuated that the monarchy was in the process of devolving into the mere shadow of its former self, and that God's sanction of William and his new dynasty was waning.

Following the *canes* are two eagles that may have been intended as newsmongers, imitating the Norman spies who are bringing news of Harold to William. Besides this obvious linkage, following the movement of the narrative in the main field once more, the eagle on the left is probably meant to symbolize William, while the one on the right is used as the symbol for Harold. Similar to the eagle on the left with fluttering wings, which is stepping on the post that bars his way from approaching the cowering eagle on the right, William was eager and determined to overcome any obstacle in order to catch Harold. In the meantime, the eagle on the right, his tail caught behind a bi-color diagonal bar, seems to be backing away as far as he can. In a similar fashion, Harold had "backed away" from Normandy and William, and returned to England; but he found himself in a dangerous position because he (Harold) accepted the English crown, and was trapped in his new role as king.

While the viewer/reader was probably well aware of the events that transpired during the critical years prior to the Norman Conquest, the borders brought their own exciting comments to the continuing saga of these two men whose lives, at this moment, seemed to hinge on the report of spies, and who both became kings in their own time. With Scene 34, the epic reached a decisive point. From the intelligence gathered in England, William was about to start the construction of the fleet that allowed him to initiate the conquest of England. At the same time, it seems that, for his own

propaganda, Odo, the most likely patron, used some deprecatory elements in the border to belittle William and portray him in a bad light.

IV. CONCLUSION

A perusal of the borders above and below Scenes 24 through 34 continues to bring added insight into the overall meaning of the Tapestry. Indeed, the pictographs represented therein gloss over the scenes, appending and modulating the meaning of the main field. Additionally, the pictographs seem to provide insights into the disposition and temperament of the main characters, and may help to reveal their inner feelings, or what the patron imagined, and wanted the audience to believe their inner feelings to be at given points in time. Likewise, images in the borders seem replete with forewarnings to keep the attention of the audience engaged in the drama evolving in front of their eyes. Lest the viewer/reader forgets who the most likely patron was, elements of the Tapestry suggest that it was Odo. Indeed, Odo is spared almost entirely from the usual comical, cynical and downright caustic innuendos harbored in the border pictographs which are directed indiscriminately at the participants, whether Norman or English. Additionally, it seems that Odo was motivated by a desire to discredit William in order to aggrandize himself by any means at his disposal, as long as no elements of the design could be construed as a direct attack on William with whom he had become estranged at the time of the Tapestry's production. Odo's covert and insidious presence continues to be experienced as the reader/viewer explores the scenes. Thus, it appears that Odo did not shy away from molding the narrative for his own purpose.

When summarizing the salient findings gathered from Scenes 24 through 34, particular attention should be paid to new elements, and to pictographs and items repeated in pivotal areas of the borders, such as the stately old lions above Scene 24 which are shown again when Edward's presence is suggested; the beast with no ears and with both canine and leonine physical characteristics; the surreptitious, yet stifling presence of William and pro-Norman interests through the various elements of *diversitas*; the repetition of two fables, i.e., *The Wolf and the Crane* and *The Fox and the Crow*; the iteration of animals with outstretched tongues; the birds caught by the neck below Scene 29; and the appearance of Halley's Comet, connected with the second representation of fish/Pisces below and between Scenes 33 and 34; and the phantom fleet below King

Harold seated precariously on his throne. As the reader/viewer progresses through Scenes 24 to 34, including a close examination of the borders, there is little doubt that new insights into the epic illustrated in the Tapestry are provided them.

With the insertion of heraldic-looking lions, looming impassively overhead, the patron probably suggests the overwhelming presence of Edward, the old king waiting for Harold to return. Beasts lacking ears are part of the medieval panoply of deformed beings that symbolize deviance. A post-Conquest audience, aware of William's flaws, may identify the taunting lion/dog in the upper border and the beast/lion with no ears in the lower border as William, who chose to ignore the possible compromise that Edward sent Harold to deliver.

Perhaps, in order to prevent the reader/viewer from forgetting the growing and insidious influence of William and the pro-Norman faction in England while Edward still lived, many elements of *diversitas*, such as checkers, stripes and zigzags, are included on various parts of architectural structures in the central field. However, the repetition of fables is one of the most ingenious ploys used by the patron to remind the audience of the changes occurring in the plot, as well as to reiterate aspects of the opponents' characters, perhaps a necessary step, if one considers that the Tapestry may have been used as a propagandistic tool. Through the first representation of *The Wolf and the Crane*, the audience is informed that William is neither appreciative nor guileless, and Harold is naïve to trust him. In the second rendition of *The Wolf and the Crane*, changes occur in its representation, which modify its meaning. Thus, the wolf and the crane have traded places, perhaps to mimic the respective movements of William (wolf) and Harold (crane). In an attempt to demonstrate that William and Harold are on either side of the Channel, a diagonal bar separates the two animals. In addition, in an effort to ensure that no one mistakes the animal pictographs which symbolize each pretender and what they are about to accomplish, the crane (Harold) is depicted with its right wing raised as though swearing an oath; and the wolf pins the mouth of the crane shut in imitation of William who is about to shut Harold's mouth permanently. Through the fable of *The Fox and the Crow*, the audience is already made aware of William's cunning deceitfulness and Harold's vanity and ambitions; the viewers are also warned about the changing fate of the English crown, first up for grabs, then securely in William's possession. The third rendition of the same fable updates the audience about the whereabouts of the crown, and

brings the attention of the viewing public to the interactions between William and Edward. Via the inverted V adorned with a small fleur-de-lis (perhaps a reminder of Edward's fading presence), the physical as well as the symbolic distance between William and Harold is made clear. Indeed, the channel and the sickly Edward seem to separate William and Harold from each other, as well as William from the crown, which the crow (Harold) holds firmly in his beak.

Animals engaged in taunting behavior, i.e., displaying their outstretched tongues, surround Scenes 24 through 28, and especially Scene 25, which illustrates the meeting between Harold and King Edward, apparently commenting negatively on Harold's penitent demeanor. It is also likely that one of the patron's ultimate goals in representing these mocking animals included the exposure of Edward as the root cause of the festering rancor and the obstinate determination on the part of the two pretenders, William and Harold, to pursue their goals no matter the cost.

Below Scene 29, the bird with a twisted neck caught behind a bar decorated with a zigzag pattern is another bit of drollery that enriches the central field while hinting at William's devious resolutions. Indeed, by placing Harold immediately above the bird detained by these special posts, it is suggested that, aware of Harold's every move, William would make sure that the bird's sorry fate befell Harold as soon as he (Harold) accepted the crown. The appearance of Haley's comet in the sky in the late winter of 1066 was a fortuitous event for William because of the malevolent effects ascribed to this heavenly body. Additionally, the comet and the fish (an iteration of the zodiacal sign of Pisces) were cleverly used to bracket Scene 33 in which Harold sits crookedly on his tottering throne. The comet on one side, the sign of Pisces on the other, and the phantom fleet below, proved ingenious devices that may have been used to suggest the approximate timeframe when Harold learned that William was building a fleet to invade England.

Armed with warnings and advice, the viewer/reader is about to discover the next part of the Tapestry, and to meet Odo, the most likely patron of the Tapestry, who presents a version of the events leading to the Conquest of England that Paul Zumthor qualified as being "*tendencieuse*." Indeed, Odo, who probably closely supervised the design of the Tapestry, seems to have painstakingly prepared the stage for the final act of the epic. No longer content to ridicule and disparage others, including William, often

through the use of covert ironic and even sarcastic barbs, Odo was about to exalt his own, and perhaps exaggerated, version of the role he played in the Conquest of England.

¹ Gameson (1997): 160.

² Terkla (1995): 264.

³ For the symbolism of the dog, see above Chap. 3, n. 4.

⁴ For the symbolic meaning of changes in hairstyles, see above Chap. 4, n. 95.

⁵ Saul, ed. (1997): 74-75; R. A. Brown (2000): 165-167, 170-171.

⁶ For the evolution of the relationship between William and Odo, see Bates (1975): 2; Zumthor (1978): 411-412; Darlington and McGurk, eds., 3 (1998): 53; Rud (2002): 36.

⁷ McNulty (1989): 107.

⁸ For the quote, see McNulty (1989): 107.

⁹ Abraham and Létienne (1929): 507; McNulty (1989): 29 and 107; Terkla (1995): 269-270, 277.

¹⁰ For Harold's character and personality, see above Chap. 2, n. 122.

¹¹ Garnier, I (1982): 95-98.

¹² Herrmann (1964): 43-44.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 45.

¹⁴ For the first quote, see Chefneux (1934): 21; for the second one, see McNulty (1989): 29.

¹⁵ Bernstein (1986): 132.

¹⁶ For *The Wolf and the Crane*, see Terkla (1995): 272; for *The Fox and the Crow*, see Terkla (1995): 269.

¹⁷ McNulty (1989): 27-29.

¹⁸ Lewis (1999): 68.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 68.

²⁰ Wissolik (1979): 90.

²¹ Bruce (1856): 28; Fowke (1913): 72; Martin Holmes, "Review of *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehensive Survey*," Sir Frank Stenton, ed., *Medieval Archaeology* 1 (1957): 178-182, esp. 180; Parisse (1983): 47, 63; and esp. Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 72-73.

²² Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. (1964): 8.

²³ Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., II (1969): 136.

²⁴ For the meeting between Edward and Harold, see Brooks and Walker, Gameson, ed. (1997): 72.

²⁵ For the symbolic meaning of hand gestures, see Garnier, I (1982): 212; Garnier, II (1989): 51.

²⁶ For a humble stance and gestures of humility, see Garnier, I (1982): 141; Schmitt (1990): 58-59.

²⁷ Lewis (1999): 105.

²⁸ Garnier, I (1982): 144-145; Garnier, II (1989): 94-98.

²⁹ Pastoureau (1991): 27-30, 43; Gaston Duchet-Suchaux, *Bestiaire roman* (1992): 24; Pastoureau (1995): 20-21, 131, n. 6; Terkla (1995): 268.

³⁰ For the quotes, see Bernstein (1986): 125.

³¹ Terkla (1995): 268.

³² McNulty (1989): 109.

³³ For Odo's rebellious activities, see note 6 above.

³⁴ For the quote, see Bishop and Durant (1966): 6.

³⁵ Lewis (1989): 106-107.

³⁶ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 195. For the events preceding the Norman invasion, see J. Laporte, "Les opérations navales en Manche et Mer du Nord pendant l'année 1066," *Annales de Normandie*, 17 (1967): 2-36; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2(1969): 170; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds., (1972): 6; David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (1989): 65.

³⁷ For the quote, see Stenton (1957): 16.

- ³⁸ For the quote, see Wilson (1985): 183, n. 78; For the reversal of the scenes and its possible meaning, see Fowke (1913): 83; Anna Maria Cetto, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1970): 8, who posited that the reversal of the scene was necessitated by the placement of the Tapestry in the Bayeux Cathedral; Bernstein (1986): 20; Grape (1994): 70; Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 80; Gameson (1997): 195.
- ³⁹ For the events surrounding Edward's death and Harold accession to the throne, see ASC, "C" "D" "E", sub anno 1066; F. Michel, *Chroniques Anglo-Normandes*, 2(1840): 223054; Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed. 1(1848): 224; Freeman, 3(1869): 29-49, 576-97; Eadmer, Rule, ed. (1884): 8; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 133; Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (1970): 254-55; Bernstein (1986): 20, 121; Lewis (1989): 110; McLynn (1999): 175-177; Lewis (1999): 112-13.
- ⁴⁰ *Vita Edwardi*, Barlow, ed. and trans. (1992): 116-124.
- ⁴¹ For Edward's death, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 9; Fowke (1913): 78; R. A. Brown (1977): 59-61; Wilson (1985): 198; Freeman, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 13; Grape (1994): 122; Foys (1998): 316-317.
- ⁴² Garnier, II (1989): 70.
- ⁴³ For combined hand gestures, see Garnier, I (1982): 212; Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 102.
- ⁴⁴ Wilson (1985): 183, 198; ASC, "E," Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker, eds., (1986): 140; McLynn (1999): 176-177.
- ⁴⁵ Brown (1984): 59.
- ⁴⁶ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 172.
- ⁴⁷ Garnier, II (1989): 67-72.
- ⁴⁸ Bernstein (1986): 128.
- ⁴⁹ Fowke (1913): 83.
- ⁵⁰ McNulty (1989): 17, 111.
- ⁵¹ Yapp (1987): 58.
- ⁵² For the birds with legs, see early drawings of the Tapestry in Montfaucon, II (1730): passim; Charles Stothard, "Bayeux Tapestry Delineated," published in *Vetusta Monumenta*, 6 (1885).
- ⁵³ For the *caladrius*, see *Physiologus, Versio B.*, Carmody, ed. (1939): 5; *Physiologus, Versio Y*, Carmody, ed. (1941): 5; see also Lecouteux (1993): 35-36, 165; Bianciotto (1995): 24.
- ⁵⁴ According to Musset (2002): 162, who does not give his source(s), ten days elapsed between the consecration of the Church of St. Peter Apostle (28 Dec. 1065) and Harold's crowning (6 Jan. 1066).
- ⁵⁵ For the meaning of the hand of God above the church, see Bruce (1856): 74; Jean Verrier, *The Bayeux Embroidery known as Queen Mathilda's Tapestry* (1946): 16; Maclagan, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1949): 11; Wilson (1985): 182.
- ⁵⁶ Douglas (1964): 325-36.
- ⁵⁷ McNulty (1989): 17.
- ⁵⁸ Bernstein (1986) : 125; Terkla (1995): 268.
- ⁵⁹ Bernstein (1986): 87; McNulty (1989): 109.
- ⁶⁰ McLynn (1999): 177.
- ⁶¹ Freeman, 3 (1875): 602.
- ⁶² Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 133; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 146; Stenton (1957): 17; Brown, "The Bayeux Tapestry: History or Propaganda?" *The Anglo-Saxon; Synthesis and Achievement*, J. D. Woods and D. Pelteret, eds. (1985): 21; Wilson (1985): 183.
- ⁶³ Bernstein (1986): 126.
- ⁶⁴ McNulty (1989): 111.
- ⁶⁵ Terkla (1995): 268.
- ⁶⁶ Lewis (1999): 111.
- ⁶⁷ Douglas (1964): 181; Fowke (1913): 85; McLynn (1999): 177; Saul (1997): 59.
- ⁶⁸ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville (1952): 146; see also McLynn (1999): 177.
- ⁶⁹ Stigant or Ealdred? Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed. 1(1848): 224; Freeman, 3 (1869): 613-615; Fowke (1913): 87; Parisse (1983): 104; Foys (1998): 323-34; Lewis (1999): 112-13; McLynn (1999): 177; R. A. Brown(2000): 157; Musset (2002): 174.

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- ⁷⁰ McLynn (1999): 177.
- ⁷¹ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed (1952): 146; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. (1969): 136-138.
- ⁷² For Stigant's excommunication, see Stenton (1957): 12; Lewis (1999): 112-113.
- ⁷³ Lewis (1999): 112-113; Musset (2002): 174; Wilson (1985): 182.
- ⁷⁴ Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 103.
- ⁷⁵ For the identity of the men, see *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 819-810.
- ⁷⁶ For the general meaning of left vs. right, see Girault (1993): 8; Garnier, I (1982): 88-91; Bouttier (1995): 18. For the meaning of the placement of the men, see Garnier, I (1982): 102-103; For the symbolism of the left hand in Scene 30, see Cowdrey, in Gameson ed. (1997): 103; and Lewis (1999): 109.
- ⁷⁷ McNulty (1989): 111.
- ⁷⁸ Garnier, I (1982): 99.
- ⁷⁹ Freeman, 3 (1875): 645-650; Fowke (1913): 88-89; McNulty (1989): 22; Foy (1998): 328.
- ⁸⁰ Lewis (1999): 113, and n. 27.
- ⁸¹ For the meaning of the comet with streaming "hair," see Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 133; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 206-208; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., II (1969): 134. For the quote, see *Chronica de mailros*, Joseph Stevenson, ed. (1835): 70, quoted in William J. Brandt, *The Shape of Medieval History. Studies in Modes of Perception* (1966): 53, and in Lewis (1999): 113.
- ⁸² For the relationship between William and Odo, see above n. 6.
- ⁸³ Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 103.
- ⁸⁴ Grape (1994): 57.
- ⁸⁵ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 154.
- ⁸⁶ Dodwell (1966): 559.
- ⁸⁷ McNulty (1989): 71.
- ⁸⁸ Grape (1994): 42.
- ⁸⁹ Lewis (1999): 114.
- ⁹⁰ McNulty (1989): 21.
- ⁹¹ *Ibidem*, 111.
- ⁹² Yapp (1987): 32.
- ⁹³ Fowke (1913): 90.
- ⁹⁴ Garnier, I (1982): 185.
- ⁹⁵ McNulty (1989): 62-63.
- ⁹⁶ Fowke (1913): 91.
- ⁹⁷ Garnier I (1982): 136.
- ⁹⁸ McNulty (1989): 113.
- ⁹⁹ Herrmann (1964): 46.
- ¹⁰⁰ For the fishes as zodiacal signs, see Albert Levé, *La Tapisserie de la reine Mathilde, dite la Tapisserie de Bayeux* (1919): 122; Jean Verrier, *The Bayeux Embroidery known as Queen Mathilda's Tapestry* (1946): 7; Gibbs-Smith, Stenton, ed. (1957): 169; Yapp (1987): 58-59; McNulty (1989): 21-22, 42.
- ¹⁰¹ Hicks (1992): 256.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM BUILDS THE INVASION FLEET

AND SAILS TO ENGLAND

SCENES 35 - 39

The Bayeux Tapestry was designed to enshrine a highly selective interpretation of what happened, and to make the interpretation normative...The Bayeux Tapestry is an objective record of how some people wanted to conceive the events in question, and correspondingly of how certain others came to perceive them...The historicity of the Bayeux Tapestry in an eleventh-century context is the history that it makes. The principal question we should, therefore, ask is: what is the history that it creates?¹

The Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry
Richard Gameson

The most misleading of all mistakes in the interpretation of the Tapestry is the claim that the borders cannot be related to the main story. This claim is demonstrably unsupportable.²

The Narrative Art of the Bayeux Tapestry Master
J. Bard McNulty

The history that the Bayeux Tapestry offers to the gaze of the observer is arguably the patron's, most likely Odo's, "highly selective interpretation" of the events, prior to and during the Battle of Hastings, which led to the Norman Conquest of England. From Scene 1 to Scene 33, one may contend that the Tapestry's main character is Harold. Assuredly, his actions seem to play an important role in determining the development of events. Scene 34 is a short scene, yet a pivotal one, since, according to the Tapestry, the decision to build the Norman fleet and invade England was contingent on the reports that William's informer(s) were bringing to him. While Wilson argues that, from Scene 35 onwards, "the Tapestry tells the story of William of Normandy and of the Conquest of England," this story is presented from a specific point of view, probably proffered by the patron.³ Indeed, in Scene 35, it is Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, who is represented prominently, and for the first time. Yet, in spite of his stature and prominence in this first scene directly concerned with the Conquest, one may wonder why Odo is not named in

this particular scene. Assuredly, if he is the patron, Odo had his own personal reasons for omitting his name, which brings one back to Gameson's suggestion that the Tapestry is not history *per se*; rather it is someone's, probably Odo's, highly interpretive, yet normative version of history.

When one reads the events depicted in the Tapestry through the filter imposed upon them by the patron, one should also pause to gaze at the borders and notice their possible relationship with the main field. To the one who denies such a relationship, McNulty replies firmly that his/her "claim is demonstrably unsupportable."⁴ A thorough reading of the borders has shown tentatively that the symbolic meaning of the pictographs may be more focused when the events in the main field demand it, or when extra, yet covert, help was needed to make the audience comprehend the events being portrayed in the central narrative in a manner more suitable to patron's agenda.

In Chapter 6, the borders continue to be used to provide additional commentaries. Sometimes the information may be of a personal nature, as some animals and their actions seem to both reflect and inflect the episodes depicted in the main narrative and give an insight into the mentality and moods of the participants. At other times, the pictographs in the borders may serve to indicate the general atmosphere of the scene and the set of emotions that are gaining ascendancy at a given moment. Similar to the previous scenes, the animal pictographs in the borders are often repeated. In the case of Scenes 35 through 39, there seems to be a higher concentration of predatory animals. Yet their placement, position and actions are varied enough to offer, to a meticulous reader, titillating tidbits of information concerning the participants and the events depicted in the main field. The ironic and at times acerbic comments are often directed surreptitiously at William.

Additionally, the reader/viewer should keep in mind that while Harold is not physically present in Scenes 35 through 39, in all probability he continues to be represented vicariously through symbols of royalty, such as the lion or the eagle, or by the symbol of Wessex, i.e., the dragon. It seems that, while depicted in human form, William is also present in the borders through his symbol, i.e., the winged lion. Similarly, a variety of birds engaged in various endeavors, may inflect the ambiance of the scene, or engage the gaze of the viewer/reader by the directed movements of their wings to look closely upon some areas of the scenes.

1. SCENE 35: “*HIC WILLELM DVX IVSSIT NAVES EDIFICARE*”

Most near contemporary written sources mention that a decision to assemble or build a great fleet was reached shortly after William received news from England.⁵ Scene 35 combines the meeting of William and an informer, with the decision to prepare the invasion of England. Scene 35 is divided in two distinct parts: first the meeting in William’s stateroom, in which William, and a companion, whom researchers have tentatively identified as Odo, receives the informer and makes the decision to build the fleet;⁶ secondly, the felling of trees and the building of ships. In the first part, William is shown in profile, as he receives a man bearing news of Harold and England in a large stateroom, the ceiling of which is adorned with a striped pattern, leaving no doubt about the preponderant Norman influence pervading the room. The well-dressed man, arriving from England, is probably one of the magnates, to whom Fowke refers as “one of the strangers whom Harold’s clemency had allowed to remain in the land,” and who “took the earliest opportunity of requiting his kindness” by reporting his (Harold’s) actions as king, to William.⁷ Once more, it seems worthwhile to analyze the placement, posture and gestures of the participants in an attempt to bring clarity to this scene.

Two figures, those of William and Odo, share the center of Scene 35, as they are placed below and on either side of a structure adorning the top of the canopy under which they sit. On William’s left, slightly behind, and somewhat higher than him, Bishop Odo, William’s half-brother is facing the audience. On William’s right, the informer is standing in profile while looking fixedly at Odo. William’s head is turned to the right (his left) in order to gaze at Odo who, although facing the audience, has turned his head slightly towards William. To Odo’s left, a worker holding an axe is also looking intently at Odo, as he prepares to obey the order to start cutting trees and building ships.

As explicated earlier, meetings, in which important affairs of state are discussed, often depict hand gestures that form a matrix of interest and concern, linking the participants. With his right hand resting on his hip, a gesture that people in power often display in medieval imagery, William manifests his self-assurance, and, as Garnier mentions, “une fermeté dans la volonté, une détermination dans l’exercice de son pouvoir personnel.”⁸ The news brought by the man on the left seems to have prompted William’s determination to implement his decision to invade England. Indeed, while William’s head is turned toward Odo, his left hand points to the bearer of news, as though he were

telling Odo that it was necessary to act upon the man's report and take the necessary steps toward rectifying Harold's arrogant and treacherous behavior. Thus, through the combined gestures of his hands, William demonstrates his ability to make a quick decision, a quality necessary in a leader. The man/spy demonstrates that he agrees with William's decision through a combination of gestures -- his left hand palm open to show his intention to cooperate, and the right one pointing at William and ultimately at the next part of the scene. Similarly, Odo makes the gesture of complete accord with his right hand, while pointing to the object of his agreement on the right, i.e., the area of the scene where the decision to cut down trees and build a fleet is being implemented.

At first glance, and because of his slightly larger size and posture, one may agree with Cowdrey's, Grape's and Lewis' assessments of the scene that, according to the Tapestry, Odo was the one who was ultimately responsible for the building of the fleet and by extension for the Conquest of England.⁹ However, as frequently noted, a certain ambiguity, perhaps willed by the patron, i.e., presumably Odo, seems to have penetrated the scene. First, an element of doubt is introduced. William has lost his peculiar Norman hairstyle. As already indicated in Scene 23, William's longer hairstyle, covering the back of his head, removes one of the most obvious distinguishing marks between Normans and Anglo-Saxons. The loss of a singularizing element may be a way, perhaps Odo's, to continue to question surreptitiously the legitimacy of William's rule over England.¹⁰

Secondly, an analysis of the gestures and postures of the participants seems to demonstrate that Odo is not having the final say, and that he is only passing on William's orders. If one follows the hand gestures of the three men carefully, and studies their postures, one may note that Odo is looking at his half-brother, perhaps with some condescendence, but nonetheless looking at him. Additionally, he performs the gesture of agreement with the open palm of his right hand, while pointing with his left index finger to the object of their agreement, i.e., the building of a fleet. Thus, with the gesture of his left hand, Odo seems to be relaying William's decision, prompted by their hearing the news from England, and not giving the order, in an effort not to assume a role equivalent to William's.¹¹ There is no doubt that Odo wanted it known that he played an important part in the Conquest by providing 100 ships.¹² Yet, according to Scene 35, Odo was careful not to outshine William by taking a position in the background and remaining unnamed in the inscription. Although Odo may have harbored a strong desire

to promote himself, the manner of his depiction demonstrates a wish to distance himself surreptitiously from the preparations of the invasion. By extension, Odo was also distancing himself from the results of the Conquest, declining any responsibility or blame for William's actions, at a time when the legitimacy of his (William's) rule remained open to question.

In the second part of Scene 35, woodworkers are felling trees, stripping them of their branches and turning them into planks, while other craftsmen are building the boats. Much has already been written about ships and ship building at the time of the Norman Conquest.¹³ However, turning one's observation to the marginal areas of Scene 35 may provide additional information and/or a comical or possibly a sarcastic commentary on the efforts of William and his men.

1.1. SCENE 35: Inscriptions and Animal Pictographs in the Upper Border

A bird, pointing with its left wing at the men gathered in the first part of Scene 35, was the last pictograph above Scene 34, and serves to introduce the next scene. Flanking this bird on both sides, and framed between two diagonal bars, drooping and deformed fleurons/fleurs-de-lis seem to emphasize the deleterious consequences of the actions being discussed below, brought about by William, i.e., a diminution/disappearance of God's graces from the events depicted in the man field. Immediately after the wilting vegetation, the margin is filled with the inscription announcing that "HERE DUKE WILLIAM ORDERED THE BUILDING OF SHIPS." After the inscription, the illustration of animals resumes with a bird whose movements and position are identical to those of the bird at the end of Scene 34. These two birds with wings pointed downwards, seem to function as a frame emphasizing the importance of the scene below and directing the gaze of the observers to the men involved in the decision to build the invading fleet.

Additionally, starting with the second part of Scene 35, the fleurons and fleurs-de-lis, which lately were ghostly, deformed, and/or had proliferated into distorted growth, have now completely disappeared from the borders. If one refers to Garnier's research, fleurs-de-lis, located in the proximity of a royal person, indicate that the person is chosen by God to rule.¹⁴ Perhaps the sudden disappearance of fleurs-de-lis in connection with William and his kingship serves to intimate symbolically that, from this point on, the kings who rule over England are not sanctioned by God. While apparently contradictory to some elements in later scenes, such as the banner sent to William by Pope Alexander II

(God's representative on earth) who supported William's designs on England, the lack of the fleur-de-lis is probably a deleterious innuendo, perhaps Odo's.¹⁵ There is no doubt that Odo offended William greatly prior to 1082, perhaps by meddling in affairs between him (William) and his sons and heirs. Indeed, after 1077, Odo dedicated himself to defend the rights of William's eldest son, Robert Curthose, to the English Crown. Odo's staunch defense of Robert was against William's wishes and his choice of his younger son, William Rufus, to succeed him.¹⁶ Accordingly, the lack of fleur-de-lis may read as a suggestion, perhaps Odo's, that God did not approve of William's rule over England.

Above the men felling the tree, an animal, resembling a young dog, seems to hesitate to advance toward another dog effecting the natural and instinctive response of a predator being surprised and fearful. Indeed, this dog, its back arched, its ears raised, and its eyes wide open as though startled, seems to be responding to danger. Yet, on the surface, the other animal does not appear to be bent on mayhem, unless the young dog on the left -- probably a metaphor for William, if one follows the movement of the narrative, since William will be moving from left to right to go to England -- is not what it pretends to be and is instead a "wolf in sheep's clothing." It is probable that Harold may have expressed his displeasure and anger when he heard about William's preparations to invade England.

Next to the dogs, a pair of affronted birds twists their neck to preen their wings, while a large hound turns its head back to gaze at the scene. The birds with their relatively long neck, curved beaks and large talons, are carrion birds, probably vultures, preening and patiently waiting to appease their hunger. The increased frequency of vultures in the borders as the battle of Hastings grows nearer should have come as no surprise to the medieval observer. In medieval culture, vultures were reputed "to tell from military musterings that men were about to die, so they followed armies in hungry queues."¹⁷ Thus, the vultures waited and watched as the workers engaged in the building of William's fleet; and two great hounds, one looking back at the carrion birds, howled a premonitory warning.

1.2. SCENE 35: A Predatory Beast, Paired Winged Lions, Vultures and Howling Hounds in the Lower Border

The beast that greets the audience at the beginning of the border below Scene 35, is the second of a pair, the first one being below the tree that separates Scenes 34 and 35.

The two affronted predators with their tails raised are not completely alike, and except for the tufted tails, they look more like dogs than lions. Like the beast in the lower border of Scene 25, the animal on the left does not seem to have ears. The lack of ears suggests that this *canis* may symbolize a ruthless person unwilling to listen, while proceeding toward another equally relentless opponent, symbolized by the dog on the right, who also appears to be lacking the necessary implements to hear. Both the posture, leaning backwards, and the questioning facial appearance seem to suggest that, like the dog in the upper border, the predator on the right is surprised and attempting to back away. Dogs and lions were tentatively associated with both William and Harold before this scene. In this case, the two animals whose appearance was probably corrupted purposefully by giving it a mixture of features belonging to dogs and lions, may forewarn the reader/viewer about the respective political stands that William and Harold have decided to take. On one side, William refuses to hear any detractive or detrimental comment concerning his attempt to gain the English throne. On the other side, Harold who is now king, is beyond hearing any more entreaties from William. Thus, like the surprised beast, part lion/part dog, the royal *canaille* (Harold) expresses his surprise that another *canaille* (William), who pants with envy for the throne, has started to forge ahead in order to steal the royal prize from him.

Two winged lions are illustrated next to the lions. One of these winged lions is positioned directly below the space encompassing William and Odo, and the other, partly below the Norman ready to obey William's command. Their placements seem to leave no doubt that, as Bernstein suspected, the two animals are signs of the presence of William and the Normans. The three fleurons/fleurs-de-lis flanking and separating the two winged beasts, have taken a more ghostly appearance, as though God's approval of the English kings was on the wane, and the reality and solidity of the English succession was being questioned, while the men above were discussing the best way to grasp it. In spite of the difficulty to consider the symbolic value of color within the context of the Tapestry, the black color of the two sets of animals, i.e., the winged lions and the vultures, was probably not chosen randomly and cannot be ignored. Black is the negation of all colors, the void much feared by people for whom nights were truly dark and fearsome.¹⁸ Thus, these animals were probably meant to express the apprehension, and even fear, connected with the preparation for the invasion of England. Additionally, the

two dark winged lions may have been appropriate to remind a post-Conquest audience, mostly made up of magnates and courtiers, of the trouble and tribulations caused by the new Norman dynasty. One may wonder why Odo would be associated with winged black lions, as the placement of the beast on the left seems to indicate. However, a scrutiny of the beasts' wings suggests that they may have been used to point out areas of concern to the audience. By following without deviation the directions indicated by their wings, one discovers that both beasts point up at William with one wing, and at the next part of the scene with the other, thus connecting William through emblematic, aggressive beasts of ill-omen (primarily because of their colors), to the felling of trees, the building of ships, and the decision to invade England. This clever association may have been necessary to convey a latent message to the audience, especially in view of the events explained above, which were occurring at the time of the Tapestry's production. Thus, the main field seems to promote Odo's role in the decision to build the fleet, a role that he truly played. Yet, while the tonsure gives the man away as Odo, the inscription does not reveal the identity of the man who, as Fowke mentions, the early writer, "Lancelot, took to be Robert, Count of Mortain."¹⁹

The next animals are affronted black birds, probably carrion eaters. The vulture-like bird on the left is pulling with its beak on a protrusion growing out of the main, and otherwise lifeless branch, perhaps in imitation of the woodcutters trimming the branches from the felled trees above. In the meantime, the other carrion bird on the right is intently watching the other bird's actions. It probably was no accident that dark vultures, which usually feed on decaying meat, were placed next to dark colored winged lions. Perhaps, such association was meant to insinuate that a dark enterprise like the invasion of England was followed naturally by many deaths and decaying corpses on which these birds would feast, and that William was really the cause of it all.

The strange fleuron with a heart shape at its center is the last plant life resembling a fleur-de-lis in the Tapestry, perhaps indicating that, notwithstanding the support of Pope Alexander II, from the moment William started building the fleet to invade England, God's grace no longer flowed in the direction of William and his descendants.²⁰ The last animal pictographs in the lower border of Scene 35 are two howling hounds. These two animals looking away from each other are located below the boats being built. While McNulty ignores the other animals in the border of this scene, he makes a point to note

that “the two beasts (dogs?) facing in opposite directions and howling, with their tails between their legs, are sufficiently distinctive to suggest special meaning.”²¹ Indeed, McNulty goes even so far as positing that:

In conjunction with the construction of the invasion fleet in the main panel, the beast facing left may be seen as responding to the evils in the earlier part of the narrative that have led to the present need for building invasion craft; and the beast facing right, the perils and mortal combat that lie ahead when the fleet reaches England.²²

McNulty’s interpretation is imaginative. However, it has already been shown that dogs were associated with both William and Harold on several occasions. These two dogs may portray vicariously the two *canailles* (William and Harold) who have gone their separate ways and, like the other two hounds in the upper border at the junction of Scenes 35 and 36, are now howling to attract the attention of their friends and relatives and invite them to join in the fray. On a natural level, dogs howl when they sense death. However, taking into account the previously discussed negative symbolism associated with the dog, the dogs’ tails tucked between their legs may be another sarcasm assimilating, unflatteringly, William and Harold to low-born cowardly beasts, “howling” in an effort to attract their respective followers to their aid.

In Scenes 35 through 39, the borders continue to play their role, qualifying with their trenchant verve the events depicted in the main panel. Thus, above Scene 35, with their wings pointing downwards in the direction of the scene, the birds framing the stateroom and pointing to the meeting may have served to suggest its importance. Other types of animals depicted in the borders, i.e., lions, winged lions, hounds and vultures, seem particularly suited to the results of the discussion, i.e., the decision to invade England and to the vagaries associated with war and its preparation. In addition, the postures and actions of these animals seem to suggest the coming mayhem which goes beyond the apparently benign undertaking of ship building. The pair of dogs (upper border) and lion/dogs (lower border) at the beginning of the borders of Scene 35, were probably meant to anticipate and illustrate Harold’s surprise when he later came face to face with William. In spite of Odo’s prominent presence in the central field and of the directional gestures being performed by the animals, William (the dark-colored, winged lions pointing with their wings) was the only one named in the inscription of Scene 35 as having decided to start building the fleet. As preparations for war often lead to war, and

wars bring death and decay (the vulture tearing at the protrusion on a branch below), and as discontent with the post-Conquest administration grew, the wilting, and final disappearance of fleur-de-lis and fleurons from the borders was probably meant to imply that for William and his heirs, the flow of God's grace had dwindled and finally stopped. Perhaps having serious doubts about the integrity and enduring qualities of William's newly founded dynasty, Odo may have attempted and probably managed to convey his inner feelings through the use of animal pictographs ostensibly meant to symbolize the tense and even hostile relationship between William and Harold, but in reality aimed at satirizing William and his heirs who were at each other's throats. Likewise, Odo seems to suggest that the withholding of God's grace, symbolized by the wilting and disappearing fleur-de-lis, ensued from the defects and "sins" of the men in power. Indeed, it may have been the patron's intent to send the message that, after twenty odd years of Norman rule, the men who governed England were flawed, and were no better than howling dogs (upper and lower borders) who call their friends and associates to support their personal ambitions.

2. **SCENE 36: "HIC TRAHVNT NAVES AD MARE"**

A tree is used as an element to effect the separation between the building of the vessels and their launching through an ingenious pulley and rope mechanism attached to a post set in the water.²³ Only two figureheads adorn the newly built ships, and one of them sticks its tongue out, not only at the men pulling the boats, but also in the direction of England, as though to taunt the Anglo-Saxons on the other side of the Channel. The men who are pulling the boats are presumably Norman, or at least pro-Norman, since they are helping William's war effort. Yet, the hair of these workmen is not styled in the Norman fashion. The blurring of differences, which negates ethnicity, may have been a way to indicate that the invasion was a concerted effort, and that William had the support of many allies, acquired through a combination of bribery, blackmail and promises of land and wealth, all common practices in medieval ruling circles.²⁴

2.1. **SCENE 36: Animal Pictographs in the Upper and Lower Borders**

Except for McNulty's statement quoted above, the borders of Scene 36 have not been analyzed. A howling dog (the second of a pair), its head turned to the right, welcomes the viewer/reader to the upper border, as though he were attempting to send a

warning to the two large birds, of an indeterminate species, that follow him. These two birds appear to be engaged in squawking angrily, as they face each other and point at the men who are bringing the vessels of the fleet being formed to invade England. These two birds and their actions seem to mimic the actions of the courtiers and newsmongers in the process of gossiping and perhaps voicing their concerns and dissent regarding the preparations to invade England.

At the beginning of Scene 36, in the lower border, two majestic beasts harboring the distinctive beaks attributed to griffins, seem to stand guard under the newly built boat being brought to sea. The griffins, placed as though they were supporting the new vessels as they were pulled into the water, seem to imply through their symbolism, the aggressive use to which these ships were about to be put, i.e., to bring a greedy, avaricious leader (William) and his Norman and pro-Norman followers to plunder the riches of England.²⁵ Two birds, probably vultures, with a dark plumage are pecking the ground at their feet while attempting to hide under one of their wings. The dark carrion eaters do not relieve the anxiety caused by the vessels being set afloat. These two sets of animals seem to increase the uneasiness and foreboding associated with “perils” and “mortal combats” that the pictographs in the borders of Scene 35 already expressed.²⁶ Indeed, the burden is acute and is emphasized by the dark color of the vultures that would naturally follow an army on the march sensing instinctively that they would soon feast on the remains of the slain.²⁷

The main panel is a straightforward representation of men setting boats afloat, and, except for the protruding mocking tongues of one of the monstrous figureheads, offers little in the manner of a commentary. However, the borders seem to warn the audience (the dog and birds above), and portend the coming of disturbing events. Indeed, aggressive, cruel and greedy leaders (symbolized by the griffins) were getting ready to set out and gather gold and property (one of the symbolic functions of the griffin).²⁸ As a result, men would lose their lives, and voracious, flesh eating birds would have a feast.

3. ***SCENE 37: “ISTI PORTANT ARMAS AD NAVES ET HIC TRAHVNT CARRVM CVM VINO ET ARMIS”***

A strange architectural structure divides Scene 36 from Scene 37. This structure has been the subject of several inquiries. Is it a “loge”?²⁹ “a type of “kiosque”?³⁰ one of the “representations of rather grand buildings” downsized to accommodate the

Tapestry?³¹ A misunderstood structure from the column of Trajan ?³² Or a structure so unrecognizable that it better be left “unidentified”?³³ I believe it could be a type of gate made to resemble a triumphal arch. It seems appropriate to include a triumphal arch heralding William’s future victory over Harold on the way to William’s greatest accomplishment. However, it is rather pompous as it stands there unnecessarily, since the column to which the men are attaching the boats would have amply sufficed to separate the two scenes. This forlorn structure, resembling a triumphal entranceway, may have been designed to mock William and his ambitious enterprise, as it would have been necessary for William and his men to pass through this gateway before they went on their expedition, not after they had won.

The display of men carrying weapons and arms, and pulling a wagon loaded with cask(s), illustrates William’s continuing preparations for the invasion. It also demonstrates that William was taking no chances in providing not only for the necessities of war (the weapons and armors), but also for the relaxation of his men or the dulling of their anxieties before the battle (the cask and pig skin perhaps full of the famous Norman apple brandy). Superficial analysis of Scene 37 already provides interesting bits of information to the student of medieval architecture, armaments and modes of transportation. However, the main field is not completely mute concerning the feelings and states of mind of the participants as they approached the final moment before embarking. The facial features of the men carrying the implements of war reflect varied emotions ranging from indifference, to contentment (the men with smiles on their faces), fatigue and anxiety. Perhaps an examination of the borders will reveal nuances, which prudence would have precluded the patron from including in the central narrative field.

3.1. SCENE 37: Lions and Birds in the Upper Border

There is no mention of the animals in the upper border, except McNulty’s comment that “the motif of balanced figures, continued.”³⁴ After the boats are built, a sense of anticipation seems to have entered the upper border. The facial features as well as the actions of the two lions facing each other, though somewhat distorted, seem to imply an eagerness to engage in a contest. The lion on the left appears to be ready to pounce on the lion on the right that is crouching, ready for the onslaught. One may wonder if the distorted appearances of these two lions were meant to insinuate that the

minds and souls of the two royals were warped, and that they were making a game out of this adventure. Perhaps, the squawking birds, pointing down with their wings towards the soldiers below, were trying to attract the attention of the two sets of lions flanking them on each side. However, like the first pair of lions on the left, the lions on the right are too fixated on their own endeavors to show any sign of having seen or heard the birds calling them, while pointing at them with one of their wings. Similarly, William and Harold (the lions) were too involved with themselves and in achieving their goals to care about the fate of the men marching below, many towards their deaths, or to pay attention to the people (the birds) whose advice they refused to hear, and/or even rejected. One more detail in the representation of the last pair of lions is worth mentioning: showing their mutual contempt, these lions seem to be sticking out their tongues at each other. It is not surprising that, like William and Harold, these two royal symbols, one ready to pounce on the other, exhibit mutual signs of disdain and spite.

3.2. SCENE 37: Lions and Birds in the Lower Border

At first glance, since the lower border contains the same animals as the upper one, it seems superfluous to examine it. However, the position and actions of the animals differ and need to be clarified. In a crouching position, the lion on the left has turned its head to the left and is in the process of biting its tail, as though to restrain itself from uttering sounds. The head of the lion on the right is also turned backwards, but this lion seems preoccupied in trying to catch its tail, and has not yet succeeded. Because of their placements, and because William is moving from left to right to reach Harold, the lion on the left may symbolize William who is purposefully quiet about his preparations to invade England. Following a similar mode of reasoning, the lion on the right may represent Harold whose attention is divided, and who is still involved metaphorically in “chasing his own tail,” as he would have been when wondering what to do about the double menace he was facing: on one side, from Harald Hardrada and his renegade brother Tostig; and on the other, from William and his allies.

Next to the lions, birds are engaged in biting on an appendage that McNulty identified as grapes, commenting that “grapes commonly appear on ancient sarcophagi and capitals,” and that “this motif ...might suggest understandably itself where wine is an important theme, as here.”³⁵ Indeed, according to recent research, large vineyards,

which probably produced wine of a “mediocre” quality, grew on Norman land in the late eleventh century.³⁶ Yet, contrary to McNulty’s observation, there are no grapes visible in this part of the Tapestry, and no loss of stitching which may have accounted for the disappearance of the grapes. Instead of grapes, there is only one stem with one small ball-like protuberance at its end for each bird. Rather than a single grape, could this round protuberance represent another type of fruit, perhaps a small apple, from which cider and a potent alcohol (known today as Calvados), not wine, were probably made then, and are still being made in Normandy? Undoubtedly, it would be remarkable if the casks were transporting wine, since wine produced through the unsophisticated methods in use in contemporary Normandy would surely have soured during transport. In final analysis, it seems that the type of fruit is immaterial. However, the actions of the birds and the symbolism inherent to the act of appropriating an object one covets are major factors in interpreting this part of the border. There is little doubt that, like the two birds, William and Harold were ready to pluck their rewards and reap the fruits of their labors. While probably not grapes, the fruits represented herein, are similar to those on which two birds are pecking in the lower border of Scene 22, directly below William riding toward Bayeux. One may wonder if, through the medium of birds pecking at fruit in the lower border, the patron was attempting to link two episodes; thus reminding the audience of Harold’s oath in Scene 23 at the same time that William was ready to embark and sail to England to enforce his “rights,” which stemmed from Edward’s purported promise, and were based on the oath that Harold was apparently forced to swear at Bayeux.

In addition, in a manner similar to the upper border, the wings of the pecking birds are directional as though to connect the animals in the borders, the men in the center field, and their various actions. Thus, with its wings, the pecking bird on the left is pointing up at the men and even beyond the men, to the two pairs of lions in the upper border. The pecking bird on the right uses its right wing to point to the bird facing it, and beyond the bird, to the pair of lions, while its left wing points at the pair of lions directly behind it, thus forming another matrix of concern encompassing the whole scene. It seems obvious that the birds were probably expressing the comments that were being made by William’s entourage concerning William’s and Harold’s (the lions’) behavior towards the men who were involved in defending their respective causes (the soldiers

represented in the main field), independently of the fact that none of Harold's men are present. Indeed, the fate of soldiers is the same no matter who their leaders are: they leave their home and family, prepare for war, go to fight, and often to die.

To the right of the pair of affronted pecking birds, two lions are once more playing with their tails. However, in spite of turning away from each other, in a manner similar to the first pair of lions, they are standing up. Additionally, the lion on the left is the one trying to catch its tail, while the one on the right has its tail firmly between its jaws. Thus, the roles of the two royals seem to be reversed. By this play on details, the interchangeability of their roles seems to be implied. Indeed, William was also probably "chasing his tail" at Dives, while waiting for a favorable wind to set sail, and, on the opposite shore, Harold was keeping quiet about his own preparations.

Thus performed, the reading of the border adds another dimension to the main narrative that only portrays men carrying and pulling supplies and armament toward the ships ready to sail to England. Through the medium of the borders, one is made aware that, perhaps, because of their defects, neither Harold nor William is worthy to rule. Undoubtedly, Harold had become king by what the Normans considered to be stealth; and William's aptitude to rule was strongly being questioned at the time of the Tapestry's production, when discord and "disintegration" beset the royal family.³⁷ Likewise, it seems that the lions with their tails in their mouths were suggesting that William and Harold remained mute, while trying to sort out their respective plans of action (the lions trying to catch their tails). In addition, inured to the counsels of wiser men (the birds above), William and Harold (the lions) were only thinking of gorging themselves with the riches of the land (the pecking birds below).

4. **SCENE 38: "HIC WILLELM DUX IN MAGNO NAVIGIO MARE TRANSIVIT ET VENIT AD PEVENESAE"**

Scene 38 illustrates the crossing of the Channel in a manner even more grandiose than Harold's first crossing. William's voyage was no pleasure trip, nor even a diplomatic journey, as Harold's may have been. Thus, the patron probably wanted to show the might deployed by the invading forces. A few details of the main field seem to be notable. William is at the forefront of the group of knights, and is riding a large, dark stallion followed by his men-at-arms. He has a puzzled, quizzical look on his face, as he approaches the water and the waiting vessels. Perhaps the number of ships, anywhere

from 700 to 1000 or more, depending on the source, and the sheer number of horses, livestock, and goods needed to sustain the primary onslaught must have been overwhelming even for a seasoned leader like William.³⁸ A determined look on their faces, the mixed group of men following William seems to be holding on tightly to their shields and spears. Leaving no doubt as to the identity of their leader, the last rider of the group is pointing upward at the word *WILLELM* in the inscription.

As in earlier representations in the Tapestry, most vessels in Scenes 38 and 39 are adorned with figureheads, and some of these monstrous figureheads are performing a mocking gesture, sticking their tongues out toward the right and William's goal, i.e., England. In addition, only one ship, most likely William's, seems to differ from the others by its size and appearance. Indeed it is the only ship adorned with two crosses, the bottom one framed and the top one unframed. These two crosses, placed at the top of the mast, are stacked upon each other, perhaps to signify that the expedition had received the papal blessing.³⁹ It is also the only ship to have, on its stern, a small human figure blowing a horn and holding a pennant identical to the one William was holding prior to embarking, and to display on its prow, a majestic lion's head with an extended tongue. Perhaps, the lion, symbol of royalty, performing a taunting gesture toward England and its new king, Harold, was an assessment (perhaps the patron's) of William's feelings, inwardly challenging Harold and his followers, as he (William) was about to disembark and prepare the final assault on them (Harold and his partisans).

4.1. SCENE 38: Eagles and Sails in the Upper Border.

Directly above the words *WILLELM* and *DUX* in the inscription, two eagles turning away from each other are depicted as they prepare to take flight. McNulty noted without further explanation that "...some special meaning was intended."⁴⁰ In spite of McNulty's hasty and superficial gloss, and because of their placements above the words *WILLELM* and *DUX*, it would appear that the eagles – especially the eagle on the right -- were meant to refer to the one royal pretender left to vie for the crown of England, namely, William, Duke of Normandy as he was getting ready to depart.

It is interesting to note that, even at this important juncture in the story, William is satirized through the medium of stripes, which endowed the body of the royal bird on the right closest to the figure of William in the central panel. It is as though William were being told that in spite of his royal pretension, he is and always will be a bastard. One

may wonder if Odo, the most likely patron of the Tapestry, had a hand in this design. Indeed, it seems that this commentary was meant to be specific to William rather than generic, otherwise why represent the only majestic, striped eagle in the Tapestry in close proximity to William, his title and his name? The encroaching sails take up the upper border of Scene 38 nearly to the end, when two other birds are illustrated, forming a type of bracket encapsulating William's voyage to England.

4.2. **SCENE 38: Birds, Winged Lions, Vultures, Lions... in the Lower Border**

In spite of their relatively long legs, the birds in the lower border below Scene 38, are probably a type of carrion eater that were known to accompany advancing armies in anticipation of the feast provided by the bodies of the dead left on the battlefield. In the case of Scene 38, the affronted birds with crooked necks are pecking the ground, perhaps patiently waiting for heartier fare. A pair of affronted winged lions is placed next to the carrion birds. The left one of the pair is located directly below William proudly riding on his stallion, while the lion on the right is placed below a departing vessel full of Norman soldiers, alluding again to the close symbolic relationship between winged lions, William and the Normans. While preening contentedly, the royal beasts seem to be waiting patiently for William's stallion to enter the water, taking William one step closer to his invasion of England. Together with the carrion birds, the winged lions seem to reinforce the pattern of anticipation that appears to have invaded the borders as well as the main field. Similarly, the next two birds resemble vultures, each one cowering below one of their wings, perhaps ashamed of their anticipatory lust for blood.

Of the two lions that follow, the one on the left seems to be preparing to pounce, while the one on the right appears to be backing away in surprise. In addition, the one on the left is sticking its tongue at its opponent, as though daring it to strike first. It is likely that the two animals are mimicking the typical actions and reactions of two leaders brought face to face by conflicting interests. It was also an ingenious ploy to suggest that William intended to surprise Harold all along, demonstrating with the help of the taunting lion, that he (William) had no respect for Harold. Although Harold probably expected a reaction from William after he (Harold) was crowned king, the reactions of the lion on the right suggest that Harold was ignorant of William's plans. There is little doubt that, like the lion on the right with his wide open eyes and half-open jaws, Harold was about to

be surprised, perhaps because he (Harold) had not expected that he would have to come face to face with William at such an inopportune time, i.e., so shortly after his (Harold's) victory over Harald Hardrada, when he and his men were utterly exhausted and rendered more vulnerable by their extreme fatigue.

Next, the paired birds are easily identifiable by their curved beaks as another kind of bird of prey, which usually followed closely behind an army on the move. With their beaks half open as though squalling, and with their wings all aflutter and pointing in opposite directions, these two birds seem to be trying to attract the attention of the audience, as they look with expectant rapacity at the men riding in the boats above. The bird of prey on the left signals toward the two lions on the left, while the bird on the right points to the dog chasing what appears to be a rabbit or a hare.

In his first investigation of the fables found in the Tapestry, Herrmann identified the episode of the dog chasing a hare/rabbit as the fable of "*The Old Dog and the Hare*," in which a hunter berates and punishes his old dog for letting his prey escape.⁴¹ In his second examination, Herrmann posited that it was the fable of "*The Old Dog*" from Phaedrus, which is similar to the above mentioned fable, except that the animal being chased is no longer a rabbit/hare but a boar.⁴² However, both identifications seem erroneous. First, in the case of both fables, the actions of the dog are atypical of an old animal, as this dog is leaping to catch his prey. Secondly, in the case of the second fable, the prey that the dog is chasing is definitely not a boar.

Both Wilson and McNulty acknowledge that the animal chased by the dog is either a rabbit or a hare.⁴³ Within the context of the Tapestry, it would have come as no surprise to a contemporary audience (especially a Norman audience) that an animal whose symbolism "whether religious or secular, was almost always pejorative," symbolic of fear and cowardice, and that "presaged misfortune," was used in connection with Harold, a man believed to have betrayed his solemn oath in order to "save his skin," and who was occupying a throne destined for the man (William) whom he (Harold) had sworn – perhaps under duress -- to uphold as king.⁴⁴ Additionally, McNulty is of the opinion that the analogy between the dog chasing a hare/rabbit and William pursuing Harold is intended, when he states that "once William decides to go after Harold, several images of pursuit and flight appear in the borders."⁴⁵ Indeed, analogies, plays on words, and conundrums, are part of the succedaneous modes probably used to communicate the

patron's (most likely Odo's) interpretation of historical events. Overtly, with the help of the two birds and the directional clues given by their wings, Odo was probably forewarning the audience about William's plan of action, and about Harold's proposed cowardly response to them. Covertly, Odo may have intended to deride William by intimating that there was little glory to gain from defeating Harold, when he acted like a fearful coward.

In spite of their colorful wings and tails, the next pair of agitated birds, are probably crows or ravens because of the shape and color of their bodies and of their beaks. In a manner similar to the other birds encountered previously, especially the birds in the borders of Scene 34 and onwards, the crow/ravens, located below William's vessel, seem to direct, with their wings, the gaze of the viewer/reader in opposite directions, i.e., toward the dog chasing the rabbit/hare on the left and toward the paired lions on the right. From a symbolic standpoint, crows/ravens were among the animals caught in the dialectical tension between good and evil. The crow/raven's positive connotation as a messenger or guide between gods and humans, which prevailed in Germanic mythology, was slowly replaced in the early Middle Ages by the negative aspect that this bird already held for Virgil (c.70-19 BC), and later for Pliny the Elder (c. 23-79 AD), i.e., that of a presager of doom, often associated with treachery.⁴⁶ In addition, as Isidore of Seville mentioned, crows/ravens fulfilled a necrophagous function. Indeed, crows/ravens were included in the different types of carrion birds that were observed to follow large groups of fighting men.⁴⁷ Therefore, it seems fitting that crows/ ravens were chosen to be depicted below the boat of the leader (William) of an invading force who was about to cause the death of many because of his ambition and desire for power, and who may have been regarded with less than admiration at the time of the Tapestry's production, some twenty years after the battle of Hastings.

Next to the crows/ravens two more lions are portrayed. Each lion appears to be preoccupied with its own welfare. Caring only for themselves, these creatures seem to ignore each other, much like William and Harold who were proceeding, each with his own plan. Next to the lions another set of birds in a heightened state of excitement are pointing at each other, reminding the viewer/observer of humans engaged in a heated discussion, as though exchanging blame for what was about to take place, i.e., the landing of William's fleet on English soil.

Contrasting with the apparent serenity of the main field, in which vessels seem to float effortlessly towards the English shore, the borders, especially the lower border, are replete with aggressive (lions) and/or necrophagous animals (carrion birds) displayed in various stages of excitement. The scene of the subtly striped dog chasing a rabbit/hare, placed about half-way through the lower border of Scene 38, in the midst of aggressive beasts and carrion birds, is probably indicative of William in pursuit of Harold, and seems to serve to focus the attention of the audience and to underline the intent of the voyage depicted directly above, i.e., the capture and defeat of Harold.

5. SCENE 39: “*HIC EXEVNT CABALLI DE NAVIBVS*”

In this short scene, the voyage across the Channel has come to an end. Some of the men are disembarking their mounts, while others are pulling down the masts of the vessels to render the boats unusable, thus removing the possibility of a quick getaway if the invasion failed.

5.1. SCENE 39: **Birds in the Upper Border and Dragons in the Lower Border**

The two birds in the upper border, which are part of Scene 39, look somewhat like eagles because of their beaks and large talons. However, their apparently small size incited Fowke to point out that these birds were perhaps hawks.⁴⁸ The birds taking off when the fleet was preparing to sail, mimicked William when he was also “taking off.” In similar fashion, the birds in the upper border at the beginning of Scene 39 are alighting, again mimicking the actions of William and his men in the main narrative. In addition, these birds may also “be emblematic of the Normans about to seize their human quarry,” as Fowke suggested.⁴⁹ Indeed, the “birds of prey,” i.e., William and his followers, have landed on English soil with the intent to reap the riches of the land. Like Fowke, McNulty makes reference to the “analogous behavior in main panel and upper border,” referring to the similarity of actions between human elements in the main field and animal pictographs in the borders.⁵⁰

In the lower border, fire-breathing dragons with their tails untied, are facing each other. McNulty is of the opinion that “firedrakes... appear only when William is near at hand,” and that “...they suggest William’s role as safe keeper of institutions and things of value.”⁵¹ However, as Fowke already remarked, dragons are more likely to be emblematic of Harold. In this case, the placement of fire-breathing, fully functional

dragons -- their tails are untied -- directly below the disembarking Normans and their horses may indicate that the Normans have set foot on hostile land protected by king Harold who will fight against Norman intruders.

Indeed, William and his men (the birds of prey in the upper border) have reached the English shore. There is no longer time to argue (the accusing birds below, one part of Scene 38, the other of Scene 39) about whose actions were determinant factors and who should bear the blame for the invasion. In fact, the time for verbal exchange is at an end. The invaders are about to face the full power of the dragon of Wessex (fire breathing dragons with tails untied in the lower border).

CONCLUSION

In Scene 35, the presumptive patron, Odo, chose to have himself portrayed for the first time. One may wonder why he picked this time in the narrative, and not, for instance, the scene of the oath, which the Tapestry places in Odo's own town of Bayeux. After a thorough examination of the Tapestry, it is easy to discover that in no other scenes prior to Scene 35 could Odo have been represented in such an advantageous situation. However, the gestures and postures of the three participants show that, while Odo probably desired to remind the audience of his generosity, he also wanted to distance himself from the decision to invade England, and by extension from the actions of William and his chosen heir, William Rufus, after the Conquest. Lest the reader forget, Odo's relationship with both these men started to deteriorate after the Conquest, and continued on a downward course until Odo's arrest and imprisonment in 1082. Most researchers agree that this period of time coincides with the production of the Tapestry. Additionally, the ingenious combination of architectural structures, vegetation and animals with pointed wings (birds and griffins) which frame Scene 35 demonstrates its importance.

Besides and beyond Odo's physical emergence, my thorough inspection of the borders above and below Scenes 35 through 39 has brought about new insights into the way William's intent and modus operandi are showcased. It seems that the borders continue to hint at a personal knowledge of the Norman ruling family some twenty years after the Battle of Hastings. In addition, the choice of animal pictographs -- birds of prey, griffins, carrion eaters, lions and hounds -- is indicative of the forebodings associated

with the preparations for war. Overall, it seems unavoidable that, given the chance, Odo used any means at his disposal to express his feelings about his half-brother William, his heirs, their divisive quarreling and their overall handling of post-Conquest affairs.

In Scenes 35 to 39, it seems that, in his probable role as patron, Odo continued to request the inclusion of birds, i.e., carrier pigeons, spreaders of news and rumors, and of an increased number of carrion birds that feed on death. Likewise, birds are used in various capacities: birds serve as framing devices (upper border, at the beginning of Scene 35 before and after the inscription); birds with their wings extended in different directions seem to have been used to focus on individuals and on areas of interest forming nexuses encapsulating pivotal areas. Thus, in Scene 35 the two birds in the upper border point directly at the black griffins in the lower margin, while, by following the directions indicated by the griffins wings, the gaze of the observer is diverted towards William on one side and the trees being cut on the other, successfully linking aggressive beasts, indicative of William and his intentions, to the news being brought by the informer and to the decision to build the fleet.

The usual lions and dogs were inserted to symbolize the opponents, and remind the viewer/reader respectively of their desired status and true nature, while qualifying their character and actions; an eagle bearing signs of *diversitas* above William and his name *WILLELM DUX* in the inscription, probably used to brand William once more as a bastard when he is about to set sail for England. Besides, the episode of pursuit involving a hunting dog (William) and a hare/rabbit (Harold) seems to express that William had planned to hunt and catch Harold even before he landed in England.

Thus, through the medium of the borders, the narrative comes alive once more. Indeed, in a manner similar to the previous Scenes, the borders bring their explanatory satires, characterizing the participants to the epic, and commenting on their intents and actions. The increasing use of aggressive and nefarious animals seems to imply the approaching final efforts prior to the battle and the inevitable consequences of war. Additionally, starting in Scene 35 where Odo is prominently displayed, his influence on the design seems almost tangible, as though Odo became more daring as the epic developed, and not as concerned with William's reaction should he ever view the Tapestry.

- ¹ Gameson (1997): 205-206.
- ² McNulty (1989): 21.
- ³ Wilson (1985): 199.
- ⁴ McNulty (1989): 21
- ⁵ Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 134; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 146-52; Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. (1964): 8-9; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. (1969): 140-142; see also, McLynn (1999): 181-182.
- ⁶ For Odo's identification, see esp. Wilson (1985): 184; Bertrand (1994): 20; Grape (1994): 127; Bertrand and Lemagnen (1996): 18; Musset (2002): 182; Rud (2002): 61.
- ⁷ For the quote, see Fowke (1913): 91.
- ⁸ For the quote, see Garnier, I (1982): 185.
- ⁹ Grape (1994): 54; Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 94; Lewis (1999): 117.
- ¹⁰ For hairstyles as indicators of concern about legitimate vs. illegitimate use of power, see above Chap. 4, n. 95.
- ¹¹ Brooks and Walker, in Gameson (1997): 68.
- ¹² C. Warren Hollister, *The Greater Domesday Tenants-in-Chief*, J. C. Holt, ed. *Domesday Studies* (1987): 222, and 80; see also McLynn (1999): 191.
- ¹³ For shipbuilding and ships at the time of the Conquest, see above "Introduction," n. 15.
- ¹⁴ For the symbolism of the fleur-de-lis, see Garnier, II (1989): 220. For the oldest representation of a fleur-de-lis with a similar meaning see above Chap. 2, n. 48.
- ¹⁵ For the pope's gift of a banner or "gonfanon," see Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 154; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 142; William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 299; R. A. Brown (2000): 128, n. 39.
- ¹⁶ Bates (1975): 16-18.
- ¹⁷ Cazenave, ed. (1996): 704; for the quote, see Payne (1990): 63.
- ¹⁸ Jean Delumeau, *La peur en Occident* (1978): 119-131.
- ¹⁹ Fowke (1913): 93.
- ²⁰ For the fleur-de-lis, See above n. 14.
- ²¹ McNulty (1989): 115.
- ²² Ibidem (1989): 115.
- ²³ Fowke (1913): 94.
- ²⁴ Morris and Durant (1966): 8.
- ²⁵ For William's greed and avarice, see *ASC*, for years 1086 and 1087; McLynn (1999): 7, 102.
- ²⁶ McNulty (1989): 115.
- ²⁷ For the vulture, see Rabannus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, PL CXI: 244 C; Rabannus Maurus, *Allegoriae*, PL CXII: 1083; Payne (1990): 63; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 704-05; .
- ²⁸ For the griffin, see above Chap. 2, n. 75.
- ²⁹ Urban T. Holmes, "The Houses of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Speculum*, 34 (1959): 179-183, see esp. 182.
- ³⁰ Parris (1983): 115.
- ³¹ Wilson (1985): 217.
- ³² Werkmeister (1976): 540.
- ³³ R. A. Brown, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 84.
- ³⁴ McNulty (1989): 117.
- ³⁵ McNulty (1989): 117.
- ³⁶ Musset (2002): 192.
- ³⁷ Bates (1975): 18.
- ³⁸ For the number of ships, see Hollister, in Holt, ed. (1987): 222-223, 223 ns. 12, 13 and 14 and 243; see also C. M. Gillmore, "Naval Logistics of the Cross-Channel Operation, 1066." *The Battle of Hastings. Sources and Interpretations* (1996): 114-128, esp. 114-115.

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- ³⁹ For an explanation of the two cruciform shapes at the top of the mast, see Jean Verrier, *The Bayeux Embroidery known as Queen Mathilda's Tapestry* (1946): 22-23; Holmes (1957): 182; S. A. Brown (1977): 70; Bertrand (1994): 20; Grape (1994): 39; Foy's (1998): 352-353.
- ⁴⁰ McNulty (1989): 26.
- ⁴¹ Herrmann (1939): 378.
- ⁴² Herrmann (1964): 47.
- ⁴³ Wilson (1985): 187; McNulty (1989): 119.
- ⁴⁴ For the quotes see, Rowland (1973): 90, 91. For the symbolism of the rabbit or hare, see Miquel (1991): 181; Seringe (1995): 51; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 362; Voisenet (2000): 84-85.
- ⁴⁵ McNulty (1989): 119.
- ⁴⁶ For the crow/raven, see Virgil, *Géorgiques*, E. de Saint-Denis, ed. and trans., I (1957): 332, 410; Pline l'Ancien, *Naturae historiarum libri XXXVII*, A. Ernout, ed., et al., 18(c. 1973): 87; see also Miquel (1992): 123; Voisenet (1994): 69, 144, 167-169; Voisenet (2000): 127-128.
- ⁴⁷ *Isidorus, Etym.*, XII, VII, André, ed. (1986): 43.
- ⁴⁸ Fowke (1913): 99.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 99.
- ⁵⁰ McNulty (1989): 25.
- ⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 97.

VII

THE NORMANS ON ENGLISH SOILAND THEPREPARATIONS FOR BATTLESCENES 40 – 47

For most of the Tapestry there are top and bottom margins which contain illustrations of birds and mammals, both real and mythical, sometimes linked to fables of the Aesop type, but sometimes more enigmatic.¹

1066. The Year of the Three Battles
Frank McLynn

Analogy in the Tapestry often comes in the form of something in the borders that suggests an idea applicable to the action in the main story.²

The Narrative Art of the Bayeux Tapestry Master
J. Bard McNulty

A profusion of real and monstrous animals of various species, or combinations thereof, continues to inhabit the borders of the Bayeux Tapestry. Some belong to fables derived from the Greek and Roman fabulists, while others are “sometimes more enigmatic” as Frank McLynn observes without further explanation.³ However, these animal pictographs mystify the reader only if one ignores their connection with the main field. Indeed, the extra ingredients, the “something in the borders” that McNulty mentions, are the placements, postures and actions of the beasts/animals vis-à-vis the individuals and their positions, postures and gestures in the main field. The analogy or contrast thus derived evokes a connection or connections which serve to induce variations in the comprehension of the elements of the scene being considered. Indeed, the pictographs in the borders seem to coax novel ideas from the mind of the observer. This process results in a deeper understanding of the narrative as the pictographs inflect the straightforward reading achieved through the sole perusal of the events depicted in the center field. It is my intention to continue to illustrate that a reading of the borders above and below Scenes 40 through 47 affects not only the narrative in the main field as a whole, but the individual characters, as well as the events represented therein, perhaps in

a manner desired by Odo, the almost universally acknowledged patron of the Bayeux Tapestry.

1. **SCENE 40: “ET HIC: MILITES: FESTINAVERVNT HESTINGA VT CIBVM RAPERENTUR”**

The inscription concerning the action unraveling in the main field is explicit: soldiers on horseback hastily depart toward Hastings to steal foodstuffs.⁴ As Mogens Rud suggests, the foremost rider may be William leading his men, which is likely, since he is known to have led a few knights to reconnoiter the area when he first landed at Pevensey.⁵ Meeting little resistance, except from what appears to be a young man brandishing an axe and his small, helpless companion -- perhaps a child, his son or brother -- William and his men act like any army on the move, not only seizing what they deem necessary to their survival, but also raping the land of whatever may be useful or of value.⁶ While the main field remains noncommittal about the actions of the soldiers and their leader, the inhabited borders seem more explicit.

1.1. **SCENE 40: A Fable, A Bird, A Lion, and Griffins (?) in the Upper Border**

After the bird (William) landed on the English shore, familiar animals invade the upper border of Scene 40 -- from left to right: two predators, followed by a hart and a lion. Few have remarked on this unusual series of animals. McNulty notes without further comment, that “when the symmetrical border pattern of balanced animals and birds is broken, some special meaning is intended.”⁷ Concerned mostly with finding stylistic antecedents, Hicks argues that “such groups and processions of different animals, . . . can be found in the illustrations of zoological manuscripts of Byzantine origin, copying Greek originals.”⁸ Yet, reluctant to ever admit the possibility of meaningful borders beyond their decorative aspect, Hicks concedes that “a few animals do not fall neatly into either the narrative and genre or the heraldically confronted groups.”⁹

Without further explanation, Hermann identifies the series of four animals in the upper border at the beginning of Scene 40 as Phaedrus’ fable of *The Lion and the Fox*, which relates the story of a fox invited to enter into the lair of a debilitated lion.¹⁰ Still afraid of the lion, the fox mutters “many enter, but no one comes out.” Such identification is dubious because other animals, besides a fox and a lion are present in this area of the border, and there is no hint of a lair. On the contrary, Aesop’s fable, *The Lion’s Share*, seems to fit the representation in the upper border of Scene 40. To refresh

the reader's memory, *The Lion's Share* is similar to Phaedrus' fable of *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*. Indeed, in both fables the story revolves around a lion who enlists the aid of other animals (in the case of *The Lion's Share*, a jackal, a fox and a wolf) by promising them a share in the kill, in order to ensure his success in hunting a hart. However, once the hart is killed, the lion keeps the whole carcass for himself and dismisses his accomplices with an abundance of threats if they dare to touch the dead animal and grab the portions they were allocated beforehand. As the fox walks away, he murmurs the moral of the story, i.e., "you may share the labours of the great, but you will not share the spoil."¹¹

In this representation of *The Lion's Share*, the fox and the jackal seem to have been conflated, perhaps intentionally, into one predatory animal. When contemplating the actions of Harold's felonious brother, Tostig, it is possible to surmise that both a cunning, deceitful fox and a cruel, covetous jackal may have been appropriate symbols for him (Tostig).¹² Historical records show that, at some point in the first six months of 1066, Tostig contacted William, with whom he tried to work out a plan to ensure Harold's fall.¹³ However, unwilling to follow William's advice and wait, or conversely, perhaps dared by William to proceed with his plans, the impatient Tostig joined forces with Harald Hardrada of Norway in an effort to achieve his goal.¹⁴ The representation of the above mentioned animals in the border above Scene 40, separated from one another by double diagonal lines, may adequately reflect the difficulty that the three conspiring leaders, namely, William, Tostig and Harald Hardrada, encountered when they attempted to communicate.

However, alternative readings are possible if one considers the similarities between *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat* and *The Lion's Share*. First, the placements of these two fables parallel two similar events, i.e., Harold and his men landing on French soil in Scene 7; and William and his army stepping on English shores in Scene 40. In the case of Scene 7, Harold's voyage to France and his capture by Guy may be considered as the starting point and primal cause for all the events that took place up to William's landing at Pevensey. In the case of Scene 40, William's arrival on English soil may be viewed as the proximate cause for the final battle fought at Hastings. Thus, it seems that two similar fables, with comparable morals, were used as mnemonic cues to remind the observers of the analogous implications for the situation at hand.

Indeed, while the circumstances differ, in both cases because of promises made and broken, Harold is about to be caught by William, with the help of unlikely allies.

Secondly, the isolation of each animal in the upper border of Scene 40 (which does not occur in the lower border of Scene 7) may refer to the state of William's army before the Conquest. It is an historical fact that "the call for volunteers went out across Europe," and that groups of foreign soldiers, who spoke different languages, answered the call, which made cooperation between William and the various ethnic groups difficult.¹⁵ It is also a fact that William attracted mercenaries with promises of easy access to wealth and land after the Conquest.¹⁶ However, like the lion of the fable, William did not fulfill his promises to the satisfaction of all the participants. Indeed, William kept the lion's share for himself. One may wonder if a parallel was drawn between Harold's and William's actions in order to remind the audience that William was just as guilty of breaking promises as Harold ever was.

In the upper border of Scene 40, the hart is caught between the wolf and the fox/jackal on the left, and the lion on the right which seems to be waiting patiently while facing in the direction of a large bird with its neck caught behind a diagonal bar. Because it is protected by double diagonals on each side, the stag remains unattainable and unscathed. Likewise, when William and his men first landed in England, Harold was beyond their grasp. In a manner similar to the lion in the upper border, William waited patiently for Harold (the hart) to come to him. While hoping for Tostig (the fox/jackal) and Harald Hardrada (the wolf), and/or for the men who had rallied under his (William's) banner to take care of Harold once and for all, the waiting lion (William) observed a bird (Harold) caught by the neck behind a diagonal bar. McNulty noted the parallel between the bird's posture and Harold's situation, as he commented that "Harold is several times associated with hampered birds."¹⁷ William was able to wait patiently because he knew that, like the large bird held by the neck, Harold was not free to do as he pleased. Indeed, during his short reign, Harold was plagued by revolts in the north of England, by the corrosive effect of his brother Tostig's betrayal, and by Harald Hardrada's threatened invasion, which eventually materialized. However, at this point in the Tapestry, the Battle of Stamford Bridge had probably not yet taken place; thus, William could not have been aware of Harold's victory.¹⁸ Like the two dogs resting and playing with their tails

to the right of the restrained bird, William and his men may have believed that the Conquest would be an easy task.

Two affronted beasts follow the dogs in the upper border. According to McNulty, who bases his findings on Bruce's drawing, only the beast on the left is genuine, the other being a later addition.¹⁹ Bernstein identifies this beast as a winged lion, a metaphor for William and the Normans.²⁰ However, the distorted appearance of the authentic beast on the left, especially the head, is neither that of a winged lion nor of a griffin. Once more, the discrepancy in the beast's appearance may have been designed to comment on the warped nature of the person whom the beast was meant to symbolize. If this is the case, the placement of the winged-lion/griffin, almost directly above a possible depiction of William, may link this defective animal to the leading knight who is probably William, thus hinting at his greed, ruthlessness, and cruelty.²¹ Indeed, the winged lions/griffins placed above the action verb *RAPERENTVR* and above William and his soldiers gathering food, stolen from the local inhabitants, seem to leave no doubt about their aggressiveness and rapacity.

The evil mask positioned between the two winged lions/griffins in place of the fleur-de-lis, which disappeared from the border starting with Scene 35, is original. It probably serves to emphasize the evils that are being committed in the main field because of the ambition and greed of William and his followers. About this mask, which is similar to the only other one above Scene 6 where Harold lands on the Continent and is taken prisoner by Guy de Ponthieu, Fowke comments that it is a "*vorant-de-lys*," the term, *vorant*, being "a corruption of *devorant* (devouring)."²² Literally, this small mask means the devourer of the lys or fleur-de-lis, i.e., a destroyer of the good and holy, symbolizing the acceptance of evil and a turning away from God's grace, probably insinuating that at this point William's rule was taking a turn for the worse. In the main field of Scene 40, the representation of the ravages exacted by an advancing army on the locals is curiously tame. Perhaps, eleventh-century society viewed the exactions associated with war as normal happenstances, and thus not worth reporting in detail. Thus, the animal imagery (the griffins), the plant life and the evil mask, in the marginal world of the borders, are the only hints at the greater evil being performed below.

1.2. SCENE 40: Lions, Birds and Other Predators in the Lower Border

Next to the dragons (a metaphor for Harold) unfolding their tails and spewing fire in the lower border between Scenes 39 and 40, two lions seem engaged in a spiteful exchange. The lion on the left is rather large and is performing a gesture that the observer has encountered many times, i.e., sticking its tongue out in the direction of the other lion which is separated from it by two diagonal bars confining a disheveled plant growing in various directions, as though to indicate distance between the two beasts. The lion on the right seems to respond to the taunting with a growl, as it advances towards the other lion that is ready to pounce. Once more the lions were probably meant to be a metaphor for the two royal antagonists, William and Harold, who were still physically far apart. Because of their placements, the lion on the left, which is following William's movement leftwards, probably symbolizes William who, by crossing the Channel and setting foot on English land, is taunting Harold and trying to provoke him into action. The growling lion on the right is probably symbolic of Harold who is standing his ground in response to William's dare.

Like the clumsy, lonely bird biting its foot, Harold finds himself once more in an awkward position vis-à-vis William. Despite mentioning the "single bird, and two others further on...[which] bracket the activity of gathering, preparing and consuming food," McNulty makes no other comment about the birds' possible interactions with the main narrative.²³ The single bird biting its foot in the lower border parallels exactly the bird caught by the neck in the upper border. The portrayal of this bird in an embarrassing situation is similar to that of the birds in the upper border of Scene 6 depicting Harold about to be captured by Guy's men when disembarking on French soil.²⁴ Similarly, in Scene 40, the Normans are disembarking on foreign soil (England). However, their sole purpose is to defeat Harold and take over the land. The two small birds next to the lone bird, also mentioned by McNulty, seem to function not only as bracketing implements but also as bearers of news and warning devices, as they appear to be squawking in warning while pointing with one extended wing at the soldiers riding to the pillage above.

Below the two figures of a man brandishing an axe and a child meekly following while holding on to the man's tunic, two ferocious looking predators seem to be growling at each other, adding to the disquietude of the scene pictured above. Thus, it is not surprising that the beast on the right is lacking ears and a tail. Indeed, once more

physical deformities may be equated to defects of the soul. There is a strong possibility that these two beasts, a black, growling hound on the left, and a reddish predator with no ears and no tail on the right, were meant not only to indicate that the invaders were *canailles*, but also to signify that William's men had lost the ability to hear the pleas of the Anglo-Saxons. It is interesting to note that these two beasts in the lower border parallel the griffins and the evil mask in the upper border. Thus, they act as a frame for the scene of the pillaging taking place between the borders, emphasizing the role that malice and evil aggression played in the invasion.

When contemplating the narrative field of the Tapestry, it seems that the invasion proceeded without much harm to the civilian population. However, there is little doubt that the pictographs in the border modify this first assumption. A perusal of the borders suggests that, as soon as William and his allies set foot on English soil, William disregards his promises and displays no intention to share with his "hunting" partners the rewards of the hunt (the fable of *The Lion's Share*). Likewise, Harold (the bird biting its foot) once more puts his foot in his mouth, and by speaking carelessly, alienated his brother, Tostig, and finds himself in a disconcerting and even dangerous position. Now, William (the lion in the upper border) has Harold (the bird caught by the neck) where he wants him, safely occupied in preparing to fight Harald Hardrada and Tostig. William (the tan lion on the left, lower border) can mock and taunt Harold. Yet, Harold (the black lion with a white mane, lower border) can only growl from afar, because he is engaged in fighting elsewhere. The English are warned of the approaching Norman soldiers (the birds squawking and pointing, lower border). But William and his aggressive followers (the dogs, lions and the winged lions/griffins, upper border) meet with no resistance and behave like *canailles* (dogs, lower border). They prey on the land like vultures, and plunder with impunity to assuage their lust for anything of worth. Thus, it seems that the animal pictographs, above and below Scene 40, continue to enrich the reading of the narrative with details and satiric innuendos, while conveying disparaging comments against William, his followers, and William's chosen heir the English throne.

2. SCENE 41: "*HIC EST WADARD*"

Scene 41 is short as it was meant to highlight one man, Wadard. Like Turol, earlier in the Tapestry, Wadard is probably one of Odo's main tenants.²⁵ This man seems

to have been given the task of supervising the plunder. Close examination of Wadard's features portrays him as a rather proud, pompous, and bored little man, who contemplates his world disdainfully through heavy-lidded eyes.

2.1. **SCENE 41: Lions in the Upper Border and Vultures in the Lower Border**

The representation of predatory beasts does not abate in the borders of Scene 41. Jaws open in a silent roar and tails raised, the two lions in the upper border are running towards each other, as though ready for an imminent confrontation. In the lower border, two dark colored vultures seem to be waiting for their share of the booty. These two sets of nefarious predators frame the mounted figure of Wadard, a Norman. A disquieting subtext is growing, which comments on the bland description of the "tame" behavior of the invading forces portrayed in the main field. The lions and vultures, probably suggest that Wadard was in charge of men who were involved in more than simply gathering food items. It should be noted that Wadard is pictured directly above a particularly dark and well-defined vulture, possibly to indicate the rapacity of this man. Likewise, the numerous predatory animals in the borders of this scene, including the vultures, seem to embody the greed and rapacity of the invaders. Additionally, in spite of the double diagonals separating the lions, these royal predators seem about to pounce on each other. It is possible that these two beasts may symbolize the two royal antagonists (William and Harold), who are making ready to fight one another, but are still too far away. Similarly, the necrophagous birds may forewarn the audience about the coming carnage.

3. **SCENE 42: "HIC: COQVITVR:CARO ET HIC: MINISTRAVERVNT MINISTRI"**

Finding little resistance upon landing, the Normans made camp close to Pevensey Bay.²⁶ Scene 42 illustrates the preparations of the food probably plundered earlier (Scene 41) from the local inhabitants. Once prepared, the food was brought in and set on a sideboard where it was arranged on trenchers to be presented at the main table. If it were not for the architectural construction acting as a doorway separating Scenes 42 and 43, one might believe that both the food preparation and the banquet took place outdoors. Due to the time of the year, William and the men of his immediate entourage probably ate indoors. All the comments made about Scene 42 revolve around the food preparation, the implements used to prepare it and the appearance of those who are involved in the process, especially the bearded man with the tongs.²⁷ An examination of the upper and

lower borders may provide added information about the mental attitudes and psychological constraints that may have been imposed on the participants.

3.1. SCENE 42: Birds and Dogs in the Upper Border

In the upper border, birds are squawking, dogs are bouncing about and in one instance a dog is trying to catch its tail, while the other has already caught it. Beyond McNulty's usual remark about the continuing "motif of balanced figures," nothing else has been written about the borders of Scene 42. A cursory glance at the borders may simply suggest to a casual reader that the animals reflect the mood of the scene, i.e., the anticipation of the men waiting for the food to be cooked. However, the types of animals displayed, their placements, postures and actions, were probably meant to arouse the interest of the observer, as they seem to act as informative devices qualifying the main antagonists, their intents and actions, as well as commenting and forewarning the audience about the battle soon to be fought.

The birds in the upper border do not appear overly happy at the preparations of fowls directly below. Perhaps this is another pun intimating that, like the bird on the right, standing directly above the skewered fowls, Harold and the Anglo-Saxons were about to be lanced, speared and otherwise transpierced in the coming battle. Likewise, it seems that the birds are once more engaged in directing the gaze of the observer by the movements of their wings, as they point in an accusing manner toward each other; back at the lions ready to pounce on each other in the upper border of Scene 41; and in the opposite direction, at the large black hounds engaged in trying to bite (the dog on the left) or biting (the dog on the right) their respective tails. By their designative movements, pointing in opposite directions, each at a pair of predators (lions on the left, dogs on the right), the birds may suggest the ambiguities and ambivalence in William's and Harold's characters and actions, and hint at the news and gossip which were bound to circulate about these two leaders.

3.2. SCENE 42: Dogs and Ostriches in the Lower Border

Meanwhile in the lower border, two young dogs are silently barking, as they bounce toward each other, a pair of ostriches squawk angrily as they advance toward each other, and a lone lion appears to look back longingly at the feast being prepared above. From the depiction of the soldiers' activities in the main field, one may deduce

that they are exercising self-control and moderation during the pillaging episode. However, the negative symbolism associated with dogs is reinforced by the presence of the necrophagous birds that precedes them below Scene 41. It is evident that these *canes* are about to get out of control, commenting negatively on the true nature of the actions of the pro-Norman raiders in the center field. Additionally, the imminent confrontation of these two *canes* seems to suggest William's and Harold's impending encounter on the battlefield.

The two birds with short, stout legs, on the dogs' right, are squawking at each other. So far, they have remained unidentified. McNulty refers to these strange birds only in the context of the resumption of the "motif of balanced figures."²⁸ However, if one considers the descriptions of the ostrich found first in the *Physiologus* and later in medieval bestiaries, the birds in the border below Scene 42 have the "short legs and feet of the camel" characteristic of the ostrich.²⁹ McNulty identifies only one bird below Scene 48 as an ostrich, and solely because it is represented next to a four-pointed star, claiming wrongly that it is "the Tapestry's only identifiable ostrich."³⁰ McNulty also maintains that "ostriches, as it happens, enjoyed a very respectable reputation in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," perhaps, even a certain fame as "a symbol of military prowess."³¹ However, McNulty forgot to qualify the wide open term "Middle Ages," for only in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance is such a symbolism mentioned in connection with the ostrich. In this case, McNulty's arguments are of little value to the analysis of the Tapestry, a work of the late eleventh-century.

The *Physiologus, Versio B*, is the only early work which attributes a positive symbolism to the ostrich. According to *Versio B*, the ostrich is reputed to symbolize a person imbued with wisdom because it turns away from material rewards (lets the sun hatch its eggs), trusting in God to complete the work.³² Except for this one instance, in other writings available in the late eleventh century, the symbolism of the ostrich is negative. Basing their ideas on Christian Scriptures, Isidore of Seville, Rabannus Maurus and Gregory the Great, whose works heavily influenced early medieval culture, viewed the ostrich as an impure and cruel bird that inhabits barren wastes, and is a sign of desolation.³³ It is interesting to note that if one refers to the *Domesday Book*, many areas around Hastings were listed as desolate areas, identified as "barren wastelands" (*wasta*).³⁴ From that point of view alone it is not surprising that the ostrich was chosen, maybe by

the patron, and that it was placed below the invaders in the process of preparing food that they had pillaged from the local inhabitants.

Additionally, unable to fly, and having *de facto* “betrayed its true nature by staying on the ground,” the ostrich was considered to be a defective bird symbolizing the hypocrites who hide their true nature, performing deeds that give the appearance of being good and righteous, but in reality are evil.³⁵ One marvels once more at the adroit use of a symbolic beast on whose potential duality of meaning, the patron probably relied to protect himself from possible retribution. Indeed, using the positive symbolism of the ostrich, this bird may have symbolized the wisdom of the invading army, and the reliance of their leader, William, on God to help him achieve his goal. Additionally, the ostriches may be interpreted as symbolizing the hypocrisy of Harold who had knowingly sworn a false oath, and thus led his countrymen to defeat and desolation.

Yet, at the same time, perhaps coached by troubadours trained for the purpose of reading the Tapestry according to the patron’s wishes, or perhaps already attuned to the patron’s innuendoes, many post-Conquest viewers may have felt that the ostrich was meant to symbolize William, who had consistently proved himself to be the worst type of hypocrite, first out of necessity, in order to survive when he was a young boy assailed by many enemies, then out of an almost pathological need to appear righteous in whatever enterprise he undertook.³⁶

After a perusal of the borders above and below Scene 42, the main field can no longer be read as the simple preparation for a banquet while campaigning in a foreign country. There is little doubt that the food preparation was used as a forum to repeat suggestions concerning the two leaders, William and Harold.

4. **SCENE 43: “HIC FECERVNT: PRANDIVM: ET HIC EPISCOPVS CIBV ET POTV BENEDICIT.”**

In order to pass the food from one area to the other, thus linking Scene 42 to Scene 43, three men form a living chain through the aperture implied by the architectural frame in the background. In Scene 43, an improvised table made up of shields set up on trestles is used to fill dishes with food while a servant blows a horn, perhaps to call to the table William’s honored guests.³⁷ One can only be sure of the identities of one man: Odo. Indeed, Odo is placed in the center of the depiction, below the word *EPISCOPUS*. Odo is also linked to his name in the inscription above Scene 44 by the man on his

immediate left, presumably his brother, Robert de Mortain, whose head is turned toward him (Odo) while he (Robert) points with his left index finger at the word *ODO*. The man seated on Odo's right is the un-named, yet recognizable William.³⁸ The guests have already taken their places, around what Fowke terms the "convex side of a table, of that classic shape which derives its name from the Greek letter sigma."³⁹ Brooks and Walker add that the shape of this particular table was probably "derived from the Byzantine iconographical tradition."⁴⁰ Additionally, as L. H. Loomis argues convincingly, this table is reminiscent of the shape of the table of the Last Supper represented in *St. Augustine's Gospels*, a sixth-century Italian manuscript kept at Canterbury, where the Tapestry may have been produced.⁴¹ When considering that the patron was probably Bishop Odo, it is entirely possible that this shape was an iconographic element known to him. In this case, it was probably used as a mnemonic cue associating a re-enactment of the Last Supper with Odo and one of the most important towns in his earldom, i.e., Canterbury. Because of Odo's rumored ambition to become pope, i.e., the representative of Christ on earth, the depiction in Scene 43 was probably meant to associate him visually with Christ.⁴² Indeed, Odo even goes as far as imitating Christ's gesture of blessing. Additionally, since, if it did occur, the meal took place on a Friday, a day of abstinence, the depiction of a fish set in front of Odo may suggest a desire to portray Odo as a devout Christian who observed the laws of the Church.⁴³

Beyond this obvious linkage, the use of an image reminiscent of Christ's Last Supper may have conveyed to a post-Conquest audience that Odo was a faithful servant of the Church since, contrary to William, Odo sided with Pope Gregory VII in his (Gregory's) dispute with Emperor Henry IV over investitures. Thus, it is doubtful that this scene had any religious significance beyond Odo's propagandistic agenda. Lewis contends that it is a repetition of the banquet scene at Bosham, thus "legitimizing Odo's role as the post-Conquest lord of a great hall in which the Tapestry is being displayed."⁴⁴ However, as previously demonstrated, there is little cause to assert that great halls existed at the time and/or that the Tapestry was exhibited in such a place. Additionally, at the time of the Tapestry's production, i.e., the late 1070s and early 1080's, Odo had other aims beyond the earldom of Kent. Perhaps a careful examination of the placements, postures and gestures of the participants may shed additional light on the contents of the scene.

Once more, the gestures of the participants delineate a zone of interest encompassing the men at table and their immediate surroundings. The first man on the left of the table and the last one on the right are both pointing at the servant in the center of the scene who is half-kneeling as he presents a dish full of water and a cloth to William who is reaching toward it with his left hand. The actions and placement of this man in the foreground act as a focal point. Researchers have pondered the meaning of this man taking the place of Judas in representations of the Last Supper in western art.⁴⁵ However, while an image of Judas is stylistically similar, it is void of any meaning in this setting. Conversely, the symbolic use of a known iconographical representation, e.g., a servant with a water bowl taking the place usually assigned to Judas, belonged to the type of ritualistic function that objects sometimes possessed in the illiterate society of the late eleventh century. Perhaps one should look upon this man, and the objects that he is carrying as mnemonic cues that may have been used to remind the viewer/reader of another known event associated with the life of Christ, potentially significant in this setting because of its symbolic content. In this particular case, the servant, whom Parisse identifies correctly as "a hand-washer," may be conflated symbolically with another servant who brought water, not to Christ but to the man who washed his hands of Christ's blood, i.e., Pontius Pilate, the spineless leader who refused to own up to his responsibility and, for political reasons, let the blame for Christ's death fall on others.⁴⁶

An examination of the man on William's right, his placement, appearance, posture and gestures, may shed some light on what may have been Odo's "Machiavellian" scheme to undermine William's position in order to promote his own cause. This bearded and mustachioed man, seated at the place of honor on William's right, was made to look considerably like Edward in Scene 1. Speculations made about this man's identity are immaterial since he was probably meant as a symbolic figure used to recollect another person, and a past event.⁴⁷ With his left elbow raised, and his left hand resting on the table this man, is effectively preventing William from extending his left hand, and perhaps reach the bowl of water. At the same time, William is turned towards Odo and seems to be looking at him with a mixture of anxiety and envy, indicated adroitly by William's placement lower than Odo and by the raised pupils of William's wide open eyes staring at Odo.

Explanations concerning the bearded man's gesture include Gibbs-Smith's unlikely proposal of an embroidery error.⁴⁸ However, Bernstein goes so far as to suggest that William "is literally and figuratively 'upstaged' by both the bishop and the unidentified bearded diner who even seems to be elbowing his way in front of the Duke."⁴⁹ It is not difficult to concur with Bernstein that Odo may have aimed to aggrandize himself to the detriment of William. However, the presence, position and gestures of the bearded man, whose appearance is an uncanny duplication of Edward as portrayed in Scene 1, remains to be explained. In Scene 1, Edward entrusted Harold with a mission, perhaps to gauge the depth of William's desire to become the next king of England, and to try to persuade William to relinquish his hopes of inheriting the crown in exchange for some unknown reward. Even if, at some earlier time, Edward had promised William the crown, it is a known and accepted fact that promises were, and still are, broken routinely when politically expedient. Thus, a portrayal of the dead king may have been used to remind the audience that the root cause of the war between William and Harold was Edward.

Additionally, in keeping with the symbolism originating in the iconographic representation of the hand washer, the patron, most likely Odo, may have insinuated that some twenty odd years after William's victory at Hastings, in imitation of Pilate washing his hands of Christ's blood, William was metaphorically washing his hands of the blood of the many who died at the Battle of Hastings, and of the lingering consequences of a Norman takeover of England. Since Edward had probably tried unsuccessfully, via Harold, during his visit in Normandy, to dissuade William from extending his expansionist policy beyond the Continent, it is probable that the patron (presumably Odo) enlisted the help of the dead Edward, apparently reaching from the grave to bar William's way to the coveted bowl and cloth, thus metaphorically preventing him (William) from denying his responsibility in the carnage, and thus, placing the blame for the subsequent unrest and destruction occasioned by the Conquest on some of his close associates, especially on Odo, with whom he (William) had ceased to agree.⁵⁰

While there is no doubt that Edward's presence was impossible, the uncanny resemblance of the man portrayed in Scene 43 with the depiction of Edward in Scene 1 would have been enough to raise the possibility that Edward was somehow interfering from the grave to prevent William from disengaging himself from his responsibilities

toward the English people. An analysis of the borders may prove helpful in clarifying this enigmatic scene.

4.1. **SCENE 43: Birds and Winged Lions in the Upper Border**

Above Scene 43, two birds with wings raised and beaks open in silent squawking seem to voice their comment about what is happening beneath. To their right, two winged lions rest majestically above the banqueting group. At first glance, the two beasts are the picture of satisfaction (the one on the left appears to be preening). However, as McNulty already noted, these two winged beasts differ markedly from one another.⁵¹ In fact, several elements in their depiction, such as size, placement, posture, deportment and color, may bear on the observer's interpretation of the scene below. About size and placement, the beast on the left placed above William and the guests to the left (William's right), is considerably smaller than the beast on the right placed directly above Odo and the man next to him on the right (Odo's left). Perhaps, physical size being commensurate with intellectual capacity and prowess, the difference in size was an attempt to demonstrate that Odo was a better and more intelligent man than William. About posture and deportment, McNulty already noted that the bodies of both animals are turned to the right, while the head of the beast on the left is turned to the left.⁵² In medieval symbolism a twisted stance often symbolized inner turmoil. About color, the winged animal on the left has a black body, and a white head, wings and tail; while the one on the right has a light colored coat and white wings outlined in black. While colors are not primary indicators in the Bayeux Tapestry, it seems that black, which has sometimes faded into a dark blue, is often associated with elements of evil, and dark omens.

Thus, because of its placement, posture, action, and bi-color, the winged lion on the left may illustrate that the men below were not truly what they appeared to be. Indeed, William strove at all costs to give the impression that his expansionistic enterprises were always justified. Similarly, Edward, probably the bearded man on William's right, endeavored to appear saintly. However, having "an elephantine memory for slights and an ability to bear grudges eternally," he (Edward) was probably content to pay William back for the lack of esteem and the neglect he had suffered in his youth while a "guest" of his (William's) father in Normandy.⁵³ Thus, he (Edward) was probably rejoicing because he successfully barred William from reaching the bowl to

cleansing his (William's) hands, i.e., from cleansing himself of his responsibility for the nightmarish battle that followed and for the future internecine warfare that plagued England during his (William's) reign of and that of his chosen heir. According to the Tapestry, it appears that Odo did not undergo such inner turmoil. His countenance and actions seem to declare that he was a law-abiding Christian who ate fish on Friday. In addition, the large light-colored and tranquil winged lion directly above Odo and the man adjacent to him on the right, who may be his true brother, Robert de Mortain, seem to attest to their lack of moral dilemma and to their clear conscience, as though they, and especially Odo, were the true heroic figures.

By these devices, the patron (Odo?) may have hinted at the ambiguity and ambivalence in William's deportment and actions while he was involved in the preparations for the final fight. Additionally, by portraying the beast closest to William with its head turned back, it seems that William was looking backwards as though unable to confront the future that Odo (the winged lion on the right) is facing without hesitation.

4.2. SCENE 43: A Raven and Dogs in the Lower Border

In the lower border, a dog running toward the left is looking to the right while barking. Similarly, Harold (the dog) was marching at great speed toward William (the lion in the lower border of Scene 42), while calling to his men to follow. As McLynn reports, like the barking dog running ahead toward the lion, perhaps "intoxicated by his success," Harold refused to wait "to receive the levies on their way to him from the home counties; he simply left word that they were to follow him to Hastings with all speed."⁵⁴ The raven following the dog in the lower border seems to hint at the result of Harold's haste. Indeed, Harold's ostensible spontaneity and lack of forethought led him to fight "with diminished numbers and resources."⁵⁵ As a result, Harold "played into William's hand."⁵⁶ The agitated, lone raven, a bird of bad omen known for its necrophagous activities, seems to be forewarning the audience about the anticipated massacre.⁵⁷

Next, the two predators in the lower border, a mix between lions and dogs, parallel the two winged lions in the upper border and frame the scene of the meal being shared above. The postures and deportments of these two beasts are almost identical to the dogs' above Scene 16. Like the hounds in the upper border of Scene 16, the beasts in the lower border of Scene 43 are also biting their tails as though to suppress an urge to

growl. One may wonder if a parallel is being drawn between the two sets of animals in order to revisit Scene 16, and associate it with Scene 43. In this manner, the observer may have been reminded of the ephemeral nature of the agreement that William and Harold had reached prior to the Brittany Campaign, probably concerning the succession to the English throne. Additionally, the double diagonals separating the animals may express the two leaders' lack of trust. Indeed, it is not difficult to conceive that the patron, most likely Odo, chose to invest the distinctive and perhaps imaginary banquet scene with several mnemonic cues associated with Edward's mission to Harold and with the temporary agreement reached by William and Harold prior to the Brittany Campaign. When Scene 43 is read in its entirety, central field and borders together, the reader is able to decipher several layers of meaning, some of which may be related to Odo's propagandistic designs.

Thus, by drawing from salient events in the recent past, and by associating a man with an uncanny resemblance to Edward, a servant bearing the implements for hand-washing in a setting similar to that of the Last Supper, and a pair of dogs (below the table, lower border) almost identical to the ones in the upper border of Scene 16, it is highly possible that the patron meant to concretize and synthesize the forces that were at the root of the battle about to be fought. First, by representing Edward in the process of blocking William's access to a means of washing away symbolically his responsibility (water dish to wash his hands), the readers/viewers are reminded that Edward was the primary culprit for the events that are unfolding in the epic, since Edward attempted to break his purported promise to William with Harold's help (Scene 1); secondly, Edward's desire to break free of William's hold caused him (Edward) to send Harold's on a fool's errand. Indeed, it appears that the agreement reached between Harold and William was only superficial and temporary (Scenes 14 and 16); thirdly, the resulting battle and Anglo-Saxon debacle occurred because Edward and William engaged in "Byzantine" politics, and resorted to covert actions using a gullible Harold as a pawn. With the help of the upper border, Odo (the large winged lion) was painted as the true hero in Scene 43, since, in contrast to William (the bi-colored, winged lion), he appears untainted by the controversial dealings between Edward, William and Harold. There is little doubt that the borders of Scene 43, in conjunction with the main field and the inscription, have led

the reader to a fuller understanding of the scene, and may have offered a peek into Odo's "Machiavellian" mind.

5. **SCENE 44: "ODO:EPS: WILLELM: ROTBERT"**

Three names and a title are offered to the reader as a succinct complement to Scene 44. Few comments have been made about this scene beyond a concise description.⁵⁸ Yet, the central panel is rich in details that have either failed to retain the attention of the observer, or have not been interpreted completely.⁵⁹ Scene 44 takes place in an enclosed space framed by two columns adorned with ornate capitals and topped by a triangular roof not unlike the pediment of a classical temple. Similar stylized buildings, which harbor within the likenesses of gods or emperors, are often found on Roman coins.⁶⁰ As well, Vivian Mann and David Bernstein note that "this most unmedieval building type" is reminiscent of a pedimented building from a Carolingian illuminated manuscript, i.e., the Utrecht Psalter (c. 820).⁶¹ William, centered in the scene between Odo on his right and Robert on his left, is seated in majesty holding the sword of state in a formal manner, i.e., unsheathed and pointing straight up, indicating that he is presiding over this meeting as liege lord. Indeed, he is pointing at his sword with his right index finger, while designating Odo with his left, as though to deliver the otherwise unformulated command that Odo must comply. His eyes riveted on William, Odo pretends to agree by presenting the open palm of his left hand, the *sinistra*.⁶² He also points upwards with his right index finger to the name of the man whom he seems bent on deceiving, i.e., William.⁶³ On the opposite side of William, Robert de Mortain is listening intently and responding positively and swiftly to the command to obey by grabbing the hilt of his sword, as though ready to pull it from its scabbard to fight for his liege lord (William).⁶⁴ Robert's placement on William's left and his smaller size were probably meant to hint at his ancillary position vis-à-vis Odo, and especially William.

5.1. **SCENE 44: A Raven and a Mocking Lion in the Upper Border**

Placed next to the last pictograph above Scene 43, i.e., the large winged lion probably symbolizing Odo, a raven with a striped neck stands over the inscription *ODO-EP[iscopv]S*, lifting its right wing as though to protect the name *ODO* and by extension the person with that name. It seems that this bird functions on different levels. First, together with the raven in the lower border of Scene 43, they form the bracket that opens

and closes the parenthetical scene in which the banquet is depicted as though it needed to be set apart from the rest of the events represented in the Tapestry in order to emphasize its symbolic content. Secondly, because of the raven's function as a carrion eater, this bird is probably meant to suggest the disastrous consequences of digging in and remaining on English soil, expressed by William's order to shore up the fortifications. Thirdly, and most importantly, this bird is no ordinary raven. Indeed its size and appearance set it apart from other birds of the same species, and its striped neck, a sign of *diversitas*, associates it with William the Bastard. Because of its placement, the raven with the striped neck, which associates it with William the Bastard, seems to imply William's vicarious and controlling presence hovering above Odo and the words *ODO EPS*, perhaps suggesting that Odo had no other choice but to pretend to agree with William, as already insinuated by Odo's use of his left hand to show his accord with William.

The lion next to the lone raven in the upper border of Scene 44 is the left one of a pair of lions connecting Scenes 44 and 45. Both lions hold similar poses. They are crouched with their tails raised in the position of predators ready to pounce, and they stick out their tongues in each other's direction. Lions holding similar poses and displaying outstretched tongues are only found in the borders when an event of consequence to both William and Harold is illustrated in the main field, whether or not the two royal contestants are portrayed.⁶⁵ This combination of poses and taunting behavior seems to illustrate the continuing antagonism between the two regal contestants, i.e., William and Harold, whose antipathetic interactions are finally bringing them to war after months of taunting and posturing. Flanked, as these two royal beasts are, by a raven on the left and vultures on the right above Scene 45, there seems to be little doubt about the deadly consequences of the two royals' persistent sarcastic challenges.

5.2. SCENE 44: Zigzags and Ostriches in the Lower Border

Commenting on Scene 44, McNulty made another reference to Bernstein's association of the zigzag pattern with the Norman cause.⁶⁶ In the lower border of Scene 44, the inclusion of a post adorned with a zigzag pattern (a sign of *diversitas*), as the sole support for the edifice in which William is seated, flanked by Odo and Robert de Mortain, seems to suggest the dubious origin of William's power, and to undermine his prospective position as chosen leader and king of England. To the right of this

peculiarly adorned post, paired birds are depicted, which fit the description of the ostrich as found in the *Physiologus*, i.e., short legs and camel-like feet.⁶⁷ The two adorsed, squawking ostriches with their wings aflutter are not only clearly separated, but also seem to be moving away in opposite directions. Additionally, the ostrich on the left looks angrily at the post with the zigzag pattern, almost touching it with its right wing. Meanwhile, the ostrich on the right appears to hurry in the direction of the future action, i.e., to the right. One may wonder why ostriches were inserted below the scene of the meeting between William and his half-brothers, and next to a reminder of William's less than noble origins (the post with the zigzag pattern). More specifically, one may ponder on the respective placements of these birds, the left one exclusively below Odo, and the right one occupying the space below both William and Robert de Mortain.

The use of the ostrich, a bird with diverging symbolic interpretations, may be puzzling, but only if one fails to recognize it as another possible covert attempt to disparage William. Overtly, according to the positive, yet seldom used symbolism of the ostrich, the birds below Scene 44 may be interpreted as representing wise men, i.e., Odo, William and Robert, who let God guide their decision to proceed with the invasion in order to supplant Harold. At this point, it is important to remind the reader that the Tapestry was produced after the Conquest, when the tension between William and Odo was about to reach a breaking point. It is also helpful to remember that Odo probably had a propagandistic agenda of his own, perhaps including disinformation, a practice still applied with success.

Thus, such a positive and candid interpretation is difficult to accept, especially when one examines Scene 44 carefully. Because the three men, i.e., Odo, William and Robert are represented by ostriches, there is little doubt that all three were meant to be viewed as "hypocrites," perhaps for different reasons. A review of the main field in conjunction with the movements of the ostriches away from one another, their placements vis-à-vis the figures in the main field, their gestures, and the zigzag pattern found adorning one of the diagonal bars in the lower border, may enlighten the observer. Indeed, the combination of these elements reinforce the interpretation that Odo disagreed with William and that he was obliged to hide his true feelings because he feared William: first, in the main field, Odo uses his left hand to show his approval of William's plans, *de facto* implying that his agreement is worthless;⁶⁸ secondly, Odo is hampered by the

presence of a unique raven with a striped neck hovering above him. Because of its uniqueness and its striped neck, this bird suggests William's powerful and feared presence, which may be viewed as a symbolic deterrent against the possibility of Odo's disagreeing openly with him; and thirdly, Odo's disagreement is expressed surreptitiously by the placements and actions of the ostriches. Odo (ostrich on the left), is prevented by William (striped post) from distancing himself from the decision that William made during the meeting in Scene 44. What this decision may have contained is probably represented in the next scenes, i.e., to strengthen the Norman foothold in England by building up the defense system (Scene 45), and to burn the houses of Harold's followers (Scene 47). The ostriches on the right placed directly below William and Robert may imply the ends that William hoped to achieve by devious means. As explained below in conjunction with Scene 47, William hoped to draw Harold into war by practicing a scorched earth policy, especially on Harold's lands.⁶⁹ The movement toward the right of the ostrich below William and Robert seems to imply the possibility of a nascent discord on the policy to follow, between William and Robert on one side, and Odo on the other. Thus, Odo may have been trying to throw the blame for the wasteland created around Hastings on William and Robert.

In summary, the central panel of Scene 44 seems to leave no doubt: William is in full charge of the meeting, and the other two participants (Odo and Robert) appear to be eager to comply with William's forceful decision to proceed with the invasion campaign. However, the borders interject disturbing qualifying elements: the stripes on the large raven's neck associate the necrophagous bird with William and his cause, ascribing a nefarious scavenging spirit, enticed by greed, to William and his enterprise. The two lions, probably symbolizing once more the two main antagonists (William and Harold), continue their aggressive posturing and taunting challenges, which led to war. Paralleling the raven with its distinguishing striped neck, the zigzag pattern on a supporting post is a type of *diversitas* applicable to William because of his bastardry, and seems to indicate that the Norman edifice of power rests on this man whose antecedents are less than noble. The ostriches' placement directly below Odo on one side, and William and Robert on the other, and their movement away from each other, were probably a skillful attempt to indicate that, although prevented from expressing publicly his dissent, Odo's views diverged from William's and Robert's. While in the main field William is clearly

portrayed as the instigator who commands and demands respect and obedience from his followers (Odo and Robert), through the ostriches in the lower border, the audience is made aware of Robert's complete adherence to William (the bird on the right), and of Odo's feelings of utter disapproval as the bird on the left hightails it with wings aflutter.

6. SCENE 45: “*ISTE IVSSIT VT FODERETVR CASTELLVM AT HESTENGA CEASTRA*”

Scene 45 includes two parts, each delineated by the figure of an officer holding a pennant adorned with a cross. In the first part, soldiers are given spades, and start a fight rather than work. In the second part, the officer closely watches the men at work. In spite of the apparent triviality of Scene 45, scholars, such as Frank R. Fowke and Roger S. Loomis, have pondered on the inscription, finding the proof of the Tapestry's origins in its wording and spelling.⁷⁰ Other researchers, including R. A. Brown, and David Wilson, discussed the exact meaning of the words *CASTELLUM* and *CEASTRA*, and the tools used by William's men.⁷¹

However, other elements may be significant to a better comprehension of Scene 45. Robert's sword not only provides the link between Scenes 44 and 45, but, like the word *ISTE* opening the inscription, connects Robert to the man, probably one of William's officers, who is holding the pennant adorned with the cross, perhaps the gift of Pope Alexander II to William, and pointing with his index finger in the direction of the work to be done.⁷² The gift of the papal pennant was considered a sign of approval from the highest authority in the Christian Church. Outwardly, it was probably included at this point in the Tapestry to lend legitimacy to the whole sordid affair of the invasion.⁷³ However, in 1081, when the conflict between the pope and Emperor Henry IV peaked, William sided with the emperor, while Odo supported the pope, perhaps deepening the increasing rift between the two half-brothers, which reached the breaking point in 1082.⁷⁴ Thus, perhaps following his personal agenda, Odo had a hidden motive for having the papal pennant displayed repeatedly. He may have aimed to provide a post-Conquest audience, aware of William's neglect in supporting the pope's policies, with another example of William's failures to keep his promises. Perhaps, by undermining the confidence of William's subjects, Odo was attempting to destabilize William's fledgling dynasty for the benefit of William's other son, Robert Curthose, whom Odo actively supported.⁷⁵

In spite of Odo's covert disapproval of the manner in which William decided to go forward with the invasion, which may be implied by the action of the ostriches in the lower border of Scene 44, the inscription above Scene 45 makes it clear that the decision to devise a method to protect the region around Hastings was taken soon after William's arrival in England.⁷⁶ Was it a castle mound that the men were ordered to build up? Or, as McNulty favors, were the men ordered to dig a trench around an existing mound fort?⁷⁷ It would seem that William's men were set to work at both digging and building up a structure, expressing William's intention to commit himself and his troops to remain at all costs. In Scene 45, William's men have exchanged their arms for distinctive medieval shovels made of wood reinforced by metal tips. Perhaps as an anecdotal aside, a short episode depicting a couple of the men engaged in a duel with their shovels was included.

Over the years, several researchers made suggestions concerning this duel. Drawing a parallel between the Tapestry and the Column of Trajan, Werkmeister stated that the designer simply misinterpreted a scene from the column.⁷⁸ While mentioning this episode, Grape regarded it as "wholly unimportant" to the narrative as a whole.⁷⁹ However, the Tapestry seems to have been too carefully planned and executed to conclude that any given scene or part thereof is "wholly unimportant." William's men were undoubtedly restless at the prospect of going into battle, which may explain why the fight occurred, but does not explain why it was included in the Tapestry. However, if one considers that the second officer portrayed holding the pennant adorned with a cross may be William, as Hudson Gurney posits, the reason for inserting the trivial scene of two men fighting with shovels becomes clear.⁸⁰ First, the fact that William's men were disorderly under normal circumstances raises the question of their behavior under battle conditions. Secondly, if it was necessary for William to interfere in order to restore order, the ability of his officers to inspire respect and to command becomes suspect. As a final point, Odo, the most likely patron, may have showcased this particular trivial episode with the secret hope of raising these very issues in the mind of contemporary viewers/readers, in order to malign William for his (Odo's) own aggrandizement.

Another interesting detail of Scene 45 concerns the pennants with crosses held by the two officers and again in Scene 46 by William seated in majesty. As mentioned above, such reiterations, symbolically calling to mind William's connection to the pope

and the Church, and the ensuing disintegration of the good entente they previously enjoyed, may have been intended as reminders of William's "misconduct," which may have benefited Odo's cause. In this case, the pictographs may prove helpful in suggesting what is left unstated in the main field.

6.1. SCENE 45: A mocking lion, Vultures and Beasts in the Upper Border

Straddling Scenes 44 and 45, the second lion of a pair of beasts with protruding tongues continues to imply the constant taunting in which the two major antagonists, William and Harold, were engaged. The large vultures with long necks and black bodies pecking on the separation between the upper border and main field remind the audience of the nefarious consequences due to the stubborn, unforgiving and prideful attitudes of the antagonists. Of the two beasts that follow, McNulty only mentions that "these beasts, triple-tailed, hoofed, and perhaps horned are distinctive enough to suggest special significance, but their meaning is not self-evident."⁸¹ In his classification, Nicolas Hallé placed them with the unrecognizable "monstres diverses."⁸² However, while the feet now look as though they were repaired to look like hooves, these two beasts could be deformed dogs with floppy ears and bushy tails, paralleling the pair of dogs in the lower border that are holding an almost identical pose. The affronted beasts have turned their heads away from each other. The one on the left is looking at the pair of rapacious vultures, while the one on the right is gazing at the birds skidding to a stop and literally taken aback on the right. Perhaps, these defective beasts express William's and Harold's mentalities at this time in the narrative, since both had proved their deviousness in their mutual dealings. Therefore, neither should be surprised (the surprised birds on the right) to find himself in a predicament of his own making, when faced with the prospects of death and destruction on a massive scale (the large, black vultures on the left).

6.2. SCENE 45: Dogs, Birds and more Dogs in the Lower Border

In the lower border below Scene 45, two affronted beasts similar to dogs rather than lions parallel the taunting lions in the upper border. Advancing from left to right, the animal on the left seems to have reached the edge of his enclosure and is bumping into the diagonal bar with its left paw. It is barking at the large hound on the right that is barking back at it. Like outstretched tongues, directed barking may be considered a taunting action used by predators to intimidate their opponents. Thus, like the lions in the

upper border, these beasts may be symbolic of William and Harold and their despicable actions vis-à-vis one another, each one attempting to coerce the other into submission. The two birds following the dogs appear to be small birds of prey. Their heads are turned in the direction opposite their bodies. Each one is intent on looking upon the canine beasts on either side of them as though commenting disapprovingly on their respective actions.

Next to the birds and paralleling the strange beasts in the upper border, two dogs turn their heads away from each other as though distracted by the birds to their left and right, perhaps suggesting that neither William nor Harold knew which way to turn and were distracted by comments coming from all sides. The pairs of animals in both borders are acting as though completely overwhelmed by the actions taking place in the main field. They suggest and intensify the underlying fear, apprehension and frustration made visible in the main field through the incident of the two men engaged in bashing each other over the head with their shovels. They also emphasize the underlying specter of poor command skills on the part of William's officers, and the lack of obedience implied by the duel and William's probable intervention to restore order.

7. SCENE 46: "*HIC NVNTIATVM EST WILLELMO DE HAROLD(O)*"

Once more, the inscription above Scene 46 illustrates the patron's concern about giving just the right amount and type of information that he may have felt safe to give openly, in this case, that "news of Harold was brought to William." Indeed, it is a correct caption for the scene. However, if one reads the facial expression, placements, postures and gestures of the figures in the main field as well as the location, stance and movements of the animal pictographs in the borders, the meaning of Scene 46 is far richer. First, in the main field, William is seated in majesty, probably in a room of the newly built or re-built fort. A man coming from the right is approaching William who is holding a pennant adorned with a cross identical to the ones held by two officers (one of them probably William) in Scene 45.⁸³ According to Guillaume de Poitiers, this messenger was "a certain wealthy inhabitant of these parts, Norman in origin and Robert by name, the son of a noblewoman called Guimara."⁸⁴ Perhaps as a result, most scholars identify the man as Robert the Staller (Robert fitz Wimarc), whom the reader/viewer encountered earlier as the man who supported the dying Edward in Scene 27.⁸⁵

McNulty argues that the placement of the messenger shows that he is coming from the right. However, McNulty's reasoning seems to be flawed when he adds that "under the rule of reversal of time discussed above..., what is shown at the right in these two scenes precedes what is shown at the left."⁸⁶ McNulty fails to see that the movement of one man from right to left does not equate to a reversal of scenes; it probably only means that the messenger is coming from the area where Harold is, i.e., from the direction opposite the place where William landed and where he means to stay.

Robert's posture – bent knees and the heel of his left foot not touching the ground – indicates that he hurried to deliver his message to William. According to Guillaume de Poitiers, Robert warned William, "his overlord and blood-relation," that Harold had killed his brother Tostig and King Harald of Norway "in a single engagement and had wiped out their armies."⁸⁷ If it is indeed this information that William just received, the disconcerted, angry look on William's face is easily explained. In addition, William may have been reacting to the news that Harold intended to ambush the Normans, as Orderic Vitalis posits, and decided to preempt Harold's actions with a surprise attack of his own.⁸⁸ Likewise, if one believes Guillaume de Poitiers, the messenger's frankness about the worth of William's men, whom he calls "a rabble of miserable curs," offended William deeply, and also goes a long way in explaining the discontented expression on William's face.⁸⁹ Certainly, the duel in Scene 45 appears to be a vivid corroboration of the verbal aspersion against William's men. As a result of the news about Harold and of the searing words that Robert may have uttered, William's pride was piqued and he was furious, which probably prompted him to march out quickly and seek Harold to engage him and his men in battle, rather than take refuge behind strong walls, as Robert was supposed to have advised him to do.⁹⁰ An analysis of the borders in conjunction with the main field, and of the location, stances and movements of the pictographs therein may provide other elements which alter the reader's understanding acquired through the sole perusal of the main field.

7.1. SCENE 46: Surprised Birds in the Upper Border

In the upper border of Scene 45, the difficult-to-identify predator on the right turns its head to gaze in amazement at the two birds, which are skidding as they screech to a halt. From their sizes and appearances, one may conclude that these royal birds of prey are eagles. The eagle on the left is placed directly above William and the

messenger, while the one on the right is placed over the beginning of Scene 47, in which a man is setting an English house on fire. Because of its placement, the left bird probably symbolizes William and his dismay when he listened to the news Robert brought to him about Harold, i.e., Harold's intention to march against William and surprise him now that he had defeated and killed Harald and Tostig.⁹¹ At the same time, the attitude of the eagle on the right placed partly above the burning English house, probably suggests Harold's surprise when he found out that, in response to his (Harold's) victory at Stamford Bridge, William started to pillage and burn the area around Hastings, to force Harold's hand.

According to the Tapestry, wearing a discontented expression on his face (the corners of his mouth are turned downwards), William responded swiftly to the news of Harold's victory. With the index finger of his right hand, William points at Scene 47 in which men are burning a house, ostensibly referring to the destruction that he (William) was orchestrating in order to stop Harold (the eagle on the right). At the same time, by holding the papal pennant, William demonstrates that he has received the pope's blessing which he (William) may have interpreted as permission to use whatever means he deemed necessary to set himself on the English throne. With the fingers of his left hand directed at the name Harold in the inscriptions and at the dumbfounded eagle on the right, Robert, the messenger, is pointing out the news he is discussing with William. With the open palm of his right hand, Robert, who was familiar with the local environment and people, seems to agree with William's plan of action. Indeed, although surprised, William, who is unhindered by any restriction (he has the support of the pope and of some of his peers), in order to be victorious, must surprise (symbolized by the posture of the bird) Harold (the name in the inscription and the royal bird of prey), confuse him, and force him into action. William's chosen method consists of destroying the possessions of Harold's supporters and tenants, e.g., the burning house.

7.2. SCENE 46: Another Pair of Surprised Birds in the Lower Border

Instead of being taken aback as though by a violent shock, a pair of birds, similar to the eagles in the upper border are resolutely walking toward each other, while performing wing movements probably designed to direct the gaze of the viewer and link the events occurring in Scenes 46 and 47. These movements of wings are explained

below in conjunction with Scene 47, since the bird on the right belongs to the lower border of that scene.

8. SCENE 47: "HIC DOMVS INCENDITVR"

Perhaps in order to convey the result of the conversation between William and Robert, and to illustrate William's haste to destroy any support system that Harold may have maintained in the area around Hastings, the Normans are portrayed in the act of setting fire to a house. A woman, probably the mother of the small boy, whom she is pulling out of the burning house, is gazing up toward Heaven, perhaps finding solace in a silent prayer.

Knowing William's cruelty and vengeful nature, the burning house is a tame representation of the exactions that William and his men perpetrated. Since even the men under his command were deathly afraid of him, one may safely assume that they raped and plundered their way through the English towns and countryside with William's consent.⁹² After examining Scenes 44, 45 and 46, there is little doubt that the men who are setting the house on fire are Normans.⁹³ In fact, McLynn argues convincingly that:

There was method in the brutality, for unless he [William] could dent Harold's prestige, authority and credibility there seemed no way the vital early battle could be fought. On the other hand, Harold was bound to rise to the bait, for contemporary notions of honor demanded immediate retaliation in such a case, or the entire notion of lordship would fail.⁹⁴

Even R. A. Brown, who is partial to William, mentions that "the ravaging of the countryside, which was Godwinson prattrimony, about Hastings is said by William of Poitiers to have provoked Harold to yet greater haste..."⁹⁵

Conversely, McNulty sustains the improbable argument that the men were Anglo-Saxons resorting to implementing a scorched earth policy at Harold's behest.⁹⁶ To support his argument, McNulty posits that the Scenes 46 and 47 are reversed and that the messenger was reporting events that had already taken place, i.e., the actions of Harold and his followers. As illustrated in the above explanation of Scene 46, there is no reversal. Additionally, if one takes into account William's mentality and track record, and considers the placements, postures and gestures of the figures in the center field, as well as the location, stance and movements of the animal pictographs in the borders, McNulty's position becomes unrealistic.

8.1. SCENE 47: An Eagle and Predators in the Upper Border

The second eagle of the pair, first mentioned in Scene 46, is also reacting as though faced with someone or something beyond belief. From its position, and from the gesture of the messenger, one may deduce that the eagle is probably taken aback violently in astonishment, perhaps by the content of the verbal exchange between William and Robert, the messenger. An ornate cruciform plant, the first of its kind in the Tapestry, is inserted between the two diagonal bars that separate the eagles. In the upper border of Scene 47, an object similar to a cross, in this case, devoid of vegetal appendages, is again placed between the diagonals separating the eagle on the right, from the first predator on its right. Yet another cruciform shape, similar but larger than the previous one, is located between the diagonal bars that separate the two predators. The repetition of the cross motif in the main field (on the pennants) and in the border (cruciform plants and objects) may have been doubly significant. Overtly, this device may have been used to remind the audience of William's favorable dealings with Pope Alexander II (1061-1073), who endorsed his (William's) efforts to secure the English crown. Covertly, because Odo remained faithful to the papacy, it is possible that the motif was used to hint at William's change of allegiance after the Conquest (when the Tapestry was probably being manufactured). Indeed, when it came to investitures and the control of Church affairs, William sided with Emperor Henry IV against Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085).⁹⁷ If Odo's propagandistic endeavors were successful, William's reputation as a leader respectful of the Pope and the Church was bound to suffer. Although cleverly hidden, such subversive actions on Odo's part may have contributed greatly to enlarge the existing breach between the two brothers, if William ever saw the Tapestry, and/or was made aware of its contents.⁹⁸

The two predators that follow the eagles are neither truly lions nor hounds: perhaps the defective appearance of these beast is an attempt to emphasize the descent of the two antagonists into their own private hell generated by their mutual fixation on similar goals: William to retrieve the English crown from Harold; and, Harold, having saved the crown once from Harald Hardrada and from his (Harold's) brother Tostig, to prevent William from acquiring it. Obsession often turns the sanest men into a degraded state, which the snarling, taunting beasts in the upper border seem to embody. The beast on the left, with its tongue protruding straight from its open jaws, has almost reached the

diagonals framing the cross. These diagonals separate the taunting beast on the left from the predator on the right, which is apparently smiling as it makes its approach. The situation of these two beasts is comparable to William's and Harold's: in imitation of the snarling and mocking beast on the left, which is bouncing hastily to catch the other predator (Harold) off guard, William seems to react angrily, giving the order to lay waste Harold's land, probably because he just heard from the messenger that Harold won the battle at Stamford Bridge. Unaware of William's reaction, the victorious Harold (the beast on the right) seems to be content and to exude self-confidence (the beast on the right with a smiling face). Yet, the apparently content beast on the right with its assured, bouncing gait may suggest to the observer that, overconfident in his ability to win, Harold probably believed that he could also defeat William.⁹⁹

8.2. SCENE 47: Birds and Predators in the Lower Border

The animals in the lower border bring their own twist to the story depicted in the center field, already amended by the analysis of the pictographs in the upper border. The birds in the lower border (one below Scene 46, the other below Scene 47) are similar to the eagles in the upper border, but may also function as messengers, like the human messenger in the center field bringing news to William. Indeed, a close analysis of the birds' position, stance and movements suggests that they fulfill a similar function. With wings pointing upward, these birds form a matrix of interest in William, the messenger, the eagles in the upper border, the predators and the burning house. The bird on the left, placed below William in Scene 46, is designating William with its right wing, while pointing with its left wing at the men setting fire to a house, and beyond the burning house at the snarling, mocking, dark predator/dog in the upper border. Thus, through the directed movement of its wings, the bird on the left links William, the black predator in the upper margin, and the man on the left of the burning house, effectively establishing that the snarling beast symbolizes William acting in frustration to get back at Harold, and that the men engaged in the violent act depicted in Scene 47 are William's men.

The bird on the right, below the burning house and one of the pro-Norman invaders setting fire to it, is pointing at Robert, the messenger, with its right wing while directing its left wing at the woman and child stepping out of the burning house and at the black beast on the right bouncing self-confidently in the direction of the beast of the same color on the left. Thus, another bird is used to form a second matrix of interest linking

the messenger and his message, the Anglo-Saxon woman and child, and the predator on the right (upper border) that is still relatively far from the other beast and from where the fire is destroying the house. In this manner, the patron was probably suggesting that William was not only a man who held grudges (the snarling, dark colored beast in the upper border), but one who would stop at nothing to achieve his goals: to remove the potential threats to Norman security (the burning house), and, at the same time, to provoke Harold (the bouncing black beast on the right), whose reactions he had observed first hand during the Brittany Campaign, into act without careful forethought.

Overtly, the fact that the Anglo-Saxon woman was alone with her child may be interpreted as proof that her husband was away at war, fighting on Harold's side. As a result, he and his family may have been considered dangerous to William's cause, explaining the need to destroy their house and their goods. Covertly, while the destruction of the personal property of the enemy was considered routine in medieval warfare, the fact that a woman and child are used, was probably meant to emphasize the level of unconcern William demonstrated during this brutal phase of the Conquest. The implication of such an uncaring attitude on the part of the Norman leader may have been included in the hope of eliciting sentiments of discomfort and disapproval from some members of the viewing public, since no matter how inured to violence early medieval society may have been, compassionate people have normally disagreed with such vicious deeds committed against a woman and child.

Next to the bird in the lower border, and paralleling the dark, snarling beast in the upper border, a bouncing dog expresses its contentment by playing with its tail. Because of its placement vis-à-vis the burning house and the snarling beast, this type of *canis* was probably meant to symbolize William who, in spite of his sour look in the main field of Scene 46, was expressing his satisfaction vicariously through the playful beast. It is almost certain that William was satisfied that the burning house was probably located in an area of England that belonged to Harold. Indeed, contrary to McNulty's argument, contemporary or near-contemporary chronicles, even the pro-Norman writings of Guillaume de Poitiers, offer compelling evidence that William's army ravaged this part of England.¹⁰⁰

The beast on the right is another type of hybrid predator that resembles a dog, yet has the mane and tufted tail of a lion. From its posture and the expression on its face,

one may conclude that the beast is thoroughly surprised at the spectacle unfolding before its eyes. This not entirely noble beast was probably meant to symbolize Harold, whose right to the English throne was suspect. As Harold neared Hastings, he saw with dismay the havoc created by William and his men. Without an examination of the borders, the main field of Scene 47 may be interpreted as another act of war attributable to either side. However, once the reader takes into account the animal pictographs, their location, positions and movements, it is difficult to attribute the episode of the burning house to Harold and his men. The last scene in Chapter 7, Scene 47, is also the last scene prior to the Normans leaving their fort to find and fight Harold, his housecarls and his fyrdmen.

9. CONCLUSION

As one reviews Scenes 40 through 47, it is necessary to keep in mind the growing tension between William and Odo at the time of the Tapestry's production, which probably goes a long way to explain why Odo may intentionally have portrayed the Norman king in a less than favorable light. Thus, those who may still wonder why Odo tried to disparage his half-brother and king by using numerous innuendos, quips and witticisms in the borders above and below pivotal points in the central panel, may be reminded of William's growing opposition to Odo's meddling ambitions, and to Odo's attempts to sabotage William's choice of an heir. Indeed, perhaps William's decision to imprison Odo was not solely determined by Odo's desire to become pope, but rather by Odo's resolution to fight on the side of Robert Curthose, together with many of "the young bloods of Normandy," against William and William Rufus, the son whom William favored.¹⁰¹ As a matter of course, when promoting himself and his cause, Odo could not be obvious in his detractions without risking retribution from William. However, the marginal areas of the Tapestry offered the patron (probably Odo) the ideal venue for venting his frustration and resentment, while building his case against William. Thus, the animal pictographs seem not only to enrich the narrative with details, and enliven the epic with satiric remarks, but also were probably meant to convey the patron's (Odo's?) propagandistic efforts which seem now more clearly defined as being especially directed against William.

In Scenes 40 through 47, Odo, the likely patron, chose several elements to get his point across. Some are similar to those used in previous areas of the Tapestry, i.e., the

fable of the Lion's Share whose story line and moral resembles *The Lion hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat* illustrated in the lower border of Scene 7; others are the various iterations of now familiar animals such as lions, griffins, winged lions, vultures, dogs, and birds; yet, in some instances, the variations in their sizes, appearances, placements and movements are probably used to further modulate the meaning of the episode depicted in the main field. Additionally, many birds may be identified as carrier pigeons, which, besides their role as news bearers, are used to delineate special areas of interest. Finally, ostriches are illustrated for the first time in the Tapestry.

In all probability, the fable of *The Lion's Share* was introduced, in the upper border of Scene 40, to serve as a complement and reminder of the fable with a similar story line and moral, i.e., *The Lion hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, illustrated in the lower border of Scene 7. By this device, the patron drew a parallel between the two protagonists both landing on foreign soil because of purported promises made and broken, perhaps insinuating that William was just as guilty of breaking promises as Harold ever was. Likewise, elements that were not part of the fable below Scene 7, such as double diagonals to separate the animals, were inserted above Scene 40. Thus, if one considers Odo to be the patron, *The Lion's Share* may exemplify his sarcastic remarks regarding the difficulties William probably experienced because of distance, when he tried to communicate with potential allies, i.e., Tostig and Harald Hardrada, and because of language and cultural barriers, when he rallied to his side the foreign mercenaries whom he lured with promises of loot and land.

Besides the usual representation of lions, dogs and carrion birds, an increased number of winged lions may be noted, perhaps to highlight the presence of William and his pro-Norman forces in England. A couple of winged lions above the banquet scene (Scene 43) stand out especially because of the differences in their sizes, placements, postures, deportments and colors. As explained above, these differences may reflect the patron's desire to aggrandize himself at the expense of William, whom he intentionally disparages through the smaller, bi-colored, self-satisfied (preening) winged lion with the twisted posture reflecting William's twisted inner nature. In addition, two pairs of ostriches play an important role in this part of the Tapestry, and may be interpreted on several levels. First, overtly, these birds may have been representative of the confidence that William and his followers had in God's grace (the ostrich that trusts the sun to hatch

its egg). Secondly, covertly, the ostriches (symbolizing impurity and cruelty) placed first below the men who are preparing the food they pillaged from the local inhabitants, then below Odo, William and Robert as they met for a final, decisive meeting before Hastings (Scene 44), were possibly meant to remind the audience that William and his pro-Norman allies turned the area around Hastings into a barren wasteland. Thirdly, on another level, in conjunction with the lone raven with the double striped neck, with the pairs of predatory beasts surrounding the second pair of ostriches, and with the placements, postures and gestures of the three figures in the main field, the second pair of ostriches seems to suggest Odo's reluctance at supporting the manner in which William's decided to force William to fight.

Besides the use of animal pictographs to symbolize the psychological attributes of the two opponents and their allies, birds, possibly carrier pigeons, continue to serve as messengers. The extended wings of these birds are utilized as connecting devices to articulate mute verbal exchanges and the patron's imbedded message. Thus, in Scene 46, the bird on the left in the lower border links individual figures (William and the messenger), other birds (the eagles taken aback in surprise and probably expressing William's reaction to the news), predators flanking the birds on all sides, and a snarling, taunting, darkly colored predatory beast in the upper border, with the actions occurring in the main field, i.e., William receiving news and the burning of the house. The connections thus established point to the snarling beast as a probable symbol for William, who, frustrated with Harold's lack of response, decided to force his (Harold's) hand by ravaging the land. Additionally, the innuendos provided, most likely by Odo, were probably meant to lead a post-Conquest audience to acknowledge that William's invasion was not legitimate and that, no matter how much William tried to justify his actions and maintain that he was the rightful heir, he had no right to invade and ravage England.¹⁰²

The bird on the right, below Scene 47, was used in a similar manner, i.e., to connect the messenger and his message, William, the English woman and her child (who are fleeing the burning house), and the predator in the upper right hand corner of the scene (probably Harold on his way back from Stamford Bridge). Together with the postures, placements and gestures of figures in the main field, the linkage provided by the wings of this particular bird forms a nexus of implications probably meant to convey the patron's message that William would stop at nothing to reach his goal.

As Chapter 7 ends, Odo's pervasive influence can be strongly felt. From being subtle in the first thirty-four scenes of the Tapestry, there is a marked increase in Odo's propagandistic innuendos and sarcastic, even dilatory, yet still veiled comments concerning William and the situation prior to the Conquest. Indeed, the choice and display in the borders of carefully selected pictographs endows them with a multi-faceted symbolism. By this mechanism, the patron significantly increases the impact of the ideas and mind-set that he may have wanted to bring to bear on post-Conquest history. As research on Scenes 40 to 47 comes to an end, one is compelled to admire the "Machiavellian" mind of the patron, probably Odo, as he succeeds in imparting his side of the story through the astute use of the placements, postures, and gestures of the participants, combined with the sparse wording of the inscription and the positioning, stance and movements of the pictographs in the borders, while leaving enough room for other and more benign interpretations.

¹ McLynn (1999): 239.

² McNulty (1989): 25.

³ McLynn (1999): 239.

⁴ Fowke (1913): 101; McNulty (1989): 120.

⁵ Rud (2002): 69.

⁶ For a discussion of Scene 41, see Fowke (1913): 101; S. A. Brown (1977): 71; Wilson (1985): 186; Grape (1994): 137; Musset (2002): 206-207; Rud (2002): 69.

⁷ McNulty (1989): 26.

⁸ Hicks (1992): 263 & n. 26.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 262.

¹⁰ Herrmann (1964): 48.

¹¹ Kopito, ed. (2002): 8-9.

¹² For the symbolism of the jackal, see Cazenave, ed. (1996): 116; Chevalier & Gheerbrant (2000): 199-200.

¹³ Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 192; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2(1969): 138-40, 142; McLynn (1999): 178-179, 187-188; R. A. Brown (2000): 123.

¹⁴ McLynn (1999): 188-189; R. A. Brown (2000): 123, 134.

¹⁵ McLynn (1999): 185-186.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 185-186.

¹⁷ McNulty (1989): 121.

¹⁸ McLynn (1999): 178-179.

¹⁹ McNulty (1989): 123.

²⁰ Bernstein (1986): 216.

²¹ Rud (2002): 69.

²² Fowke (1913): 101.

²³ McNulty (1989): 121.

²⁴ For comments about the birds in the upper border of Scene 6, see McNulty (1989): 89, "a."

- ²⁵ For Wadard, see Fowke (1913): 102-103; Stenton (1957): 21; McNulty (1989): 122; Brooks & Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 68-69; Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 94 and n. 2; Gameson (1997): 171; Prentout, in Gameson ed. (1997): 26-30; Musset (2002): 208; Rud (2002): 69.
- ²⁶ McLynn (1999): 210; Musset (2002): 210.
- ²⁷ For comments on Scene 42, see Fowke (1913): 103-104; Bertrand (1994): 21; Grape (1994): 365; Bertrand and Lemagnen (1996): 20; Musset (2002): 210-211; Rud (2002): 70.
- ²⁸ McNulty (1989): 123.
- ²⁹ For a description of the ostrich (*struthiocamelus* in Latin, or *structocamelon* in Greek, i.e., bird-camel), see Carmody, ed., *Physiologus, Versio B* (1939): XXVII, *Asida* (presumably from the Hebrew *assida*); for later descriptions found in Bestiaries, see Bianciotto (1995): 45 (*Le Bestiaire* de Pierre de Beauvais, bef. 1217), and 95 (*Le Bestiaire divin*, Guillaume le Clerc de Normandie, c. 1210-1211). For a representation of the ostrich with camel feet, see *Bestiary*, early 13th cent., Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 1511, illustrated in Payne (1990): 69; and in Grape (1994): 41, fig. 28.
- ³⁰ McNulty (1989): 1.
- ³¹ For the quote, *Ibidem*, 2.
- ³² *Physiologus*, "B" Carmody, ed. (1939): XXVII, *Asida*.
- ³³ For the symbolism of the ostrich see *Isidorus*, XII, VII, *De Avibus*, André, ed. (1986): 20; Rabannus Maurus, *De rerum naturis*, PL CXI: 245C; D: 254B; Rabannus Maurus, *Allegoriae*, PL CXII: 1061; Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, PL LXXVI: 578; Grape (1994): 41-42; Cazenave (1996): 62; Voisenet (2000): 122-23; For reference to the negative symbolism of the ostrich in Scriptures, see Lev. 11:16; Deut. 14:15; Is. 13:21; Jeremiah 50:39; Mich. 1:8.
- ³⁴ Freeman, 3 (1875): 412, 728; Fowke (1913): 113.
- ³⁵ For the negative symbolism of the ostrich, see above n. 33. For the quote, see Voisenet (2000): 122 (please note that the translation from the French is mine).
- ³⁶ For the manner in which the Tapestry may have been read (perhaps with the help of troubadours), see Brilliant, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 119; For William's character traits, see Douglas (1964): 15 and Appendix A; McLynn (1999): 95, 104; and R. A. Brown (2000): 48-49.
- ³⁷ For the possible identities of the guests, Fowke (1913): 106; Foys (1998): 367-68.
- ³⁸ Lewis (1999): 119-120.
- ³⁹ Fowke (1913): 105-106; Brooks & Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 75; Musset (2002): 210.
- ⁴⁰ Brooks & Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 75.
- ⁴¹ *Gospel Book of St. Augustine*, late 6th century Italian manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MS. 286, f. 125r. For the similarity of the table in Scene 43 to a table of the Last Supper, see L. H. Loomis, "The Table of the Last Supper in Religious Secular Iconography," *Art Studies*, 5 (1927): 71-90; Dodwell, "La miniature anglo-saxonne," *Les dossiers de l'archéologie*, 14 (1976): 56-63, esp. 62; Bernstein (1986): 48-49 and fig. 18; Grape (1994): 31, 82 n. 5; Brooks & Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 75-76, 74 n. 47; Musset (2002): 210.
- ⁴² Grape (1994): 30.
- ⁴³ Concerning this banquet, see Bertrand (1994): 21; Rud (2002): 70; and S. A. Brown (1977): 73, who doubts its occurrence because she has found no literary counterpart describing a meal prior to the Battle of Hastings.
- ⁴⁴ Lewis (1999): 120.
- ⁴⁵ Grape (1994): 30-31; Brooks & Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 74; Foys (1998): 368.
- ⁴⁶ Parisse (1983): 102.
- ⁴⁷ For the identification of the bearded man seated next to William, as Roger, Earl of Beaumont, a.k.a. "The Beard," or Roger "à la barbe," see Fowke (1913): 106, n. 1; Jean Verrier, *The Bayeux Embroidery known as Queen Mathilda's Tapestry* (1946): 26; Parisse (1983): 102; and Bertrand (1994): 21; Cowdrey, in Gameson (1997): 94, n.2, wonders "Can this privileged figure be Turolf?"
- ⁴⁸ Gibbs-Smith (1973): 10.
- ⁴⁹ Bernstein (1986): 138.
- ⁵⁰ Rumors of Edward's sainthood circulated widely after his death. Regarded as a saint, he was canonized in 1161 by Pope Alexander III.
- ⁵¹ McNulty (1989): 125.

- ⁵² Ibidem, 125.
- ⁵³ For Edward's character and personality, and for an explanation of his actions, see Michael Winterbottom, "Notes on the Life of Edward the Confessor," *Medium Aevum*, 56 (1987): 82-84; Simon Keynes, "The Aethelings in Normandy," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 13 (1990): 173-205; *Vita Edwardi*, Frank Barlow, ed. and trans. (1992): 17-19. For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 13.
- ⁵⁴ McLynn (1999): 215.
- ⁵⁵ Ibidem, 215.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 215.
- ⁵⁷ For the raven/crow as a bird of bad omen, see Cazenave, ed. (1989): 163-64; Chevalier & Gheerbrant (2000): 285-86.
- ⁵⁸ For Scene 44, see Gibbs-Smith (1957): 171; Grape (1994): 54; Gameson (1997): 177; Lewis (1999): 120-121; Musset (2002): 212-213; Rud (2002): 71.
- ⁵⁹ For a partial interpretation of Scene 44, see especially, Lewis (1999): 120-121.
- ⁶⁰ For this type of illustrations on coins, see Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (1996): 109, figs. 89a, 89b; 300, fig. 231b.
- ⁶¹ For the quote, see Bernstein (1986): 43. For this type of "Roman" buildings in the BT, see Vivian Mann, "Architectural Conventions on the Bayeux Tapestry," *Marsyas*, 17(1974): 59-65, esp. 62; Bernstein (1986): 42, fig. 9, Utrecht Psalter, Reims, c. 820; Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS Script, Eccl. 484, Psalm 57 (58), f. 32v.
- ⁶² For the meaning of the left side, see Garnier, 1(1982): 89; Girault (1992): 8.
- ⁶³ For the meaning of the open palm, see above Chap. 3, 132 n. 87.
- ⁶⁴ For the relevance of Robert de Mortain's action, see Cowdrey, in Gameson (1997): 95.
- ⁶⁵ For other depictions of pairs of taunting lions, see Scene 1, upper border, juncture of Scenes 8 and 9, 18, lower border, juncture of Scenes 22-23, 37, 51, 57.
- ⁶⁶ For the zigzag pattern, see Bernstein (1986): 125-26; McNulty (1989): 111, n. "e".
- ⁶⁷ For the ostrich, see above ns. 29 and 33.
- ⁶⁸ For the meaning of left vs. right see above n. 62.
- ⁶⁹ William directed the destructive efforts of his men toward Harold's lands, especially the lands that had been Norman possessions in the past, such as "the lands at Steyning seized from the abbey of Fécamp," see D. Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions* (1962): 19-21; J. F. A. Mason, "The Rapes of Sussex and the Norman Conquest," *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 102(1964): 75-77; for the quote see McLynn (1999): 212.
- ⁷⁰ For the wording and spelling of the inscription, see Fowke (1913): 110; Roger Sherman Loomis, "The Origin and Date of the Bayeux Embroidery," *Art Bulletin*, 6 (1923): 3-7, see esp. 3-4; Wilson (1985): 204.
- ⁷¹ For the meaning of the words in the inscription, see R. A. Brown, in Stenton ed. (1957): 82; Wilson (1985): 215. For the tools used, see Fowke (1913): 109.
- ⁷² For the identification of the man as one of William's officers, see R. A. Brown (2000): 128 n. 39; Gibbs-Smith (1973): 13.
- ⁷³ P. Jaffe, ed., *Monumenta Gregoriana* (1865): 414-416; Morton, (1975): 362-82; McLynn (1999): 182-183, and ns. 5 and 6.
- ⁷⁴ Zumthor (1978): 411.
- ⁷⁵ S. A. Brown (1977): 144, uses the argument of the tension between the new pope & William to deny the possibility that the pennant was the papal gift.
- ⁷⁶ According to Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 134; and Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 168, a castle was first built at Pevensey, then another one was erected at Hastings; *ASC*, "D," sub anno 1066, only mentions the building of a fortified mound at Hastings.
- ⁷⁷ For a discussion of the type of construction in which the Normans were engaged at and around Hastings, see E. S. Armitage, *Early Norman Castles of the British Isles* (1912): 87-88; Fowke (1913): 109; F.H. Baring, "Hastings Castle, 1050-1150," *Sussex Archeological Collections*, LVII (1915): 120-25; R. A. Brown, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 83; Brian Hope-Taylor, "Norman Castles," *Scientific American*, 198:3 (March 1958): 42-48; B. A. Barker and K. J. Baron, "Excavation at Hastings Castle," *Archeological Journal*, 134 (1977): 80-100, esp. 80-88; McNulty (1989): 124; Musset (2002): 214.
- ⁷⁸ Werkmeister (1976): 535-590, esp. 540.
- ⁷⁹ Grape (1994): 25.

- ⁸⁰ Hudson Gurney, "Observations on the Bayeux Tapestry," *Archaeologia*, 18 (1817): 359-370, see esp. 368.
- ⁸¹ For the "triple-tailed" animals, see Yapp (1987): 51. For the quote, see McNulty (1989): 127.
- ⁸² Hallé (1987): 85.
- ⁸³ McNulty (1989): 126.
- ⁸⁴ For the quote, see Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 170; also in Thorpe, ed. (1973): 44.
- ⁸⁵ For Robert the Staller, see Fowke (1913): 111; Gibbs-Smith (1957): 172; Douglas (1964): 290; S. A. Brown (1977): 77; R. A. Brown (1984): 30, n. 41; McLynn (1999): 211; R. A. Brown (2000): 140, and n. 103.
- ⁸⁶ McNulty (1989): 48.
- ⁸⁷ For the quotes, see Guillaume de Poitiers, in Thorpe, ed. (1973): 44.
- ⁸⁸ Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 172.
- ⁸⁹ Guillaume de Poitiers, in Thorpe, ed. (1973): 44.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 44.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 44.
- ⁹² For events that reveal William's character and personality, see *ASC*, "E," 1086, 1987; Freeman, 3 (1875): 263-66; Douglas (1964): 372; McLynn (1999): 102-103.
- ⁹³ Fowke (1913): 113; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 180; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 180; *Carmen*, Morton & Muntz, eds. (1972): 10-12; Grape (1994): 25; Gameson (1997): 158-159.
- ⁹⁴ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 212.
- ⁹⁵ For the quote, see R. A. Brown (2000): 140. For William's ravages, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 411-12, 728-29; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 168, 180; Douglas (1964): 196; McLynn (1999): 213; R. A. Brown (2000): 140.
- ⁹⁶ McNulty (1989): 48.
- ⁹⁷ For William's interactions with Pope Gregory VII, see Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1971): 675; Zumthor (1978): 411-412; Brown (2002): 221, and n. 256.
- ⁹⁸ Did William ever see the Tapestry? See Cowdrey, in Gameson (1997): 97, and n. 12.
- ⁹⁹ For Harold's overconfidence, see McLynn (1999): 213; R. A. Brown (2002): 93.
- ¹⁰⁰ Fowke (1913): 113; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 180; *Carmen*, Morton & Muntz, eds. (1972): 10; Wilson (1985): 189; Gameson (1997) 158-159, and n. 5.
- ¹⁰¹ For Robert Curthose, see Brown (2000): 172.
- ¹⁰² For the reasons why William felt justified in conquering England, see Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 133; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 149; 180 n. 26; Orderic Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. 2(1969): 140-41; Freeman, 3(1869): 262; Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power* (1988): 192-229.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

SCENES 48 – 58

We do not know whether William the Conqueror ever set eyes upon the Tapestry; we may reasonably wonder whether, if he did, he was pleased by what he saw.¹

“Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry”

H.E.J. Cowdrey

It is assumed that these [illustrations of birds and mammals in the margins, both real and mythical] are cryptic comments on the main action, but the exact hermeneutics of these animal figures has proved elusive. What we can say with certainty is that there is a very clear allegorical slant to the Tapestry.²

1066. The Year of the Three Battles

Frank McLynn

H. E. J. Cowdrey raises an interesting point when he wonders how William the Conqueror may have reacted to the Tapestry, especially if one considers that Odo, the most likely patron, probably aimed to shape the collective memory of his contemporaries with his own brand of history in order to fulfill his personal propagandistic agenda. In fact, William may have been quite displeased with the rendition of events as illustrated in the Tapestry -- but only if he were able to perceive the latent, incisive and derisive comments woven into its fabric. William, whose moodiness and outbursts of anger are well-documented, may have shown his displeasure by exploding into one of his famous rages.³

As I continue to examine and analyze the borders of the Tapestry, in conjunction with the main field and the inscriptions, there is little doubt that the “illustrations of birds and mammals in the margins, both real and mythical are cryptic comments on the main action.”⁴ However, contrary to McLynn’s assertion, the pictographs in the borders may be cryptic at first glance, but their interpretation does not always prove as ‘elusive’ as a superficial overview may convince a distracted or overwhelmed reader. Although a twenty-first century reader may be unable to uncover and grasp completely the various meanings hidden in the fabric of the Tapestry, if one accepts that the Tapestry is a piece of propaganda, not pro-William, but rather pro-Odo, it is easier to unravel the latent

asides that contribute to enrich it. Indeed, the layers of meanings one encounters when analyzing the various elements of the Tapestry are usually explainable if one considers the possibility of a covert agenda, probably that of the patron, most likely Odo.

In Chapter 8, the positioning, stances and movements of the pictographs in the borders continue to clarify the actions depicted in the main field, and enlighten the reader/viewer; they also help qualify the moods, frames of mind and intentions of the protagonists on the verge of fighting a decisive battle. However, it is important to remember that these explanations and clarifications are probably heavily influenced by the presumptive patron, Odo, who had a personal agenda to fulfill, and who plotted against William, and, against William's chosen heir, William Rufus, his third son, a young man who lacked his father's "creative energy and ambition," and whom Paul Zumthor describes as "plus violent que fort, mêlant à la bravoure la fourberie, prodigue, mondain sans nuances, orgueilleux mais inculte, cruel, ennemi des clercs..."⁵ Thus, while one may expect to find deleterious comments about Harold, the so-called "villain" of the epic, it should come as no surprise to also find latent, caustic remarks, detrimental to William, and his chosen heir, strewn cleverly in the Tapestry borders.

1. **SCENE 48a: "HIC MILITES EXIERVNT DE HESTENGA ..."**

Scene 48 seems to be divided naturally into two parts by a cluster of trees. Thus, in order to facilitate the reading of this scene, I have divided it in two parts: 48a and 48b. Scene 48a is delineated on the left by the structures probably meant to represent the fort at Hastings, and on the right by three exotic trees, suggesting the forested hills that existed around this area. As though to emphasize the speed of departure of William's men, the door to the fort has been left open. In front of the open door stands a man, dressed in full armor, whom researchers have identified as William holding a pennant similar to the one in Scene 46, even though in the case of Scene 48a the design of the cross is partially hidden.⁶ It seems that William is waiting for his mount to join the knights hurrying away. It is interesting to note that the horse being brought to William, probably by Walter Giffard, Lord of Longueville, is a black stallion displaying a full erection.⁷ Perhaps, in an age which considered maleness to be a sign of power, this particular portrayal of the stallion was meant to emphasize William's powerful position as he set out to fight Harold. Additionally, the fact that the stallion was the gift of a king (the Spanish King, Alfonso of Leon), together with the fact that William is holding the

Pope's gift, seems to infer that William received the approval of the Church and of his peers prior to undertaking the Conquest of England.⁸ Thus, overtly, this apparently sundry episode may have been inserted to reinforce the much debated righteousness of William's pretensions. Yet, when one examines both borders, one discovers that Scene 48a provides a perfect tool to remind a post-Conquest audience of William's frailties and disloyalties once he had achieved his goal, i.e., become king of England.

1.1. **SCENE 48a: Ostriches and Winged Lions in the Upper Border**

For the third time since the arrival of William on English soil, birds identifiable as ostriches, because of their camel-like feet and legs, are illustrated in the Tapestry. Curiously, overlooking the description of the ostrich found in the *Physiologus* and in medieval bestiaries, McNulty identifies these birds erroneously as "dragons."⁹ These ostriches, located in the upper border of Scene 48a, are depicted above William and the words *MILITES EXIERVNT*, referring to the soldiers who left the fort in order to fight. On one level, it is fitting that birds whom medieval society considered to be synonymous with disaster, and that were prone to inhabit desolate areas, be represented in conjunction with soldiers about to turn many areas around Hastings into "wasta" through their killing and plunder. On another level, the negative symbolism of the ostrich also applies to William, who is about to unleash destructive forces upon the land.

To the right of the ostriches, a pair of affronted winged lions is probably meant as a metaphor for Norman noble strength, especially since the one on the left hovers over William's powerful stallion. The winged lions' growling and combative attitudes seem to reflect the mood of William and his followers as they prepare to fight. However, the smaller winged lion on the right is defective, i.e., it has no ears, perhaps suggesting that from then on William, who had exchanged many messages with Harold, was no longer open to parley.¹⁰

1.2. **SCENE 48a: Large Ravens and Barking Dogs in the Lower Border**

In the lower border, ravens are using their carefully preened wings to point in opposite directions: at the lions to the left, below Scene 47, and at the excited dogs yapping at the top of their lungs located to the right. Besides being necrophagous birds, especially fond of pecking the eyes of the dead, according to Rabannus Maurus, ravens are like indecent men who act under cover of night to hide their evil deeds.¹¹ Because of their placement

directly below the open fort, and below William and his aide, these birds seem to relate and qualify the men and the episode represented above on several levels. First, remnants of Nordic myths lingered in the early medieval period, perhaps inferring that ravens played a neutral role as messengers between gods and humans.¹² Secondly, because of their necrophagous activities, ravens seem to be fitting symbols for men who are about to kill indiscriminately and wreak havoc on the surrounding countryside. Thirdly, the ravens may suggest that William intended to act with raven-like stealth in order to outwit Harold. To accomplish his aim, he probably sent his men to search for Harold “before daybreak” with the intention of surprising him.¹³ Fourthly, with their wings used as semaphores, the ravens act as links between the lions on the left and the dogs on the right, perhaps continuing to hint at William’s need to appear noble and righteous (lions) at all costs, while he was involved in covert, despicable acts (dogs). Indeed, as long as William believed that his villainous actions were not common knowledge, he had no qualms about performing ignoble acts of “cold cruelty,” especially if it meant reaching his goals.¹⁴

The two dogs following the ravens in the lower border may be examined on several levels. On one level, it is the natural reaction of a dog to bark and howl in the midst of the confusion and loud noises created by groups of men in full armor riding to war. On another level, the barking of dogs may have been intended to signal to the audience that William’s plan to surprise Harold failed. On yet another level, these two canes are connected to the lions below Scene 47, via the ravens’ wings, and parallel the two winged lions in the upper border. Because of their symbolism, and of their respective placements and interlinked positions, these sets of beasts may be interpreted as continued insinuations regarding William’s character traits. It was common knowledge at court that, disturbed by his grim childhood, William had the tendency to be a cruel, conniving hypocrite (ostrich), as well as a low-born *canaille* (dog) who performed despicable acts surreptitiously under the guise of nobility and righteousness (lions and winged lions), and would have gone to any length to obtain what he most desired, i.e., the English crown.¹⁵ The two carrier pigeons to the right of the dogs in the lower border link the two parts of Scene 48. Birds of this type have been used repeatedly in the borders of the Tapestry, especially when needed to indicate the spreading of news or rumors.

Thus, to summarize Scene 48a, the borders seem to have transformed a straightforward scene representing an aide bringing William his horse to ride into battle, into an episode pregnant with latent meaning. Through the ostriches in the upper border, their placements, postures and actions, it is possible to infer that, as William was about to mount his stallion, he was well-aware that his fight was neither gallant, nor righteous. On the contrary, William probably knew that it was a dangerous sham which would lead to desolation (ostriches) and carnage (ravens). After a comprehensive examination of Scene 48a, it seems that the borders of the Tapestry continue to alter the depiction of the Norman leader. While, William wanted to be thought of and was represented as noble and powerful (like the lions below, and the winged lions above), he and his followers were but common, low-born *canailles* (like the barking dogs below) who failed to surprise Harold.¹⁶

2. SCENE 48b: “...*ET VENERVNT AD PRELIVM CONTRA HAROLDVM REGE*”

Three exotic looking trees separate Scenes 48a and 48b as though to signal a complete change. Indeed, the time to pause and reflect, connive and plot was past. Probably stirred into rapid response by William's cruel treatment of his (Harold's) subjects, Harold was on the move, and coming closer. William, who had the masts of his vessels removed (Scene 39), probably in order to avoid the temptation to sail back to Normandy, was forging ahead with his troops, prepared to face whatever fate had in store for him and his followers. Thus, Scene 48b depicts a group of heavily armed knights following their leader, William. In order to portray many horses in a short space, and to simulate the growing speed of the riders, not only some of the horses' legs, but also some of the horses were entirely eliminated.¹⁷ Towards the front of the group, one of the knights carries the Pope's pennant adorned with a cross, probably in order to reiterate the pope's approval of the expedition, and perhaps to remind a post-Conquest audience of William's subsequent problems with the Church and its leader. Directly ahead of the knight carrying the Pope's pennant, another knight bears a semicircular banner adorned with a bird. The few researchers, who delved into the meaning of this particular emblem and inquired about its origins and usage, are of the opinion that the bird is a raven and that banner of this type belonged to a group of mercenaries of Danish lineage who followed William into battle.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that this particular banner was placed ahead of the papal pennant, perhaps as a clever way to suggest that William placed

his faith in the hodge-podge gathering of men motivated by the promise of money and loot, before he relied on the power of the Church. As in previous parts of the Tapestry, it seems that the borders above and below Scene 48b add their own comical and/or caustic comments to the narrative in the main field, with a special emphasis on deriding William.

2. 1. SCENE 48b: Naked Figures, Birds, a Donkey and a Wolf -- Upper Border

As one leaves the upper border of Scene 48a, one is reminded of the questionable nobility of a leader (William) who intended to remain deaf to any further attempt at conciliation (the winged lion with no ears). The upper border of Scene 48b seems to reinforce the concern regarding William's true nature and his intention towards the Anglo-Saxons and their leader, Harold. This part of the border contains two sets of nudes separated by a pair of geese. Perhaps oblivious to the probability that nudity did not elicit the same reactions from late-eleventh century observers as it did from a mid-nineteenth century audience, J. Collingwood Bruce considered the two sets of nudes to be illustrations of the "disorders that usually accompany armies on the move."¹⁹ Writing at the end of the nineteenth/beginning of the twentieth century, Fowke made a more objective argument, when he posited that these representations were "intended to indicate the haste with which the English were called upon to arm, and their sorrowful parting with the wives who might so soon be widows," which argument Mogens Rud later adopted.²⁰ Always anxious to discover fables, Herrmann made an unlikely identification of this pictograph as Phaedrus, II, 22, the fable of "The Widow and the Soldier."²¹

Commenting on the nudes above this scene, McNulty observes that "Harold's vulnerability, particularly when he has adversaries on both sides, is associated with the imagery of nudity."²² About the women in the borders, Madeline Caviness posits that "the long-haired Anglo-Saxons, especially Harold, are constructed as a feminized 'other' or the enemy."²³ Caviness also argues that the two sets of nude figures above the knights actualize in pictorial form "the obscene insults Norsemen hurled at one another to provoke a fight."²⁴ However, a close examination of these two naked pairs, their physical appearances (including the objects the man in the first pair is carrying), and their placements, postures and gestures vis-à-vis one another, enlighten the reader beyond the tentative interpretations to date.

In the first set of nudes on the left, a being, whom researchers have identified as a female, is depicted with straggly, longish hair, no recognizable facial features, no visible

breasts, and no other sexual attributes. It is entirely possible that this figure was meant to represent a nubile female, i.e., a pure and innocent virgin. Because of elements of composition in Scene 48b, the nubile female is probably meant to symbolize, as well as deride William. First, it is placed above Norman knights advancing behind William into English territory; and secondly, it follows their movement from left to right towards an encounter with Harold and his army. Additionally, since William was not known for his dalliances outside the marriage bed, the female figure's lack of sexual organs may be understood as another subtle way to undermine William's reputation as a strong leader.²⁵ Indeed, in an age when chieftains and nobles had concubines, and sexual prowess was linked to male strength and the ability to rule, William's faithfulness to Mathilda may have been mistaken for a lack of virility, leading to mocking whispers, jeers, and name calling behind the leader's back.

Beyond the light banter, this representation may be the site of a latent commentary on the two irreconcilable leaders, i.e., William and Harold. Through her welcoming gesture, it seems that the androgynous, nubile female figure with the extended arms, symbolizing William, is suggesting that William was making one last effort at conciliation. However, this last effort is immediately contradicted by the posture and gestures of the female in the second set of nudes which is examined below.

In the first pair of nudes, contrary to the figure on the left whose sex is indeterminate, the one on the right is depicted with two darkly outlined testicles, and a large mustache. Together with the typical Anglo-Saxon axe that the figure on the right is carrying, the prominent sexual attributes and large mustache suffice to identify the figure respectively as male and Anglo-Saxon, probably Harold. Additionally, this mustachioed man is carrying an object by the handle, probably a lantern. In the early Middle Ages, lanterns were left to burn all night next to the deceased person, or in front of his/her house, to guide his/her immortal soul to its everlasting rest.²⁶ Such an object may be indicative of Harold's coming demise. However, since the Anglo-Saxon man, probably Harold, is offering it to the "female" advancing towards him, probably symbolizing William, the proffered lantern may be included to imply that a courageous Harold (man with balls) was ready to defend himself (the axe) and die (the lantern), or conversely, to suggest that unafraid, Harold was ready to provide William (the advancing female) with a guiding light to the next world (the lantern).

The pair of geese that follows the first set of nudes in the upper border of Scene 48b, seems to confirm this interpretation. According to Celto-Germanic lore, the goose, like the raven, served as a messenger between gods and humans. Additionally, like the crane and the stork, the goose was a psychopomp, ferrying human souls between the earthly realm and the netherworld.²⁷ In the Middle Ages, while its psychopompic function lingered, the goose also came to symbolize an ordinary messenger, even a rumormonger.²⁸ Additionally, early medieval culture regarded the goose as a symbol of the careful man, reluctant to commit himself, and always prepared to escape difficult situations.²⁹

Geese were already encountered in the upper border of Scene 12, at the critical moment when William decided the fate of Harold, who was Guy's prisoner. Because of their placement and gestures, this pair of friendly geese may have suggested that William was a benevolent man ready to bail Harold out of his predicament. In a post-Conquest setting, and in view of Harold's cruel death at Norman hands, such a display may have been perceived as a cynical commentary on William's actions. In Scene 48b, the preening geese are no longer touching each other amicably. On the contrary, their heads are turned in opposite directions and they are separated by a double diagonal. The symbolism of the goose being complex and diverse, it is possible that these particular geese were meant to fulfill several functions: because they point, each one with one of its wings, at one of the naked pairs, and because they symbolize messengers and rumormongers, the geese may suggest that gossip and rumors were being spread about the two leaders; because they may be understood as psychopomps, the geese placed above the men departing for battle may have forewarned the readers about the coming death of many of the men below; and also, because of their psychopompic function, since each goose is pointing and gazing especially at the mustachioed male figure in each set of nudes, and is positioned directly above William's knights, they may constitute an attempt to forewarn the observer about the role that they (William's knights) were about to play in Harold's death. Additionally, as psychopomps and symbols of the cautious, scheming man, adept at escaping problematic situations, the geese above Scene 48b may be perceived differently according to one's political allegiance. On one hand, they may have acted as a reminder that, in spite of the contrived display of friendship above Scene 12, a careful, conniving man like William had decided Harold's fate long ago. Indeed, it

seems that the geese above Scene 48b, in combination with those above Scene 12, illustrate that William was waiting patiently for an opportunity to send Harold's soul to its eternal rest. On the other hand, these geese, pointing directly at the mustachioed men, seem to designate Harold as the cautious man: Harold had always been reluctant to accept William's so-called friendship, and had so far been able to overcome obstacles, the latest being his victory over Tostig and Harald of Norway at the Battle of Stamford Bridge.

Together with the first pair of nudes, the second pair seems to complement and qualify the main field. Herrmann identifies the two naked figures as the fable of The Young Man and the Courtesan, which bears no relation to the narrative.³⁰ McNulty and Caviness lump the two pictographs of naked figures together, assimilating the nakedness of women to Harold's vulnerability, and in the case of Caviness, the hurling of insults.³¹ However, it is necessary to note the differences between the two naked pairs if one wishes to understand their meaning more fully. First, the placement of the set of nudes on the right seems to mirror the ones on the left, and was probably meant to effect a parallel between the two episodes featuring the nude couples. Thus, in both cases, by reversing their locations, the mustachioed male figures -- both probably representing the Anglo-Saxon king, Harold -- are closest to the geese, as though they were the geese's main focus. Secondly, the postures and gestures of the nudes in the second pair (on the right) differ from those of the first couple.

In the second pair of nudes (on the right), the mustachioed Anglo-Saxon, i.e., probably Harold, is on the left, perhaps to place it closest to the psychopompic goose one more time as a forewarning of his coming demise; his sexual organ is flaccid as he points menacingly to the woman with exposed breasts. In turn, this woman points an accusing finger in his direction. Additionally, both figures are kneeling. Garnier argues that kneeling symbolizes "un rapport essentiel de dépendance entre les personnes."³² He also argues that the similar gestures of opposing figures mean an "opposition, a discussion and/or a conflict."³³ Indeed, Harold and William depended on each other to find a solution to their dilemma. Yet, contrary to the female figure whose right knee touches the ground, the knee of the mustachioed male figure does not quite touch it, perhaps to suggest that Harold depended on William a little less since he was already in possession of the crown. It is also certain that William and Harold (the naked pair) were engaged in a conflict, for which they probably blamed each other (the accusing fingers). In spite of

his reputation for strength, according to his cartoonish alter ego in the upper border of Scene 48b, at this point in the narrative Harold has lost his “balls,” i.e., he seems to have lost his ability to fight back against William, a foe who was transformed from a soft, nubile, welcoming female in the first set of nudes, into the formidable hussy in the second set. Perhaps, this change was meant to remind the audience of the warning provided by the fable of *The Swallow and the Birds* below scene 10, and probably served as a reminder and further warning that if William was allowed to grow strong (flax), he would destroy those who permitted him to do so (birds). Adding to the stigma attached to being compared to a woman, William is now transformed from a welcoming “puss” in the first set of nudes into a virulent, threatening “hussy” unwilling to back down, in the second.

Additionally, it is possible that the nude couples above Scene 48b served another function. Perhaps they were placed as a mnemonic cue to remind the observer of the nudes below Scene 13 and of the contents of that scene. In Scene 13, Guy de Ponthieu was handing Harold over to William. It seems that Harold, probably symbolized by the naked and sexually excited man below Scene 13, felt a strong desire to somehow find a way to “screw” William, probably symbolized by the poor, helpless female in that scene, towards whom the male was rushing with evil intent. In the case of Scene 48b, there is no depiction of overt sexual attack. In a reversal of sorts, it is the androgynous, nubile female who is welcoming the Anglo-Saxon male (Harold) with open arms, perhaps to insinuate that Harold no longer needed to “screw” William, since he had obtained the crown. On the contrary, it was William who was up to his old tricks, and, while he pretended to be open to negotiations, he had decided from the start that he would find a way, any way, to acquire England, a possibility to which the obviously angry second pair of nudes seems to allude.³⁴

Following the second naked couple, a donkey is depicted within a narrow space between two sets of double diagonals, while a predator, identified as either a wolf or a fox, watches from behind bushes. Fond of finding fables everywhere, Herrmann reads the two beasts as the unlikely fable of *The Ass and the Wolf Doctor*.³⁵ Fowke proposes that the ass represents the English spies, and the “wolf or fox,” the Norman informers.³⁶ Following Fowke’s lead, McNulty is of the opinion that these animals are part of the “stalking and other images of pursuit as William goes after Harold.”³⁷ Little argument

may be found against Fowke's and McNulty's similar positions. However, while their position may reflect the overt reading obtained from a quick glance at the border, a clearer reading may be obtained if one takes into account the symbolism of the two beasts, makes allowance for their placements vis-à-vis each other, and vis-à-vis the movement of the Norman army from left to right, and finally, considers the words of the inscription, and the scene depicted in the center field.

In the early medieval period, the ass played various roles and enjoyed a nuanced reputation. Its timidity and meekness were often construed as coarseness and stupidity.³⁸ As mentioned earlier in connection with various fables, the wolf is cruel, ruthless, and makes evil use of his strength. Because of the flow of the narrative, and because of the beasts' respective placements, especially the placement of the wolf directly above the name Haroldum in the inscription, there is little doubt that, contrary to Fowke's and McNulty's assertions, the wolf was meant to symbolize Harold, and, by default the ass was probably associated with William. Indeed, the wolf lurking behind bushes may be likened to Harold, who "spotted William's manoeuvre" (to send his cavalry to take Battle Hill), and dispatched his men in large numbers to reach it first.³⁹ The barking dogs, below the stallion in Scene 48a, may have already been intended to warn the audience about William's failure to surprise Harold. Thus, it is suggested that William, symbolized by the ass, a crude and dumb animal, is an inefficient leader for underestimating the abilities of Harold, who proved to be a shrewd strategist at the beginning of the Battle of Hastings. Indeed, understanding William's intention, Harold outwitted William and "won the race up the hill and drove off the Norman archers."⁴⁰

2. 2. SCENE 48b: **Birds, Old Lions, Vultures, Dogs and A Scene of Pursuit in the Lower Border**

Birds continue to act as signaling devices linking diverse elements of the scenes with their wings. In the case of the lower border of Scene 48b, heads upraised, wings lifted, affronted birds seem to be squawking at the top of their voices, perhaps to attract the attention of the audience toward the howling dogs on the left (below Scene 48a) and the impassive old lions on the right. Similar to the lions that grace the upper border of Scene 24, these heraldic-looking lions below William's men are turned full-face towards the audience. Previously, McNulty argued for an association of these guardant lions with Harold's arms.⁴¹ However, as explained above, these majestic beasts may have been

included to remind the viewer of Edward (the old lion), “the rootless, discontented, mean and irascible” man, whose Byzantine politics and death precipitated the rivalry between William and Harold toward the inevitable and final confrontation at Hastings.⁴²

Following the old lions in the lower border is a pair of birds, which may be identified as vultures, in spite of McNulty’s assertion that the bird on the left is an ostrich. McNulty bases his findings primarily because of the presence of a four pointed star. However, these birds do not conform to the manner in which the ostrich is described in the *Physiologus* and in Medieval Bestiaries, with legs and feet akin to those of a camel.⁴³ An examination of the pair of birds below Scene 48b demonstrates that both have crooked beaks, and feet with sharp talons -- features which are associated with the vulture, not the ostrich. Additionally, necrophagous birds are usually linked in the Tapestry to the presence of fighting men. It was a common belief that they anticipated the carnage resulting from battle.⁴⁴

The two dogs that follow the vultures in the lower border of Scene 48b parallel a similar pair below the stallion in Scene 48a, thus a bracket is formed that encompasses the signaling, shrieking birds, the old lions and the carrion eaters, and that circumscribes the pro-Norman knights departing to do battle, qualifying them as “a rabble of miserable curs.”⁴⁵ At this pivotal threshold in the narrative, the two birds pointing accusingly at the old lions, one with its left wing and the other with its right, were probably meant to remind the audience that the outwardly impassive Edward was not without flaws, and was the root cause for the upcoming battle. Indeed, both William and Harold used Edward’s ill-advised words in order to further their plans to acquire the throne, leading to an unavoidable conflict and its accompanying bloodshed (the vultures). It is possible that Edward made a careless and dubious “promise” to William when he needed his support during the crisis with the Godwins in 1051.⁴⁶ However, he made several such promises, when other perceived emergencies arose, such as the ones he made to Svein Estrithson and later to Edward the Atheling.⁴⁷ Additionally, in spite of his so-called promise to William, it is probable that Edward bequeathed the throne to Harold on his (Edward’s) death bed, simply, perhaps, because he (Harold) happened to be present.⁴⁸ The last pictograph below Scene 48b is a small bird of prey, perhaps a hawk, that is about to catch a rabbit running for its life. Never at a loss to find a fable, Herrmann identifies the hawk about to pounce on a rabbit as Phaedrus II, 33, *The Hare and the Sparrow*.⁴⁹

Needless to say, this fable has little to do with the action at hand. Besides, the depiction included in the Tapestry lacks the sparrow, an indispensable character in the fable. McNulty states laconically that “a bird (hawk?) pursues a rabbit,” and refers the reader to other “analogies of pursuit in the Tapestry.”⁵⁰ Following the direction of the narrative, and of William and his men, the hawk, a bird of prey, probably symbolizes William who is engaged in pursuing Harold, the rabbit. Isidore of Seville describes the hawk as a rapacious bird, qualifying it of being a raptor, i.e., a thief.⁵¹ Subsequently, Rabannus Maurus posits that the hawk symbolizes an excessively grasping, covetous man.⁵² The symbolism of the hawk appears to fit William’s situation well, since he was ready to “steal” Harold’s throne out of greed and desire for personal power. Indeed, hiding behind righteous pretensions, upheld through clever politicking, William succeeded in acquiring the support of the pope, and the implied agreement of his peers (suggested in the Tapestry by the stallion offered by the Spanish king). This gift was also meant to hint at the various agreements, many of them merely tacit assurances of non-intervention, which William succeeded in negotiating.⁵³

There is a good probability that a rabbit was already used to represent Harold vicariously in the lower border of Scene 38. As mentioned in the analysis of that scene, the symbolism of the rabbit is mostly negative, and is used to qualify a fearful, cowardly person who runs in the face of danger.⁵⁴ As noted above, this little episode appears to be a comical reflection of the scene of pursuit represented in the main field. However, because of the qualities (or defects) attributed to the two beasts involved in the pursuit, this scene may also be used to qualify the character and personality of the two main participants, William and Harold. The hawk, a thieving bird is probably used to question surreptitiously the validity of William’s claim to the throne, while the rabbit, a frightened cowardly animal disparages Harold. With the animals employed in his little charade and the suggestions that their symbolism provides, it is probable that the patron aimed to diminish the value of William’s victory, since little glory is ever gained from defeating a coward. Lest one forget, in medieval epic narratives, it is usual for the hero to face someone who is not a coward but a courageous opponent who falls from grace by committing one act of treachery. Accordingly, one is led to believe that medieval society would have considered the man who defeated a coward to be less than a hero.⁵⁵

In summary, through the pictographs in the upper and lower borders, the reader continues to receive additional tidbits of information in the form of innuendos aimed not only at all the major participants, but also, in many cases, specifically directed at William and his followers. It is plausible to suggest that Odo, whose relationship with William started to disintegrate a few years after the Conquest, used this tactic when he became involved with discontented and envious rebel leaders who strove to destabilize William and his newly founded dynasty. Via the old lions in the lower border, the observer is reminded that an unstable, “weak, indecisive and ineffectual” Edward, pressed by circumstances and not overly embarrassed with pangs of conscience, was at the root of the problem.⁵⁶ Indeed, like many leaders of his day, Edward made promises that he did not intend to keep, including “promising” the throne of England, not only to William but to others as well, when expedient.⁵⁷ There is little doubt that Edward was “notoriously slapdash with his pledges of succession.”⁵⁸ Additionally, an astute reader versed in court politics may have been confronted with the insinuation that a conniving William was not only a greedy and ambitious hypocrite (ostriches) who did not intend to listen to the other side (winged lion with no ears), but, as the forward placement of the banner with a bird vis-à-vis the placement of the pennant with a cross suggests, preferred to place his trust in mercenaries, the “rabble of curs” (dogs) mentioned above, before placing his faith in the Church, symbolized by the papal pennant. Above all, William (the androgynous, nubile female of the first naked pair) was always concerned about appearing to have tried his best to be conciliatory and solve any problems peacefully, while all the time using underhanded tactics, including threats and blackmail, and implying that the other side was at fault (naked female shaking an accusing finger). No matter the cost in life and material, William intended to get his way. Meanwhile, Harold (the nude Anglo-Saxon with balls) was ready to fight (the axe). In spite of being keenly aware about the transience of life (lantern), especially after the battle of Stamford Bridge, Harold was not about to let that “hussy” (William) frighten him into bending his knee to him, especially now that he (Harold) was king. Indeed, William was stupid (the ass) if he believed that the cunning king Harold (wolf above *Haroldum rege*) would not discover his shenanigans. Unbeknownst to William (the ass), Harold (the wolf) was approaching, and carnage (the vultures) would soon follow. William was an ass indeed, if he believed that,

like any thief (the hawk), he could swoop down and catch a frightened Harold (the rabbit), and that Harold would then scurry away.

Without the border in conjunction with the inscriptions, and the gloss that they provide, the reader would be left with a sundry episode representing a fully armed William on the left (Scene 48a) preparing to mount a magnificent stallion, a clump of exotic trees, and a narrative scene depicting Norman knights, mounted on too few horses represented with not enough legs to show speed, preparing to follow the leader (William) into battle against Harold. However, the borders provide comic and caustic asides which were probably meant to enable the viewer/reader to recognize the inherent flaws of the two leaders, especially William's, the difficulties they both faced, and the misconceptions which led them to act the way they did, at least from one man's point of view, probably Odo's. Indeed, it seems that the worst aspects of William's personality and character are emphasized, and that William is associated with animals that symbolize greed, avarice, cruelty and hypocrisy.

3. SCENE 49: "*HIC WILLELM DVX INTERROGAT VITAL SI VIDISSET EXERCITV HAROLDI*"

Ahead of the knights gathering momentum in Scene 48b, William carrying a mace, his weapon of choice for the day, is followed by a knight with a staff or club ending in a trefoil. Shirley Ann Brown sustains the improbable argument that the two figures are two representations of William, one belonging to Scene 48 the other to Scene 49.⁵⁹ David Wilson hesitates between Odo and Robert de Mortain as the man who follows William.⁶⁰ While most researchers choose to ignore this knight holding a club with a peculiar head, some identified the knight behind William as Odo, carrying the weapon of choice for an ecclesiastic, i.e., the *baculum*.⁶¹ One detail in particular seems to lend credence to the identification of Odo: the three points at the end of the *baculum*, the number "three" symbolizes the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, i.e., the Three Persons in one God. Because of its symbolic significance, such an emblem associated with the person of Odo may have reminded a knowledgeable post-Conquest audience of Odo's attachment to the papal cause and of his affinity for the papacy, and conversely of William's controversial alliance with Henry IV against Pope Gregory VII, after he had received the approval to invade England from Gregory's predecessor, Pope Alexander II. Proudly mounted and pointing ahead, William asks the whereabouts of Harold's army

from a knight named *VITAL*, who is riding toward him (William), counter to the movement of the narrative. Vital, probably one of Odo's tenants, is pointing toward a vantage point on the right -- probably Telham Hill -- from which Harold's position was visible.⁶² By naming Vital, one of Odo's tenants, and by attributing a pivotal role to him at this crucial moment prior to the battle, it seems that the emphasis was placed on Odo's role in helping to provide pertinent information, on which William could build a winning scheme. Indeed, the establishment of a sound strategy often depends largely on the intelligence that the leaders receive prior to battle. It has been suggested that the second knight riding up the hill, behind the knight pointing forward with his shield, is William, who may have wanted to ascertain *de visu*, the veracity of Vital's information.⁶³ While the main field does not contain any surprise, the borders may be indicative of the undercurrents that are part of any momentous action, and, more significantly, of the commentary on the actions of the main participants as the time for battle draws near.

3.1. SCENE 49: Birds, Lions, Geese, and Mocking Beasts in the Upper Border

Besides being ravens, traditionally birds of bad omen, the birds that follow seem to function as semaphores, forming another matrix linking the wolf, Harold (identified as *REGE*), the lions, William (entitled *DUX*), and the words of the inscriptions. Both birds use one of their wings to point to the word *REGE* below, as though it was paramount that any observer be aware that Harold was king. Additionally, the bird on the left is looking back towards the wolf, thus visually connecting the words *HAROLDUM REGE*, over which it stands and to which it points, with this cunning beast. The bird on the right, also pointing at the word *REGE*, stands directly over the word *HIC*, perhaps to insinuate that "here," at this point in the narrative, Harold is king. The head of this same bird is turned to the right, toward the lion crouched over the name *WILLELM* followed by *DVX*, perhaps to suggest that "here" William is only *DUX*, yet he aspires to be king and is ready to fight Harold, the man clearly named king, probably symbolized by the darkly colored lion coming from the right. Next to the lion, the geese, placed above Vital and bracketing his name in the inscription, probably qualify the knight as a bearer of news which may signal someone's future demise, probably Harold's. One detail of the border needs to be noted. Between the two geese and after the goose on the right, cruciform vegetation was inserted, the vertical members of which end in three-petal fleurons, or

fleur-de-lis, the emblem of royalty sanctioned by God, which seems to reinforce the fact that the news brought by Vital concerned Harold, the consecrated king.

At first glance, the predators that follow the geese could be identified as young lions without manes. However, on close examination they have the body type, tail and facial appearance typical of large hounds (especially the larger beast on the right). Outwardly, the dogs' actions may allude to the continual posturing and taunting between the two rivals: William (dog on the left), and the taller Harold (larger dog on the right).⁶⁴ Vital, probably and significantly Odo's man, is pointing at the dog on the left while looking at William. By the gesture of his man, William is linked with the barely veiled suggestion that he (William) is the low born *canaille* licking his chops in anticipation, as he metaphorically knocks at Harold's door, suggested by the same hound about to paw at the diagonal separating him from the other hound (probably Harold). In turn, as the hound with the fully extended tongue indicates, Harold, who is coming into visible range in the main field, is about to respond to William's taunts with the same degree of disdain and mockery.

Besides their negative symbolism, two pairs of birds of the same species, perhaps ravens, bracket the upper border of Scene 49. Likewise, these birds play similar roles, as signaling devices and messenger birds. In the last pictographs, the bird on the left has raised its head and opened its beak as though announcing and warning whoever is within earshot that someone is coming up the hill. Thus, these birds may be considered efficacious devices to remove the element of surprise. In addition, if a diagonal were drawn following the direction of the left wing of the bird on the left, it would touch the griffin in the lower border. If another diagonal were drawn from the right wing of the opposite bird it would point downward and come in direct contact with the head of the ass in the lower border, which is oblivious to the predator running toward it.

Through the medium of these invisible diagonal lines, the reader is apprised of the cautionary words intimated by the squawking birds. The suggested connection between the bird on the left, placed above two Norman knights, one of which may be William who is holding the papal pennant, and the griffin below, may be part of the panoply of ploys cultivated (perhaps by Odo) to ridicule and disparage William. Indeed, through an ingenious use of animal pictographs, their clever positioning, and skillful movement of limbs, the reader is reminded that the approaching pro-Norman mercenaries, with

William at their head, are avaricious and greedy for power and loot (first diagonal between bird and griffin). Yet, not only are the pro-Normans and their leader greedy and avaricious, they are also acting like stupid asses because they seem to be unaware of the potential magnitude of Harold's (spotted predator's) threatening presence (second diagonal link).

3.2. SCENE 49: **Rapacious Birds, Dogs, an Ass and a Leopard -- Lower Border**

The two birds that follow the hawk and the rabbit in the lower border are another pair of carrion birds, most probably vultures with sharp, crooked beaks. With one of their wings raised and necks bent as though pretending to ignore the events unraveling in the main field, they seem to be pecking at something lying on the ground. Because of their placement, these vultures seem to qualify William leading his mercenaries into battle, and Odo (if it is Odo), riding behind him. One may wonder why Odo would allow himself to be depicted above a carrion eater which may qualify him as a rapacious man waiting for the spoils of the dead. However, it is important to consider that contrary to William, Odo is not named, allowing the reader to wonder about the identity of the knight behind William in spite of the unmistakable three-headed *baculum*. Additionally, to single out William by depicting only one vulture directly below him may have been too obvious a disparagement.

Next to the vultures, a pair of predators resembling large, angry hounds are positioned for attack, reflecting the atmosphere of combative expectation filling the main field and the posturing between William, the royal pretender, and Harold, the king, both of whom have shown their abilities to act like low-born canailles if and when necessary. Paralleling similar elements in the upper border, a cruciform shape separates the dogs, while another is placed after the dog on the right, perhaps to reinforce the fact that Vital, positioned directly above, was bringing news of Harold, the anointed king. The two birds below the knights riding in opposite directions differ from one another. Yet both are rapacious carrion eaters, i.e., the bird on the left with a long neck and a curving beak is probably a type of vulture, while the bird on the right with a short thick neck and straight beak resembles a raven. These two birds hungry for spoils seem to be engaged in a fight of their own, perhaps mimicking the infighting regarding the division of the booty, which was bound to erupt, after the battle, between William's followers.

The rapacious birds are followed by an ass grazing peacefully. Unbeknownst to the beast, a predator, which McNulty identifies as a leopard because of its spots, is watching in preparation for attack.⁶⁵ Always ready to find fables and ignoring the quasi osmotic effect between main field and borders, Herrmann went overboard, identifying two separate fables in the one episode: first, the ass as Phaedrus III, 27, e.g., the fable of *The Ass and the Old Man*, and the spotted predator/leopard as Phaedrus IV, 17, e.g., *The Weasel and The Man*.⁶⁶ It is reasonable to side with Wilson who doubts such identifications.⁶⁷ A similar pair of animals, i.e., an ass and a predator tentatively identified as a wolf, adorns the upper border at the end of Scene 48b, thus bracketing Scene 49 in which Vital informs William of Harold's whereabouts.

Fowke is partially correct when he assumes that the stalking episodes refer to the Norman scouting activities; and so is McNulty who supports his claim.⁶⁸ But, if one follows the course of the narrative from left to right, and as explained above in connection with Scene 48b, if one considers historical records, one is led to believe that Harold outmaneuvered William in his attempt to seize Battle Hill first.⁶⁹ Therefore, McNulty's identifications of the ass with Harold and of the wolf and leopard with William need to be reversed. An inquiry into the symbolism of the ass and the leopard offers interesting findings. As mentioned above, the ass not only symbolizes meekness and subservience, but also clumsiness and stupidity. In early medieval texts, the leopard, an exotic animal, was even more despised than the ass. Isidore of Seville and Rabannus Maurus consider the leopard as a "shrewd and malicious" beast, a "degenerate lion," believed to be the bastard offspring of a lion and a "pard," etymologically according to Isidore, from *leo* (lion) and *pard* (*pardus*, i.e., cat).⁷⁰ Harold proved himself not only cunning (wolf at the end of Scene 48b), but also as much of a ferocious bastard (leopard) as William could ever be, as he kept a steady watch on the pro-Norman forces. Thus, the two episodes of pursuit involving an ass and a predator form a bracket delineating Scene 49, and marking the pro-Norman mercenaries and their leader William as lacking in strategic know-how (asses), especially since they failed to see that Harold and his spies were watching them all along. In spite of William's efforts, Harold succeeded in reaching the relative safety of the hill, later dubbed Battle Hill, where he was able to position his men and form the customary Anglo-Saxon shield-wall.⁷¹

In summary, the birds (upper border) seem to connect the upper borders of Scenes 48 and 49, while emphasizing by the movement of their wings that William's adversary is king (rege). The reddish lion above the name *Willelm* in the inscription was most probably meant to symbolize William, who is only *dux* but whose sole purpose since the beginning of the narrative is to become king. The black lion facing it and seemingly taken aback in surprise may be Harold, who, although absent from the main field was the object of William's quest. Additionally, these confronted lions seem to reinforce the main field, and to express by their postures and actions the inner hopes of William, who had sent scouts to find Harold and surprise him. Perhaps, William and his men entertained the hope that Harold would flee like the rabbit running from the hawk below, giving William additional ammunition to appear righteous when he achieved his goal of finally stealing (like a hawk) the crown and taking the major share of English spoils (vultures). However, Harold did not run, and faced William (affronted dogs, lower border) with deadly consequences.

Directly below a pair of geese, symbols of the messenger, Vital was returning to bring news to William. William's scorched-earth policy worked (taunting dog, lower border): he succeeded in bringing Harold to Hastings. William was already licking his chops (dog on the left, upper border). However, contrary to what William may have hoped, Harold stood large and firm (large hound on the right, upper border), and responded to this mockery by some taunting of his own. In spite of the intelligence passed along by Vital, who came in haste to apprise William of Harold's efforts to position his troops on a ridge, William acted like a stupid ass. Ignoring the threat posed by Harold and not reacting fast enough, William missed the chance to reach the hill first, thus losing the opportunity to gain an important advantage over Harold. In turn, Harold (the leopard) acted with as much cunning and ferocity as William. Once more the borders qualified the otherwise sedate scene and its main participants, playing on a few facts, especially William's bastardry and Harold's supposed lack of courage, to suggest the flaws in character from which these men suffered, and weaving a tale in which greed, envy, cruelty, stupidity, and fear plagued the participants. Indeed, the gloss, which the borders provide, is filled with malicious gossip. However, it is not just gossip; it may be part of a larger plan of attack on William and on his chosen heir, William Rufus.

4. **SCENE 50: “ISTE NVNTIAT HAROLDVM REGE[M] DE EXERCITV WILLELMI DUCIS”**

Scene 50 is a relatively short scene delineated by trees on the left and right, which were probably meant to suggest the wooded areas surrounding Hastings. Scene 50 parallels Scene 49, as it portrays fully armed English scouts who have sighted William and Vital on a hill (probably Telham Hill), and are reporting hastily to a wide-eyed Harold who, though surprised, appears determined, as he points in the direction of the Normans. The knight running down the hill in Harold's direction, while pointing backwards at Vital and William coming up the hill, seems to reinforce Harold's pointing action. It is doubtful that this is the scene in which Harold hears about William's landing and invasion, as the *Carmen de Proelio Hastingsae* reports.⁷² Rather, this scene probably represents Harold mounted on his horse near a lone tree, astonished to find William and his army so close. Indeed the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, versio D, mentions that, prior to doing battle, Harold waited near “the hoary apple tree,” i.e., the Anglo-Saxon rendezvous point agreed upon in London.⁷³

4.1. **SCENE 50: Dogs and Birds in the Upper Border**

No comments are made about the upper border of Scene 50 beyond McNulty's monotonous mention of “the motif of balanced figures.”⁷⁴ Yet, a pair of dogs at the beginning of the upper border of Scene 50 seems to mimic and emphasize the action of the scouts in the main field. This obvious linkage may serve to intimate that Harold and his men are *canailles*. The dog on the left appears to be straining physically to peer down at William and Vital in Scene 49, thus making a connection with the two men below. The dog on the right nonchalantly turns its head away from them, as though engrossed in viewing what lies ahead. Additionally, the dogs are separated by diagonals decorated with a zigzag pattern, perhaps to remind the audience of the surreptitious, yet almost palpable presence of William the Bastard in the English camp. Combined with the zigzag patterns between the two dogs, the dogs parting ways may also imply the final break between the two *canailles*, William and Harold. Next to the dogs, a squawking bird resembling a carrier pigeon, points directly with the tip of its right wing at the name *HAROLDVM* and at the figure identified as Harold below. Additionally, the same bird is using its left wing to point back at the dog, thus effectively linking the name and the figure identified as Harold, with the dog on the right, as though to emphasize that Harold,

another low-born *canaille* is coming into William's line of vision . The other bird of the pair seems to mirror the movement of the first bird. As this bird stands above the last part of the name *HAROLDUM*, its left wing points at the dark lion in the lower border, while its right wing points back towards the winged horses in the next space, thus connecting Scenes 50 and 51.

4.2. SCENE 50: Hybrid Beasts, Birds and a Lion in the Lower Border

McNulty identifies the two beasts below the trees separating Scenes 49 and 50 as winged lions.⁷⁵ While the legs and paws appear to be those of lions, the beasts have the bird's heads and beaks characteristic of griffins. It seems appropriate to include these hybrid, aggressive beasts when enemies come face to face, even at a distance, since the readers/viewers were probably aware of the ensuing deadly battle with the prospect of booty for the winning side. The birds that follow, probably carrier pigeons, are almost identical to the birds in the upper border. These two messenger birds seem involved in a squawking match as they point their wings in opposite directions. With their extended wings they connect the first winged lion/griffin on the left with the darkly colored lion on the right which is looking back in their direction, as though suggesting that there is the same greed and yearning for power and gold in Harold (the winged lion/griffin on the right below the English side in Scene 50) as in William (the winged lion/griffin on the left, below Scene 49 and the hill on which William is probably depicted on his horse). Because of its placement below Harold, and because Harold is king, the black lion with its head turned to the left -- the direction that Harold is going --- while advancing to the right probably symbolizes Harold , the luckless king. The black hound which is paired with the black lion is part of Scene 51 and is analyzed in conjunction with that scene.

The salient elements of Scene 50 may be read as follows: As the birds, winged lions/griffins, hounds and lions in the borders indicate, when the two opposing forces, William's on one side and Harold's on the other, spotted one another, news and gossip spread quickly. Indeed, by their placement and their movement, the birds seem to suggest that covetous greed and lust for power were motivating both sides (griffins); that both William and Harold were aggressive, greedy (griffins) low-born *canailles* (dogs). Additionally, the birds seem to forewarn the audience that even though Harold was king, he was following the ill-fated path that led him to his demise (black lion). Thus, the

borders of Scenes 50 seem to add to the general surprise and malaise stirred up by rumors and probably experienced in both camps.

5. SCENE 51: “*HIC WILLELM DVX ALLOQUITVR SVIS MILITIBVS...*”

Contrary to Scene 50, Scene 51 is a lengthy, yet masterful depiction of the deployment of William’s mounted knights riding toward, and attacking the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall formed by Harold’s men. The inscription indicates that this is the moment when William made his famous speech to the assembled men under his command. Oddly, William is represented at the end of his speech while giving the last instructions to the standard bearer. Among other sources, the approximate contents of William’s speech have been passed down through the chronicles of Guillaume de Poitiers who, “imagines the speech which the Duke delivered to his men.”⁷⁶ From a compilation of various works, Freeman produced a facsimile of William’s allocution.⁷⁷ According to these writings, William tried to bolster the courage of his men, reminding them of their past victories; of the Godwins’ treacherous acts; of the previous Anglo-Saxon defeats; of the material gains they would enjoy, if victorious; and of the ignominy of defeat if they lost the battle. He also reminded the assembled knights that God and the Church were on their side, telling them that the cause they were defending was just, and that with daring they would soon enjoy a complete victory.⁷⁸ As William pronounced his last words of encouragement and admonishment, the knights were already riding ahead; only the standard bearer still had his head turned toward William as though to catch the last word. Scene 51 ends at the English shield-wall, which is surrounded by the advancing pro-Norman cavalry. The first casualties appear in the Tapestry when the Normans are about to reach the tightly assembled Anglo-Saxons. The bodies of two knights lie on the ground. The manner in which the lances have pierced them and the way the bodies have fallen suggest that the dead or dying knights are probably on the Norman side.

Historical records reveal that the housecarls, i.e., “the household retainers, the ‘hearth-troops,’ of Harold, of his two brothers, earls Gyrth and Leofwine, and of other great lords” repulsed the first assaults of William’s archers, and cavalry.⁷⁹ Indeed, “once within stabbing range of the shield-wall, the Normans were skewered, impaled and scythed down in dozens.”⁸⁰ The Tapestry shows Harold’s housecarls being attacked from both sides, and resisting the attack, as the bodies of the dead and dying are strewn in the lower border. However, when Scene 51 comes to a close, no hint is given about who

won the first encounter, which has led some historians, biased in favor of William, to gloss over Harold's early success at Hastings.⁸¹ However, some chroniclers and later historians attribute the first victory to Harold and his men.⁸² The borders may be helpful in clarifying this point.

5.1. SCENE 51: Winged Horses, Birds, Lions, Eagles, Asses, a Fable, Griffins, Other Lions, Geese, and Hounds in the Upper Border

The winged horses placed directly above William are unique in the Tapestry. Perhaps their uniqueness may be suggestive of one or several specific purposes. Indeed, with their bent heads they bracket the name *WILLELM* in the inscription below, and seem to be grazing on its first and last letters. Thus, it appears that the winged horses were designed to bear a symbolic influence on William. In his analysis of the animals in the border, Brunson Yapp posits that the winged horses refer to a Greek myth, e.g., the capture of Pegasus, when he was drinking at the Hypocrene (the Horse's well), by Bellerophon, who used this mythical animal in his fight against the Chimera.⁸³ It is obvious that, like the centaurs and the other monstrous figures in the borders, the winged horses derived from a mythological context. However, in medieval culture, the winged horse had a symbolism of its own, almost completely independent of the Greek myth.

McNulty noted, but without further explanation that, "above the figure of William as he exhorts his troops before the battle Pegasus appears, symbol of eloquence."⁸⁴ Indeed, the winged horse (Pegasus) is the symbol of lofty imagination and ease of expression.⁸⁵ But traditionally, it is also the symbol of an unrestrained impetuosity of desire.⁸⁶ Thus, by the bias of winged horses, placed above William, and bracketing his name by "grazing" at both ends, the man (William) below could unabashedly be qualified. Overtly, the winged horses may have implied that William was eloquent as he addressed his troops with an art that bordered on the sublime. Covertly, the winged horses may have also suggested William's lack of restraint, which led him to invade England as quickly as he possibly could after Edward's death and Harold's crowning in order to enforce his "right" to the English succession.

The winged horses are followed by birds. Because of their coloring, size and shape, the birds are probably ravens. These ominous birds, believed to haunt areas where death is imminent, seem to reinforce the malaise inherent in the departure for battle of a large number of men, many of whom are going to their death. Additionally,

the affronted ravens seem to function as connective devices, linking with one extended wing, the winged horse on the left and the lions on the right. These lions probably play a role similar to all the parts played by the other lions in the borders, i.e., they symbolize the two protagonists, King Harold and the soon-to-be king, William. In addition, the lion on the left plays another role. By turning its head back (to the left) towards the birds and pointing with its raised tail in the same direction while its body is set to advance forward to the right, the lion on the left is linked to the ravens and through the ravens' pointing wings, to the winged horses. The second lion (on the right) is a mirror image of the first. Its body is moving forward towards the first lion while its head is turned back toward the next pictograph, which happens to represent eagles.

As in previous illustrations, the royal birds of prey fulfill the same function as the lions, i.e., they represent the two royal protagonists: William, coming from the left towards Harold waiting for him and his men, on the right. The eagles hold the same poses as the lions, i.e., their heads are turned away from each other while their bodies are affronted. With their extended wings, the eagles also provide a link between the lions and the pair of donkeys connected by the rope they are holding between their teeth. Herrmann identifies the two asses as Phaedrus, IV, 25, the fable of *The Two Mules*, an identification which has been consistently ignored.⁸⁷ Indeed, except for the two animals, all the other elements of the fable are missing: the mules are carrying neither bags of money nor bags of oats, there is no bell around the neck of one the mules, and neither mule seems to have suffered in an ambush and been wounded. Thus, one can safely reject Herrmann's identification. Commenting on the line connecting the two beasts, McNulty mentions that they cannot be construed as "tethers or restraints."⁸⁸ Furthermore, McNulty seems to have guessed correctly when he mentioned that "this unique arrangement presumably carries a special meaning."⁸⁹ Yet, he leaves one to wonder when he states that "this unique arrangement is probably relevant to what William is saying to his troops before the battle, but [that] the meaning is not self-evident."⁹⁰ It may be worthwhile to try to disentangle what the two donkeys linked by a rope may have suggested. The asses are facing each other, and, from the contented grin on the face of the tan colored donkey on the left, the connection seems to be profitable at least for this particular animal. However, the other donkey looks somber and not overly satisfied. Following the movement of the narrative once more, the left donkey may be a metaphor

for William who is satisfied to order his pro-Norman mercenaries to charge Harold's Anglo-Saxons warriors, and the black, unlucky ass may symbolize Harold who probably realized that his fate was tied to William's, and that William's previous show of friendship was an intrinsic part of the game William played to subdue him (Harold) and put him back in the place where he belonged, at least according to the pictographs above and below Scene 14, a proposition that is also implied by the peacocks in the lower border of Scene 51.

This assemblage of animal pictographs continues with two birds identifiable as birds of prey, primarily because of their curved beaks and sharp talons. Perhaps they are a type of small hawk or buzzard, which were undoubtedly numerous in the wooded and marshy areas around Hastings in the late eleventh century. As explained above, hawks were known to be thieves and to symbolize excessively grasping and covetous men, like the pro-Norman mercenaries and their leader, William, who are riding below.

At this point, the string of linked pictographs is interrupted by a fable. Always searching for new fables, Herrmann declares that the predator and the horned beast are a representation of Phaedrus, IV, 20, the fable of *The Fox and the Ram*.⁹¹ This fable relates the story of a fox, which falls into a well and coaxes a ram to come down to help him out. Once the fox has escaped, he leaves the ram to his own devices. Needless to say that there is no well, no ram, and, neither animal is thrashing about in water. With regard to this pictograph, Fowke only noted that "a wild animal confronts a goat,"⁹² although McNulty is more prolix, and mentions that it is another representation of *The Goat that Sang*. Indeed, it seems that these two animals may depict the fable of *The Goat that Sang* for the second time in the Tapestry. To refresh the reader's memory, this fable relates the story of a goat caught unawares by a wolf coming out of the woods, who begged the wolf for a reprieve in order to sing the Mass. But, the goat's request was a ruse. Instead, the goat yelled for his friends and was rescued in the nick of time. While the goat appears to have been rescued in the first rendition of the fable below Scene 6, the goat of the fable above Scene 51 is penned up with the wolf in a relatively small enclosure, suggesting that the goat will be unable to escape.

If one were to subscribe to McNulty's line of reasoning when examining *The Goat that Sang*, then, like McNulty, one may, and probably should, believe that Harold is the cunning wolf who is threatening William and his "just cause."⁹³ However, if one

follows the movement of the narrative and posits that this movement is important to the readers' comprehension of the Tapestry and its borders, it is difficult not to be aware that the wolf coming from the left follows the direction of William's move from Normandy to England, and out of the fort of Hastings toward the area which became the battlefield. Thus, one may safely assume that the wolf is a symbol for William who is riding *ad proelivm*, especially, since a wolf has already been used to symbolize William several times, and William has demonstrated his cunning on numerous occasions. In his latest *tour de force* to win the kingdom, William secured the approval of the pope mainly through promises to support Church policies when he became king of England.⁹⁴ Likewise, through shrewd alliances and intermarriages, pressures adroitly applied, and favors called, William garnered the support of the men who owed him vassalage, and of other rulers, proving himself to be an ingenious and greedy wolf who would stop at nothing to get what he wanted.⁹⁵

Furthermore, if one continues to follow the movement of the narrative, one may posit that the goat is Harold coming from London, whose call for support was not answered. Probably aware that any attempt to sway the pro-Norman pope, Alexander II, who "had blessed all the Norman marauding expeditions of the 1060s," would be ignored or denied, Harold refrained from sending any petition to the pope.⁹⁶ Moreover, ignoring the moral impact of the pope's support, Harold probably believed that the pope was powerless as far as the election of a king of England was concerned.⁹⁷ Additionally, Harold may have been overconfident in his own ability to win, without outside help, after his recent victory at Stamford Bridge. However, at Stamford Bridge he had received the help of Morcar, the Earl of Northumbria, and of his brother Edwin, Earl of Mercia. Yet, vexed by Harold's implied mistrust after the battle, Morcar and Edwin failed to join forces with him (reply to the goat's pleas), which probably helped tip the balance in William's (the wolf's) favor.⁹⁸ Thus, the second rendering of *The Goat that Sang* seems to claim that the biggest fool of all was Harold (the goat), whose cries for help failed. Undoubtedly, *The Goat that Sang* forewarns the observer that unbeknownst to all, except perhaps his most trusted family members and supporters, William, the sly wolf always intended to get rid of Harold, and that the opportunity to kill Harold (the goat) with impunity was at hand.

However, while this fable warns the reader of Harold's upcoming demise, Harold (the taunting lion on the right), fresh from his victory at Stamford Bridge, remains a formidable enemy, as the large size of the taunting lion on the right facing the smaller mocking lion (William) seems to suggest. Indeed, William and his cavalry, riding hard towards a clash with Harold's housecarls, were about to experience first hand the strength of Harold's army. Following the lions, a pair of birds, perhaps small birds of prey, seems to be in a frenzy as they flutter above William's men charging the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall below. Yet their wings seem to guide the audience as they point to the mocking lions on the left and the black griffins on the right, as though linking once more a king, Harold, and a soon-to-be king, William, with the monstrous predators which symbolize the aggressive leaders who lust after power and riches. Again, taking into account the movement of the narrative, the griffin on the left penned in a narrow space and stepping backwards on one of the diagonal bars forming the enclosure, probably symbolizes William. The griffin on the right, facing the other griffin, aggressively holds its ground. Likewise, below, the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall is resisting fiercely. Thus, the positions, postures and actions of the griffins suggest that Harold and his housecarls succeeded in breaking William's cavalry attack.⁹⁹ William's men had to retreat. Yet, both sides knew that the respite would be short (lions crouching on the grounds) and that they would have to bide their time and reorganize quietly (crouched lions biting their tails).

McNulty is the only one to comment on the birds that follow, referring to the "unusual arrangement of three birds in sequence [which] may have to do with the action in the main panel below."¹⁰⁰ However, the black bird that follows the crouched lions, as well as the pair of tan birds to the right, are probably geese, which are surveying the massacre taking place below. According to the old Nordic legends still lingering in the late eleventh century, especially amongst fighting men, the geese were not only messengers, they also were psychopomps, i.e., they carried to a warrior's paradise the souls of the fighting men about to die in the melee below. Following these birds, the two dogs, growling while marching aggressively towards each other, seem to attest to the fact that this was only a first encounter and that William and Harold, the two *canailles* (black dogs), were not about to give up so easily, in spite of the bodies of the dead piling up in the lower border. An examination of the lower border of Scene 51 may also comment on

the preparations for battle above and address the various concerns that may have plagued the leaders as they were about to fight to the death.

5.2. SCENE 51: A Black Dog, Dragons, a Fable, Peacocks, Griffins, Hunting Episodes, Birds, Lions, Dead Birds ...in the Lower Border

As mentioned in my analysis of Scene 50, a predator, probably a black hound, is apparently paired with the black lion at the beginning of the lower border of Scene 51. The dark hound holds a pose that is a mirror image of the lion's, i.e., its body is turned in one direction while its head faces another. The hound is gazing at the dragons separated from it by two diagonal bars and scrolling vegetation, while walking away from them as though not yet ready to face them. Because of its placement directly below William, one may assume that the black hound is a symbolic representation of William, who is hereby qualified once more as being a low-born canaille known to use deceit when it suited his purpose. Indeed, William demonstrated great cunning when he decided to pursue a "scorched earth" policy, "concentrating particularly on lands known to be Harold's."¹⁰¹ William had rightly reasoned that he would "dent Harold's prestige, authority and credibility," and force Harold "to rise to the bait, for contemporary notions of honour demanded immediate retaliation or the entire notion of lordship would fail."¹⁰² However, in a manner suggested by the hound's movement away from the dragon, William, who was encouraging his men to go forward and fight, may have preferred not to face Harold, the dragon of Wessex, whose courage he had a chance to observe during the Brittany campaign. It is reported that William boasted that it was his intention to fight Harold in single combat. Yet, when the strength of the English started to wane and the shield-wall began to crumble, leaving Harold exposed, William did not go to face Harold; instead, he ordered Eustacius de Boulogne to take three knights to go and find Harold and kill him.¹⁰³

However, the dragons are contained; their tails are tied in a knot once more. In fact, not only are the dragons constricted and deprived of their main weapon for fighting (the tied tails), but through adroit stitchery, one was made to look ghastly (the one on the left), and the other ghostly (the one on the right), like mere shadows of their former selves. Such an appearance is not surprising if one remembers that, having learned of William's exactions (burning of English estates and pillaging), Harold responded in the manner that William had foreseen. Harold, the dragon of Wessex had endured a grueling

ride back from York to London (ghastly looking dragon). After getting back to London on 5 or 6 October, Harold spent but a few days there to appraise the situation before setting out for Hastings, where he probably arrived on the evening of Friday, 13 October. By the evening of the next day, Harold had been killed (ghostly looking dragon).¹⁰⁴ Perhaps the dog moving away from the dragons, with their tails tied, was meant to suggest to a post-Conquest audience that William was a low-born, cowardly *canaille* who feared Harold, even when he (Harold) was exhausted and on the point of death.

Referring to the episode depicted next to the dragons, Fowke only noted that “a wolf advances calmly towards a pack of curs which yelp from behind a barrier.”¹⁰⁵ Notwithstanding the fact that there is no cat, sow or eagle represented in the episode described by Fowke, Herrmann identifies this same small scene as Phaedrus, I, 10, the fable of *The Cat, the Sow and the Eagle*.¹⁰⁶ Researchers have dismissed or ignored Herrmann’s findings, agreeing instead that this episode is a second depiction of *The Pregnant Bitch* illustrated first below Scene 5.¹⁰⁷ However, due perhaps to their Norman bias, researchers interested in the borders such as Bernstein, McNulty and Terkla do not follow the flow of the narrative, and they ignore historical facts. As a result, they misinterpret the scene. Thus, Bernstein argues that, “since the pregnant bitch’s actions seem to fit comfortably as a metaphor for Harold’s ingratitude and guile when making promises, and then for his use of force to retain his possession, this fable would appear to be anti-Harold.”¹⁰⁸ Comfortable with this interpretation, McNulty argues that “the appearance of the fable in the lower border here suggests that William in his harangue is reminding his men of the call to which they have responded,” i.e., to remove Harold from the throne and capture England for William.¹⁰⁹ Definitely affected by his Norman bias, Terkla believes that William had a right to invade England. Consequently, Terkla ignores the flow of the narrative and posits that the fable of *The Pregnant Bitch* was incorporated into the border below William’s cavalry to emphasize William’s harangue to his assembled men, and to entice them to chase Harold “out of his and Edward’s cave so he can rightly occupy it.”¹¹⁰

If one analyzes the two renditions of this fable, is not hampered by a “Norman bias,” respects the narrative flow, and takes into account the respective placements of pictographs in the borders vis-à-vis the movement and actions of the main participants in the center field, one arrives at a different interpretation. In the first illustration of *The*

Pregnant Bitch placed below Scene 5, the bitch and her puppies probably symbolize Harold who was given England to rule by and for Edward. The other dog may be identified as William who was waiting to find a way to dislodge Harold and his companions in order to regain the “house” (England) which Edward had purportedly promised to him, and which William considered to be his.

In the lower border of Scene 51, the house harboring the bitch and her puppies is still on the left of the image. However, following the flow of the narrative, William is the one who is moving from left to right, has left Normandy, invaded England, and is now metaphorically in Harold’s house resisting expulsion, since Harold has been chosen to reign over England. Additionally, the black dog’s (Harold’s) posture here differs from the dog’s (William’s) posture in the first rendition of *The Pregnant Bitch*. Under Scene 51, the black dog (Harold) is advancing menacingly in order to dislodge the bitch and her puppies (William and his mercenaries) from his house (England). In this case, William is the squatter. He is making himself at home in England under suspicious premises, arguing that he was promised the throne. However, the Tapestry has shown that Harold is *REX*, not William. This second illustration of *The Pregnant Bitch* was probably meant to ensure that the audience understood that Harold is the ill-fated *canaille* (black dog), who is arriving post haste at Hastings, as indicated by the forward movement of the dog, to defend and reclaim his kingdom.

Next to the fable, two birds that McNulty identifies as peacocks seem to be pointing at each other accusingly with one of their extended wings.¹¹¹ Noting that “peacocks are shown in early bestiaries with tufted heads,” McNulty proceeds to explain that, since they are “emblems of immortality,” peacocks “are appropriate here in Scene 51 as William exhorts his troops, many of whom can expect to die in the coming battle.”¹¹² In spite of McNulty’s explanation, details of the representation seem to evoke another interpretation. If one refers to the fable of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw* above Scene 14, one is reminded of the first formal encounter between William and Harold. However, in the case of Scene 51 and contrary to Scene 14, both birds have the same appearance except for the slightly larger size of the bird on the right. Again, following the movement of the narrative, the peacock on the left probably symbolizes the proud William, while the larger one on the right may be Harold, who no longer rules England as a *sub-regulus* (the jackdaw of the fable above Scene 14), but has finally achieved his

goal of becoming king (peacock), to William's dismay and despite his (William's) pretensions. The pair of peacocks below Scene 51 acts as a reminder of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw*, and was probably inserted at this pivotal point in the Tapestry as a mnemonic cue to help the audience recall Harold's first formal encounter with William; and to remind them of the debt that Harold incurred towards William, because he (William) had ransomed him (Harold) from the clutches of Guy de Ponthieu; of the temporary accord between the two men; and of the subsequent help in the Brittany Campaign that Harold was forced to provide to William as a partial repayment for saving him (Harold). As the mutual pointing of the peacocks' wings suggest, the resentment between William and Harold festered and grew during the months that had passed since their meeting in Normandy. Likewise, the two donkeys linked by a rope in the upper border, were additional reminders of the bond between the two leaders, which went sour almost as soon as it was established because it was built on deceit. Thus, as the encounter between the two leaders and their armies became imminent, peacocks were used, perhaps as reminders of the moral of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw* above Scene 14, and to warn the audience that the time had come for debts to be settled between William and Harold.

The two hounds that follow, a small dark one on the left and a larger light-colored one on the right, were interpreted by Herrmann as the representation Phaedrus I, 1, the fable of *The Wolf and the Dog*.¹¹³ However, neither the story line nor the moral of the fable has any relevance to the epic unraveling in the main field. More to the point are the placements and postures of the two animals. The smaller, dark dog on the left apparently caged within a narrow enclosure is at a standstill, and raises a large left paw as though to signal his opponents in the next compartment to halt. Because of its placement vis-à-vis the other hound and because of the movement of the narrative, the small black dog probably symbolizes William, whose sphere of action was limited as long as he did not eliminate the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon army and break the English resolve to resist him. This darkly colored, mangy mutt in a defensive attitude was probably chosen to symbolize William in order to ridicule him vis-à-vis Harold who is most likely associated while the larger, tan hound given ample space to advance. Another pair of griffins follows the dogs in the lower border. This beast (the griffin) is one of the few that is illustrated when aggressivity and greed are emphasized. These two elements were

necessary to succeed as a leader in early medieval society which valued strength and cleverness, two components that probably prevailed in Harold's and William's psyches.

The two sets of animals that follow represent predators that have caught fowls by the neck. Counting the pictographs in this area of the border amongst the "allegorical allusions to the incidents of history," Fowke mentions that "a leopard and a fox each bear off a fluttering goose."¹¹⁴ Never at a loss, Herrmann identifies these two hunting scenes as yet another two fables. He names the first one, *The Panther* (Phaedrus, I, 33), and the second one, *The Cat and the Chickens* (Phaedrus, IV, 28), neither being relevant to the narrative.¹¹⁵ Always sympathetic to William's cause, McNulty mentions that, "stealing chickens is an ancient symbol of treachery and thievery, an appropriate symbol as William reminds his men of Harold's usurpation of the throne."¹¹⁶

At first glance, McNulty's interpretation was politically correct in post-Conquest England. However, the placement of the animal pictographs (depicting identical subjects, i.e., predators making off with their prey), vis-à-vis the evolution of the narrative from left to right, suggests that the predators symbolize William, and the fowls that they hold between their jaws are metaphors for Harold. It is noteworthy that the first predator is represented with spotted fur, similar to the fur of the animal stalking the ass below Scene 49. McNulty is of the opinion that the spotted beast below Scene 51 is a panther. In the early Middle Ages, the nomina panther and leopard were interchangeable. Both were considered to be the bastard offspring of a lion and a "pard."¹¹⁷ Because of their bastardry, these animals were flawed. Indeed, Rabannus Maurus posits that bastardry leads to moral degeneracy.¹¹⁸ In addition, the spots on their fur, which are irregular, are signs of "disorder, confusion and transgression."¹¹⁹ In the case of the lower border of Scene 51, it comes as no surprise that a leopard, i.e., a bastard animal known as a symbol for "moral degeneracy" which often leads to "disorder, confusion and transgression," is associated with another bastard offspring, i.e., William.¹²⁰ In addition, it is not surprising that this particular leopard caught a goose. In Medieval culture, this fowl symbolized the rumormonger, i.e., a person who has a hard time keeping his/her mouth shut, and whose tongue leads him/her into countless snares, which flaws were attributed consistently to Harold. As well, the goose was also the symbol of the cautious man, always prepared to escape trouble. This particular goose, caught by the neck, seems to illustrate that, in the end, while careful, Harold had finally fallen prey to William.

In the next pictograph, also depicting a predator and his prey, the predator has lost its spots. It is now a hound or most probably a wolf – McNulty mentions the possibility of its being a fox.¹²¹ The fowl is smaller, and because the designer took care to include comb and wattles in his illustration, it was probably meant to be a rooster, not a goose as Fowke posits, nor a mere chicken as McNulty mentions.¹²² Roosters are symbols of vigilance and hope, and because of their vigilance, symbols of the one who succeeds in avoiding the snares of thieves.¹²³ Roosters were found only once before in the upper border of Scene 11, in which William's envoys rode at full speed to bring hope to Harold in the form of an order for Guy, the kidnapper and thief, to release Harold, and to give a gleeful Guy the ransom that his envoys managed to extract from William. Before agreeing to a ransom, it is probable that William calculated that Harold was well worth the expense and that he would be able to recoup his expenditures later when he (William) became king.¹²⁴ In the case of Scene 51, hope, in the form of a rooster, which was probably meant to symbolize Harold, is being crushed between the jaws of a ruthless, thieving animal, the wolf (William). Indeed, since Scene 4, and the fable of *The Wolf and the Lamb*, William has been associated with the wolf and the specific character traits attributed to this animal, e.g., its duplicity, cruelty, and lust for power, flaws that William developed to survive during his difficult childhood. Thus, the second pictograph of hunting predators below Scene 51 was probably meant to reiterate the warnings, given to the audience by the first pictograph of hunting predators, that, in spite of his vigilance, Harold (rooster) will be unable to escape the snares prepared by William, who is not only cunning and ferocious (wolf), but is also a thief about to steal the crown of England from Harold (combined symbolism of the wolf and the rooster).

A rapid scanning shows that the squawking birds, probably carrier pigeons, depicted to the right of the second predatory scene, appear to be completely distraught, their wings fluttering aimlessly, as they seem to comment on the events unraveling in the main field. However, on closer inspection, the fluttering of their wings does not appear random. Instead, the wings seem to connect different areas of the scene while trying to focus the attention of the observer. Thus, with its left wing, the carrier pigeon on the left points to William's men in the center field, and with its right wing, it refers to the predatory scene behind it in the border, making an efficient linkage between the wolf carrying a rooster in its jaws and William's knights and archers about to attack Harold's

housecarls. In similar fashion, the messenger bird on the right points both of its wings upwards and toward the coming battle as William's men are gaining speed while preparing to throw their lances at Harold's housecarls, formed into a shield-wall. As a result, the birds create a nexus of interest encompassing the pictographs of predators in the lower border, William's pro-Norman knights, and Harold's Anglo-Saxons housecarls who have closed ranks to prevent William's cavalry from breaching their defenses.

At first glance, the pictographs of the two carrier pigeons may only suggest that they function as devices meant to mimic the reactions of observers to the rampage taking place above. In fact, when considering the placement of the individual animal pictographs, their movement and action vis-à-vis the movement from left to right of the narrative, and the symbolic meaning of the beasts depicted in these pictographs, the two carrier pigeons seem to be part of an attempt (perhaps Odo's) to convince post-Conquest viewers that William the Bastard's schemes led to disorder, confusion and transgression (leopard): disorder and confusion because of the upheaval inherent to any takeover and change of government; and transgression because he had connived to persuade the pope and some of his peers that his pretensions were backed by an undeniable right to the English crown. Additionally, the carrier pigeons also signal not only that William (the leopard) was about to catch Harold (the goose), the man who spoke too much, but that he probably intended all along to shut him up for good (grab the goose by the neck). Indeed, by killing Harold (the rooster), a resourceful William (the wolf) rid himself of the one man who could have been the major rallying figure for all the malcontents who fomented many post-conquest protests and rebellions.

As though to complement the meaning of the previous pictographs, the next pictograph is a lion, its black body stretched in a forward motion, its tail raised proudly in the air, its head raised and jaws open in a great mute roar, as it faces a tan lion who seems to be holding its ground as it gazes and roars back at the black beast in front of it. Following the movement of the narrative, the black lion probably symbolizes William, who seems to have gained confidence as his men ride ahead. By its appearance, posture and movement, the tan lion, probably symbolizing Harold, expresses the possible doubts and hesitation that Harold may have felt when he finally came face to face with William's army, knowing that he and his men were exhausted, and that the fourteenth day of October was going to be a long day, regardless of the final result.

The two birds that follow are the last animal pictographs (except for the horses of the fallen knights) to be represented in the lower border of the Tapestry. Beyond the depiction of the dead birds lies the beginning of a lengthy representation of the results of the battle: the dying and the dead litter the lower border with their bodies and body parts, and the artifacts, such as swords, shields and lances, are scattered among the dead and dying. Addressing the last pictograph of the birds in the lower border, Fowke states that “these mystic figures gradually give place to the dead bodies of Norman and Saxon which strew the ground.”¹²⁵ McNulty is more specific when he notes the correlation between “the shock of impact as the two great armies meet in battle,” the fall of the first of the warriors, and “the birds in the lower border [which] are knocked off their feet.”¹²⁶ Indeed, it is obvious that because of their placement and their upside down postures with feet up in the air and outstretched wings, the birds mimic the dead knights above who have just been skewered by Anglo-Saxon lances.¹²⁷ Besides the obvious mimicry, these last pictographs, representing fallen birds that resemble carrier pigeons, indicate that, from this point onward, messengers are no longer needed to forewarn about the death and destruction, which are the expected results of war. Indeed, after the first clash, the dead bodies in the lower border are sufficient to demonstrate the carnage that took place on 14 October 1066.

5.3. SCENE 51: Conclusion

A perusal of Scene 51 shows that the pictographs in the borders continue to dispense their relentless comments and innuendoes. That these comments are especially aimed at William should come as no surprise to the reader/viewer. Indeed, William seems to have become the major recipient of an accelerating campaign of disparagement, which aimed to bolster Odo’s own standing amongst the post-Conquest knights and courtiers. Odo’s “Machiavellian” mind probably conceived such a campaign to make contemporary, influential people accept his views and to attract them to his and Robert Curthose’s cause and against that of William and William Rufus. After a close examination and analysis of the borders of Scene 51, one may note an increase in the frequency of pictographs that may be reminders or suggestions of William’s past exactions.

In summary, the string of pictographs in Scene 51 may be interpreted on two levels: First, to a casual twenty-first century observer, not particularly versed in

historical details and anecdotes, the borders above and below Scene 51 may be construed as a gloss of William's allocution to his men. Secondly, and more importantly, close observation of the borders reveals how late eleventh-century viewers/readers acquainted with William, with his famous and infamous deeds, and with the events surrounding the final battle for the Conquest of England, may have read and understood elements in the depiction of the animals, and their postures and gestures, which may have led them to decipher other latent meanings, for the most part detrimental to William. In view of Odo's presumed influence on the Tapestry's design, it is probable that Odo used the façade provided by the gloss of William's speech, to impose on contemporary viewers – who were perhaps willing recipients – his unsavory remarks concerning his half-brother, William.

Thus, one may read the upper and lower borders as follows: William who was endowed with a lofty imagination, may have given a moving speech (Pegasus) to his men. However, an impetuous William used little restraint, once he decided to act (also, Pegasus). His yearning to become king (left lion, upper border), coupled with Harold's determination to remain king (right lion upper border) was about to send countless people to their death (ravens). William (black dog, lower border), who knew Harold's strength from having fought at his side during the Brittany campaign may have been hesitant to face Harold (black dog turning away). So he harried Harold's tenants, and profited from the fact that Harold was in dire straits and that his men were at a low point (dragons with tied tails) after the Battle of Stamford Bridge, to time his attack. But Harold still had enough strength to try to dislodge William from England (*The Pregnant Bitch*). Edward had given Harold the opportunity to be a king (right lion, upper border), but William had previously told him (Harold) that he did not belong to that special group of men born to rule (fable of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw*, Scene 14). However, Harold had become king (right peacock, lower border), while William, who believed he was part of that special group of men (left lion, upper border), was still only a duke, and the bastard son of a duke, a *canaille* (lone black dog, lower border) reluctant to face Harold (dragon).

Turned away from each other, William and Harold (the lions and eagles) were occupied in their mutual preparations for battle. William probably knew that Harold had not been fooled by the show of friendship after the Brittany campaign (asses linked with

ropes). However, this time with all the cunning at his disposal, William (the wolf) garnered the approval of the Pope and the active help of some of his peers, as well as various promises of non-interference on the part of others. On the contrary, Harold alienated some of the earls who could have been his best allies (Morcar and Edwin). Harold failed to use his tongue as wisely and with as much guile as William (wolf of *The Goat that Sang*). As a result, Harold (goat of *The Goat that Sang*) was left to fight with little outside help (moral of *The Goat that Sang*). William may have been only a duke, a would-be king (small lion upper border), but he had strong allies, and could laugh and taunt Harold (protruding tongue of same lion). Harold was mighty, he was king (large lion, upper border), which led him to believe that he could accept the throne, and make fun of William's preparations with impunity. William and Harold were but aggressive beasts lusting for gold and power, neither man wanting to forego his ambition (griffins, upper and lower borders). Indeed, William and Harold acted like dogs fighting over a bone (dogs in the lower border). Perhaps still awed by Harold (large tan dog), William (black dog) seems to be eager to stop Harold (movement of the black dog's left paw) before he regained his strength (waning strength perhaps indicated by light color of dog on right) and/or received back up help. By transgressing the established order, William, the bastard, was bringing disorder and confusion to England (leopard), as well as death to king Harold, a man who had never learned to keep his mouth shut and was now paying the price (goose held by the neck). To his long list of flaws, William added outright thievery, stealing the crown from Harold who, in the end, was not successful in avoiding his trap (the wolf and the rooster below). The remaining pretender, William (the black lion on the left) was about to face Harold, the king (tan lion on the right), and only death and destruction could result from this encounter (dead birds).

6. **SCENE 52: "HIC CECIDERVNT LEWINE ET GYRD FRATRES HAROLDI REGIS"**

One is puzzled when analyzing – in as objective a manner as the written sources and near contemporary records permit -- Harold's movements and his course of action in the days prior to the Battle of Hastings.¹²⁸ As McLynn argues, "even greater folly was evinced by his[Harold's] insistence that Gyrth, Leofwine, and all the great names of Wessex and southern England accompany him to Hastings; this meant that if they were defeated, the English would be left with no leaders who could rally them," which is

exactly what took place.¹²⁹ Chroniclers and the Tapestry seem to confirm that, “Leofwine and Gyrrh were killed early in the battle,” probably during the melee that followed the assault of the Norman knights on Harold’s position and the subsequent rout of William’s Breton knights and infantry.¹³⁰ While “we may not take seriously the scene in the Bayeux Tapestry showing Leofwine and Gyrrh falling together,” such a concise depiction of the two deaths was expedient from a design point of view, especially when one considers the technical difficulties inherent to the representation of such a long battle.¹³¹

Yet, it is obvious, from their use as the focal point of Scene 52, that the deaths of Harold’s brothers when the Breton contingent was in disarray and “the Normans were on the point of being routed,” were important to the evolution of the battle.¹³² Indeed, the killing of Leofwine and Gyrrh deprived the Anglo-Saxons of two important leaders, and probably played a major role in halting the general, organized advance of the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall, giving William the opportunity to rally his troops.¹³³

6.1. SCENE 52: Birds, Hounds, Cranes and Griffins in the Upper Border, Results of the Battle in the Lower Border

A pair of squawking birds, lifting one wing, followed by a pair of dark hounds about to pounce on each other stand above the word *cecidervnt* in the inscription. It seems that the birds, probably carrier pigeons, were meant to forecast the news of the death of Harold’s brothers, while the hounds that precede and follow the birds may be indicative that the men engaged in the killing were but bloodthirsty *canailles*. Next to the birds, the smaller hound (the left one of the pair), which follows the movement of the pro-Norman riders below, seems to react in surprise at the advance of the large hound on the right. The larger dog on the right is placed directly above the name *Leofwine* in the inscription, and his figure in the main field, perhaps suggesting that one need to act as an evil *canaille* (large black dog) to fight other *canailles* (smaller black dog). Following the hounds, a pair of cranes seems to stand guard above the name *Gyrrh* in the inscription below. As noted above, according to the Celto-Nordic tradition, cranes fulfilled the role of psychopomp, i.e., they carried the souls of the dead to the netherworld. It is appropriate to include cranes above a scene representing the death of two leaders. After their death, a pair of griffins in the upper border, following the cranes, suggests continued aggressivity. However, the griffin on the right appears to be backing away from the

advancing griffin on the left, which may hint at the dwindling resistance of the English forces after the death of two of their most important leaders.

To sum up Scene 52, the black hounds suggests that there was no gallantry in the fight between Harold's strongest supporters, his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine, and William's forces. After they met with an unsavory death on the battlefield, their souls were carried to a warrior's paradise by the cranes waiting above. However, the war was not yet over. The lust for power and gold still moved the opponents (griffins). Like the black hound above the word *REGIS*, William's Breton contingent ran back and away from the Anglo-Saxons troops. After following the fleeing Bretons, the Anglo-Saxons were caught unawares by William's rallying forces, and ran, like the tan hound to find shelter behind the relative safety of the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall.¹³⁴ In addition, the crouched stance of the two hounds seems to indicate what a historian suggested: that, spent after hours of fighting, "both sides paused to rest, recuperate and consider options."¹³⁵

The lower border has been invaded by the bodies of the dead knights. All are still fully dressed, and some have their sword or lance by their side. Additionally, in a grim display of the atrocities found on the battlefield, a couple of knights have literally lost their heads.

7. **SCENE 53: "HIC CECIDERUNT SIMVL ANGLI ET FRANCI IN PROELIO"**

The inscription above Scene 53 only mentions that "the English and the French died in battle." As the term *Franci* indicates, not only Normans fought for William, but members of other ethnic groups which are lumped together under the name "*Franci*," i.e., Franks, who had become the dominant power in Western Europe in the mid-sixth century.¹³⁶ It has been argued, yet it is doubtful, that Scene 53 represents the so-called *Malfosse* incident, which, according to most early sources occurred toward the end of the battle at nightfall, and after Harold's death. Historians recorded that, while pursuing the fleeing Anglo-Saxons, the Norman knights rode down a gully so steep and deep that "many riders broke their necks," while others were "despatched by the waiting Anglo-Saxons" that were part of the rearguard.¹³⁷ Instead, it is probable that the episode, reported in Scene 53, is an illustration of the Anglo-Saxons' efforts to continue the fighting after the deaths of Leofwine and Gyrth, the Breton retreat, and the subsequent slaughter of the English fyrdmen who had broken rank to pursue the Bretons.¹³⁸ Indeed,

after the death of Harold's brothers, the course of the battle seems to have changed for the worse for the Anglo-Saxons. If Harold ever had a chance to win, it happened when the Bretons, who had taken a "terrible mauling" at English hands, "broke and began streaming down the hill."¹³⁹ In spite of the story spread by Norman historians of a calculated Breton retreat to break the shield-wall, it seems that the Breton rout was real.¹⁴⁰ In any event, perhaps because it was a sore point for William, and therefore a dangerous subject for anyone to broach, the Breton retreat is not illustrated overtly in the Bayeux Tapestry. Whether or not Harold had a chance to finish the battle then and there is immaterial since the death of his brothers probably robbed him of that chance.¹⁴¹

Scene 53 includes a knight being thrown from his horse. The knight is not named; yet coincidentally, William was unhorsed (the first of the three times he was unhorsed during the battle) in the melee that ensued following the Breton retreat, his horse probably stumbling on sharp stakes that the Anglo-Saxons had planted in the ground for that very purpose. Also in Scene 53, a knight, again probably William, who is not recorded as having suffered any injury from his first fall, is pulling on the end of a leather strap holding a horse's saddle in place in order to loosen it and make its rider fall. Apparently, after William was thrown off, he requested that an unnamed knight from Maine give up his horse.¹⁴² Upon the knight's refusal, an enraged William unhorsed him forcefully, and mounted the animal instead. Scene 53 also shows the Anglo-Saxons fighting from the top of the hill, surrounded by William's cavalry, symbolized by two knights charging with their lances and ready to strike.

Additionally, two Anglo-Saxon infantry men are depicted in the act of running away from the scene. While running forward, the fyrdman on the left has turned his head back to gaze upon the event depicted at the beginning of Scene 53, while the fyrdman on the right seems to be calling out, using his left hand to make his voice carry further. Perhaps these two men allude to the part played by the Anglo-Saxons in spreading the false rumor of William's death. As though to comment on the merciless battle, the lower border of Scene 53 is littered with the corpses of the fallen warriors. No other commentary need be made of the lower border for this scene. However the upper border is still filled with animal pictographs which may qualify the events depicted in the center field, and may enlighten the reader/viewer about the events unraveling in the center.

7. 1. SCENE 53: Birds and Dogs in the Upper Border

Yapp mentions “the peculiar crests growing from the back of the head” of a pair of birds in the upper border of the Tapestry,” adding that “there is no British bird like this.”¹⁴³ McNulty also noted “the elaborate crest” on the pair of birds suggesting that “these are intended as birds of Paradise, appropriate to a scene where men die in battle.” However, the symbolism to which McNulty refers dates from the seventeenth century, not the Middle Ages.¹⁴⁴ Despite their fanciful representation, some varieties of partridges (*perdices*) and quails (*coturnices*) have a sort of tuft growing from the top of their heads. The one curlicue “feather” adorning the upper part of the heads of the birds in the upper border of Scene 53 is a bit fanciful; yet, these apparent discrepancies do not negate the possibility that these birds are partridges or quails, or were meant to represent a conglomerate of both. Perhaps, it was because of their symbolism that these birds were included in the Tapestry.

Isidore of Seville describes the partridge as “*avis dolosa atqve immvnda*,” leaving no doubt about its negative symbolism.¹⁴⁵ According to Isidore, the partridge is deceitful and impure because the males of the species prefer to mate with other males.¹⁴⁶ Likewise, medieval culture considered quails to be clever and perfidious because it was believed that the quails chose a bird of another species (*ortygometra*) as leader when crossing large bodies of water, to prevent being attacked by hawks, since it was believed that the hawks pursued the first bird they saw, and let the others fly away without injury.¹⁴⁷

One may wonder what the symbolism of a pair of partridges/quails, which are placed directly above the word *ANGLI*, and the knight (probably William) being unhorsed, may have conjured up in the mind of a post-Conquest reader/viewer.¹⁴⁸ Overtly, these perfidious birds may have been used to suggest to a post-Conquest audience that the treachery of the *ANGLI*, i.e., Anglo-Saxons, whose leader was the deceitful Harold, did not pay; that the Anglo-Saxons could unhorse William, yet he would get up again and go on fighting them to the end. However, this version, favorable to William, is weakened by a close examination of Scene 53, and by a knowledge of historical events. Indeed, in spite of the legend that William was unhorsed by Gyrth, there appears to be no Anglo-Saxon warrior involved.¹⁴⁹ The knight’s (probably William’s) horse seems to have run into the sharpened stakes that the Anglo-Saxons had

implanted in the ground to trip and injure the horses, disabling the oncoming cavalrymen. As a result, one may wonder if there were other reasons why such an episode, detrimental to William, found its way into the design of the Tapestry. Additionally, one may also wonder why quails and partridges were included in the upper border above this particular episode. It seems that the combination of these two elements of design offered an opportunity to besmirch William's reputation and that of his chosen heir, William Rufus. Indeed, it is known that Tostig and his wife visited William in Normandy in January 1066. Overtly, it was a visit motivated by family concerns, since Judith (Tostig's wife) was related to Matilda (William's spouse).¹⁵⁰ As McLynn mentions, "the two men conferred, and William gave his blessing to Tostig's plan for a spring raid on the south coast, to test Harold's defences."¹⁵¹ William saw how potentially useful Tostig might be in diverting Harold's attention from his (William's) own preparations, thus facilitating the conquest of England.¹⁵² Therefore, in the case of Scene 53, it may be suggested that William was the perfidious bird (quail) who let Tostig, the sacrificial *ortygometra*, test the strength of Harold's army at Stamford Bridge; and that, while Harold was busy killing Tostig and his ally, Harald Hardrada (after they landed on the northeastern coast of England), William and his army (the quails) had landed safely in England. Additionally, the mating habits attributed to the partridge may have been a reference to the persistent rumors that William Rufus was not only vain, uneducated and cruel, but that he followed the reputed behavior of the partridge, and preferred to mate with persons of his own sex.¹⁵³ Such innuendos may have been part of Odo's handiwork, especially when considering the state of his relationship with William and William Rufus.

Next to the deceitful birds, a pair of affronted dogs with striped necks (the one on the left has two stripes, the other only one), have turned their heads away from each other. As explained above, medieval society considered stripes to be one of the signs of *diversitas*, which were reserved for its undesirable members, such as bastards. Perhaps because William was a bastard, stripes and other signs of *varietas* are often associated with him, his followers, and those who owed William service through the complicated relationships established by the feudal system. These men were lumped under the nomen *FRANCI* in the inscription above Scene 53. Directly above, the dog with the double stripe on its neck is sticking a long, red tongue at the quails/partridges behind it, as though defying and mocking them. Below the mocking dog and the word *FRANCI*, a

knight, probably the unhorsed William, is forcing another knight, probably the unidentified knight from Maine, to dismount. By refusing to dismount, the knight from the conquered *comté* of Maine, who was probably forced into service after William seized Maine from its rightful overlord, acted like the dog with a double stripe around its neck mocking the partridges/quails, and was in turn defying and taunting William (the partridge/quail).¹⁵⁴

One may find it amazing that such an episode involving an act of defiance, probably aimed at William, could be represented in the Tapestry. Perhaps, out of sheer caution, neither knight is named. However, a post-Conquest audience, aware of the many stories that knights and other warriors brought back from battle, probably had no trouble in recognizing this episode as the one involving William and the unnamed knight from Maine. Perhaps this episode was designed to remind the audience of the circumstances surrounding two events from the relatively recent past. Firstly, while involved in the takeover of the province of Maine, his last act of aggressive expansionism prior to the conquest of England, William was infuriated by the resolve of the rightful ruler of Maine, Geoffrey of Mayenne, to refuse to surrender.¹⁵⁵ As a result William hunted him mercilessly.¹⁵⁶ To be refused a request by a knight of Maine on the battlefield probably angered William anew. Indeed, William never forgot an insult; he could not accept to be contradicted, and was wont to avenge himself, probably prompting him to unhorse the man.¹⁵⁷ If one was bent on mischief, the advantage in depicting such a scene was to remind contemporary courtiers and vassals that William was a dangerous man, that their existence as rulers of their own little fiefdoms depended on the good will of their lord, William, whose conduct was becoming more and more erratic as he aged, and that William followed whatever course he deemed expedient to ensure his power base, including summarily “replacing” vassals who displeased him.¹⁵⁸

Secondly, the event, involving the knight from Maine, may have reminded the audience of William’s Byzantine political constructs. Indeed, after the Conquest some members of William’s entourage still resented the manner in which he (William) had drawn them into what many considered his personal fight to fulfill his own expansionistic ambition. Indeed, before the invasion, during a meeting with his vassals, William demanded that they double their military obligation. Outraged, they refused en masse to fulfill his demands. William proceeded to use their refusal as an excuse to adjourn the

meeting. Unrelenting and always devious, William engineered a plan, with the help of the wily William Fitzosbern, hinting at the “dreadful retribution” that these recalcitrant vassals and allies would suffer if they were obstinate in their refusal. Then, instead of having another meeting, William convoked each vassal separately. Cornered and fearful, each one had no other alternative but to agree.¹⁵⁹

Through an association of ideas, the fall and subsequent unhorsing episode from Scene 53 may be transformed into a mnemonic cue aimed at reminding a post-Conquest audience that William’s treachery was long-lived, and that William was ruthless, cruel and dangerous. Thus, this episode may have been included to cultivate the resentment, and to encourage the spirit of discontent and rebellion that festered in some members of the nobility after the Conquest, especially after promises made to them prior to the invasion were only partially fulfilled, or worse, simply ignored.

The dog on the right, with the one stripe around its neck, has turned its head in the direction opposite the mocking dog while running toward it, and is looking at the messenger birds in the next compartments above Scene 53. As well as serving to link the pictographs before and after them with elements of the center field, these birds, probably carrier pigeons, seem to be directing the attention of the viewer/reader towards various areas of Scene 53. With its right wing extended along its body, the bird on the left points to the barking dog with the unique stripe. With its left wing, it points to the Anglo-Saxons defending the hill below. Thus, the dog with the one stripe, running away from the area above the fighting men, may be symbolic of William’s men, the Breton *canailles*, who started to disband and retreat from the Anglo-Saxon knights and fyrdmen fighting from the top of the hill. Like the bird calling the dog angrily back, William was trying to rally the cowardly Bretons.

Without knowledge of rumors and anecdotes, which seem to bring their own weight to bear on the pictographs in the border, Scene 53 may be considered as an ordinary scene of battle with an amazing rendering of two knights being unhorsed and of horses in the act of tumbling down and falling over. However, the pictographs in the border seem to add their own commentary not only because of what they symbolized in medieval culture, but also because of their clever positioning vis-à-vis the inscription and the figures in the center field. Thus, through an association of ideas, the observer is reminded of the frowned-upon mating habits (partridge) of William Rufus, William’s

chosen heir to the English throne; of William's deceitfulness (quail); of his intrigue with Tostig; of his well laid out plan of aggressive conquest (unhorsed knight from Maine) which culminated in the Conquest of England; of his treacherous attitude and broken promises toward the *FRANCI*, his associates and vassals (dogs with striped necks); and of the Bretons attempts to disobey and withdraw (dog with one stripe running away).

8. SCENE 54: "HIC ODO EP[ISCOPV]S BACVLV[M] TENENS CONFORTAT PVEROS"

About Scene 54, McNulty only mentions that the knight "immediately facing the club wielding Odo (at the far left) is one who has turned to leave the battle," in other words, flee.¹⁶⁰ Fowke writes more liberally about Scene 54, declaring that "Odo joined with the Duke... in restoring confidence to the routed troops," when he saw that "William's left wing was thrown into utter confusion by the first flight of the Bretons."¹⁶¹ A first hand observation of the Tapestry shows that Odo is wearing a suit of armor nearly identical to the one William wore in Scene 16, when, accompanied by a sullen Harold, he led his knights at the beginning of the Brittany campaign. As mentioned earlier, diamonds are another sign of *diversitas* which link Odo effectively with his half-brother William, the bastard. As he wielded his *baculum*, Odo probably considered himself to be an alter-William.¹⁶² In fact, the resemblance in accoutrement may have been meant to suggest to a post-Conquest audience that Odo could easily take William's place, since, according to the Tapestry, he is the one who initiated the rally of the young (*pueros*) *FRANCI* warriors who were losing heart. Perhaps, what the Tapestry does not show, is what Odo did not wish the audience to recall, namely, that Odo was not the only one to try to turn the tide of the fleeing *FRANCI*. Indeed, William "whacked at his fleeing men" and "other Norman nobles did likewise."¹⁶³ As the battle wore on, body parts, shields, swords, and even horses continue to litter the lower border.

8.1. SCENE 54: Lions and Vultures in the Upper Border

In the upper border of Scene 54, a pair of lions follows the messenger birds. In spite of the attempt by the bird on the right to attract the attention of the lion on the left by squawking, and by pointing with its right wing, this predator is turned away. Indeed, not only is the lion on the left marching towards the apparently tired lion stretching in front of it, but he seems engrossed in mocking the beast by sticking his tongue at it, perhaps defying it to come forward. Because of its placement above the words *HIC*

ODO, this taunting beast is probably meant to symbolize the regally attired Odo below. There is little doubt that by this vestmental subterfuge, Odo was given an importance equal to William, whose place he is shown to usurp when he (Odo) rallies to the Norman cause, William's men (the Bretons) in the process of fleeing. The lion on the right, that is stretching as it advances, probably symbolizes Harold, the Anglo-Saxon king who, though exhausted after Stamford Bridge, rode post haste to meet William on the battlefield at Hastings. It would come as no surprise if, through the lions and their actions, a message was sent that when the battle was taking a turn for the worse for the Norman side, Odo was the only leader brave enough to stand firm (the lion with the protruding tongue) against the advancing Harold. Next to the lions, two black vultures with their beaks open, and their necks bent down toward the knights below, seem to be anticipating the repast they will enjoy after the carnage is over, leaving no doubt about the fate of some of the pueros about to rejoin the fighting.

9. SCENE 55: "*HIC EST DVX WILEL[MVS]*"

When William fell from his horse, rumors spread like wildfire that he had died.¹⁶⁴ To dispel this potentially dangerous misconception, William raised the frontal piece of his helmet to prove to his worried men that he was alive and well. In Scene 55, William is represented as he points with his right hand to his one visible eye, which is unusually large, round, and clearly outlined in black. With regard to the eyes, Richard Brilliant noted several instances of "hand to the eye movement" in the Tapestry, lending them a "proleptic import" and positing that "the hand to the eye movements seem particularly programmatic, even if their significance could be comprehended only through the closest well-informed scrutiny of the visual narrative." Yet, Brilliant only hints at what they anticipate, i.e., Harold's hand-to-the-eye movement, when he is struck in the eye by the arrow that some believe killed him. Perhaps the emphasis on William's one visible eye may be explained by the medieval belief that a physical interchange, in the form of rays emitted from the eye of the viewer and from the subject or object viewed, occurred during the act of viewing.¹⁶⁵ In this case, the size of William's darkly outlined, round eye may be commensurate with, and indicative of the number of people William was trying to reach and reassure. This somewhat naïve concept is akin to the belief of young children that one cannot be seen, if one does not see (no exchange of rays).

A knight, carrying a banner adorned with a cross, is depicted next to, and slightly to the right of William's figure. While the upper bodies of William and this particular knight are turned back (to the left) and they are facing the knights behind them, the horses that they are riding are following the flow of the narrative to the right. With the index finger of his right hand, the knight is pointing at William who has just lifted the frontal of his helmet. There is no consensus about the identity of the person who carried the papal pennant at the Battle of Hastings. Orderic Vitalis and Wace have suggested that this individual next to William is Turstin, son of Rollo, not Eustacius de Boulogne.¹⁶⁶ However, in the early nineteenth century, while "examining torn and ragged edges which had been doubled over," Charles Stothard discovered traces of four letters which he read and restored as *E---TIVS*.¹⁶⁷ Thus, Stothard tentatively identified this knight carrying a banner, which resembles the papal pennant, as Eustacius de Boulogne, an identification which is accepted today.¹⁶⁸

Being familiar with the many apparently innocuous images, which are loaded with hidden meanings, the observer is bound to notice that Scene 55 raises several questions. It is apparent from a long examination of the Tapestry that the patron acted purposefully when he advised the designer on the choice of elements to be embroidered, and there is strong circumstantial evidence that the patron closely supervised the work.¹⁶⁹ So, why mention Eustacius? A summary of Eustacius' activities may provide the help needed to answer this question.

Eustacius had long been acquainted with William, Edward, Earl Godwin and his son, Harold, through circumstances, and, in the case of Edward and William, through alliances and services rendered.¹⁷⁰ From contemporary chronicles that report Eustacius' actions, there emerges a rather unflattering portrait of the man. Because he was ambitious and yearned after the English crown, he envied the Godwins' position at the English court. For the same reason, he was also jealous of William's increasing power in Normandy and of William's determination to grab the English crown, especially given the fact that he (Eustacius) was Edward's brother-in-law -- he married Edward's sister, Godgifu in 1051.¹⁷¹ Indeed, Eustacius probably felt that he had as much or more right to succeed Edward than either William or Harold. While there was no love lost between Eustacius and Harold, Eustacius and William disliked each other personally and intensely.¹⁷² William only saw Eustacius as a potential means to an end, i.e., a source of

men and armaments for the conquest of England. In fact, "William never really trusted him," and forced him (Eustacius) to "leave his son in Normandy as hostage before he [William] would give him [Eustacius] a command."¹⁷³

Additionally, it seems that "Norman contemporaries spoke of him [Eustacius] with no particular respect."¹⁷⁴ Indeed, Guillaume de Poitiers, who does not even mention Eustacius in connection with the incident described in Scene 55, brushes a less than favorable portrait of this man's conduct at Hastings.¹⁷⁵ As a matter of fact, Eustacius proved to be a coward on several occasions. At Dover in 1051, Eustacius killed and maimed many civilians, including women and children, for no valid reason except his own capricious greed.¹⁷⁶ During the Battle of Hastings, out of fear, he advised William twice to withdraw.¹⁷⁷ The first time that Eustacius counseled William to retreat, occurred after the rumors of William's death were put to rest, and he (William) was rallying his men with the help of Odo and other members of his entourage, which seems to be the episode represented in Scene 55.¹⁷⁸ Eustacius advised William to retreat a second time when the pro-Normans forces came face to face with a group of Anglo-Saxon knights attempting a last ditch effort to save the day for Harold.¹⁷⁹ Fortunately for Eustacius, he (Eustacius) was wounded (not seriously) and taken away, escaping in this manner "the duke's disfavour once more."¹⁸⁰ But before his second act of cowardice and before he was wounded, Eustacius proved his complete lack of chivalry by participating in Harold's slaughter.¹⁸¹ However, like all cowards, perhaps trying to ingratiate himself to William, Eustacius came to his (William's) help once during the Battle of Hastings.¹⁸²

After Hastings, Eustacius' career as an ambitious, merciless and cowardly traitor was not over. In the autumn of 1067, he orchestrated the Boulonnais revolt and another attack on Dover, which was now part of Odo's earldom of Kent.¹⁸³ After this last offense, William sent Eustacius into exile as a punishment; but, in a strange reversal, the brooding William, who never forgot a slight, forgave Eustacius, and with unusual clemency, allowed his return to court in 1077. There is little doubt that Odo was probably disappointed by Eustacius' relatively swift return. For one thing, Eustacius had attacked Dover, Odo's town; for another, the reappearance of Eustacius at court may have impeded Odo's rebellious activities against William.

One may speculate about the reason why Eustacius was placed prominently next to William in the Tapestry. A quick survey of Eustacius' salient misdeeds has already

shown that his contemporaries were not overly impressed with his accomplishments. One may wonder if Odo did not seize the opportunity to use Eustacius for his own advantage, exploiting the placement, postures and gestures of the figures in the main field in his scheme to flaunt his (Odo's) own meritorious achievements. In order to enhance the importance of the scene, Odo is placed at the beginning of Scene 54 in the process of "comforting" the young knights and urging them to fight. Conversely, Eustacius is located at the end of Scene 55 in the process of advising William to withdraw. Thus, two men with opposite suggestions are used to bracket the episode in which William shows his face to set aside rumors of his death: at the beginning of Scene 54, Odo, to whom William listened, and who, according to the Tapestry, saved the day for the Norman side; and at the end of Scene 55 Eustacius, who, if William had heeded his advice, would have led the Normans to defeat.

Thus, it seems odd that Eustacius, a man who was often at odds with William, was included in the design of the Tapestry. It seems even stranger that he was depicted as the bearer of the papal banner. Yet, the Pope's pennant in Eustacius' left hand seems to be a convenient ploy to indicate Eustacius' treachery, because of the symbolic meaning of the left hand, and to remind the audience of William's post-Conquest treachery towards the pope. Additionally, a link is established between Odo in Scene 54 and William in Scene 16, because of the similarity in their respective attire adorned with *diversitas*. In Scene 16, William was on his way to fight a victorious campaign against the Bretons. In Scene 54, Odo is dressed as an alter-William, perhaps to suggest that he has the leading role, while William, who was caught in the flow of retreating Bretons and has just recovered from his first fall of the day, has been conveniently placed besides the panic stricken traitor, Eustacius, who advised him to withdraw. While the elements of the main field have already given important information because of their placements, and the postures and gestures of the figures, the border may provide additional support to this particular interpretation of Scene 55.

9.1. **SCENE 55: A Hound, E....CIUS, and the Papal Pennant – Upper Border**

Directly above William, a hound, in the process of biting its tail, was depicted with its front legs crossed. As explained above, the dog is a symbol for a low-born *canaille*, i.e., a dishonest person despised by many. The person that this *canis* qualifies is

probably the one placed directly below it. In this instance, it is William who is in the process of raising the visor of his helmet in order to be recognized.

Predators biting their tails, thus insinuating that in some cases it is better to keep silent and bide one's time, are found in several areas of the borders. However, it is the first time that a predator is represented with its front legs crossed, a peculiarity of design that has so far gone unnoticed. According to Garnier, crossed limbs indicate the deceitful character of the hypocrite.¹⁸⁴ In addition, crossed limbs express uncertainty and waffling when one is faced with a difficult decision.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the dog placed directly above William seems to qualify and complement the innuendos in the form of placement, outward appearance, and gestures, which are prevalent in the main field of Scene 55. Indeed, via this hound with front legs crossed, the observer is made aware that not only is William qualified one more time as being a deceitful, low-born *canaille*, but also of biding his time (dog biting its tail) and hesitating between following Eustacius' advice to withdraw or Odo's unabated encouragements to go on fighting (hesitation suggested by the crossed limbs).

Why place the name in the marginal area of the upper border? First, this placement is not unique. Indeed, there are two other instances where the inscriptions were placed in the upper border: in Scenes 27 and 35. In these two cases, the move to the marginal area does not seem to have any symbolic significance. The move to the margins seems to have been dictated by the design and/or the lack of space. Indeed, the reason for placing the name Eustacius may also be a lack of space. However, some may consider unusual the placement in the upper border of the letters that are believed to form the name Eustacius. A placement in the framing device rather than in the main field may indicate that while Eustacius seems to play an important role as pennant bearer, he was a man who was best relegated to the margins. Indeed, both the papal pennant and the name *E [USTA] CIVS* are isolated and at the same time emphasized by their placement in the upper border. Because of their placement outside the main frame, yet inside the border above the area occupied by Eustacius, the name and the pennant were probably meant to function as mnemonic cues aimed to emphasize the elements of treachery already present in the main field, and to convey to a post-Conquest audience another reminder of Eustacius' several instances of disloyalty, and of William's deceitful conduct and broken promises after the Conquest.

In summary, the major elements found in the upper border of Scene 55 seem to strengthen the arguments pertaining to the main field. When faced with the decision to withdraw or continue the fight, William hesitated (dog with front legs crossed) between Odo's strongly voiced suggestion and Eustacius' whispered advice, and, as the close placement of William and Eustacius suggests, was on the brink of following the latter. The lower border of Scene 55 is filled with William's archers who are hastening toward the final battle.

10. SCENE 56: "HIC FRANCI PVGNANT ET CECIDERUNT QUI ERANT CVM HAROLDO"

Apparently eager to live up to Odo's encouraging words and expectations, and perhaps ignorant of the ill advice Eustacius gave to William, the *FRANCI* rode into the thick of the battle and succeeded in breaching the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall and in breaking the resistance of the English knights. Gathering his cavalry for what he hoped would be the last assault, and ordering his archers to "work out a wide-angle trajectory for their arrows," William led the charge.¹⁸⁶ However, in the Tapestry, William is not placed at the forefront of the assault. Yet, it is obvious from the many arrows that pierce the shields and bodies of Harold's housecarls that William's archers, who fill the lower border, have managed to strike their targets and inflict damage on the enemy. Indeed, as explained in the inscription, the *FRANCI* are fighting, and those who follow Harold are dying.

One detail of the main field catches the attention of the viewer. One of the *FRANCI* is holding an elongated shield on which a ghostly looking, prostrate dragon, rendered powerless by a twist in its tail, is depicted on a black field. There is little doubt that throughout the Tapestry the dragon is used as a symbol for Harold, the dragon of Wessex. A dragon with its tail tied and biting one of its wings was already represented on a pro-Norman shield in Scene 7, when Harold was about to be taken prisoner by Guy's men. Dragons with loosened tails seem ready to jump off the two shields of William's messengers who are coming to demand Harold's release in Scene 11. In Scene 13, a dragon, with its tail tied once more, adorns the shield of a Norman knight behind William riding to meet Guy, who is about to surrender Harold (directly behind Guy) to William. Perhaps the tied tail of the dragon suggests that Harold was merely exchanging jailers. Also in the lower border of Scene 13, two additional angry dragons spitting fire

and with their tails untied, below Guy and William, seem to express Harold's pent up anger at being forced to follow William. No other dragons are depicted on shields until Scene 56. In this case, the dragon, in a prone position and apparently drained of its life blood, seems to be a metaphor for Harold's impending death, which is represented in the next scene.

10.1. SCENE 56: A Hound, Griffins, Lions, Birds of Prey, and Lambs (?) in the Upper Border

The placement of the remnants of the name *E [USTA] CIUS* within the bracket formed by two hounds (the first belonging to Scene 55) seems an obvious qualifier for the person who bears the name. According to the nineteenth-century researcher and restorer, Charles Stothard, starting in this area, the Bayeux Tapestry, including its borders, was restored extensively.¹⁸⁷ Stothard's statement may explain the clumsy renderings of some of the animals as well as their missing or simply outlined parts. Following the hound, two sets of double diagonals are separated by the unsheathed sword of the pro-Norman knight galloping into the fray. Perhaps the sword, thus inserted, marks the turning point of the battle when the resistance of the *Angli* was waning. The griffins to the right of the hound are placed above the *Franci* galloping at full speed, and were probably meant to qualify the men below who, pressed into combat, are yearning for power and loot that is now within their reach.

The two affronted lions that follow have turned their heads away from each other, in an apparent attempt to catch their respective tails, while raising one of their front limbs as though to stop the opposing beast. Perhaps the action of the lions was an attempt to suggest that the fight should have stopped at this point in the battle, when the inscription informs the reader that "those who accompanied Harold died."

Next to the lions, two squawking and angry birds of prey, with wings outstretched, are running toward each other, while a small animal, which McNulty identifies as a lamb, is attempting to scurry out of their way to escape their apparent wrath.¹⁸⁸ In a manner similar to the birds of prey chasing after a lamb and trying to corner it from both sides, the *Franci* below are preparing to kill Harold shamefully as forewarned previously by the fable of *The Wolf and the Lamb* in the border below Scene 4. Indeed, even if Harold had bowed his head and bent his knee to William, it would have been impossible for William to let Harold live, since William could not afford to

risk having to face Harold at some later time. Thus, the warning given to the reader by *The Wolf and the Lamb* (below Scene 4) is about to be realized (above Scene 57). The two animals to the right of the birds of prey are not easily recognizable but have been identified tentatively as a species of dog.¹⁸⁹ It seems appropriate that dogs, i.e., deceitful *canailles*, were chosen to bracket the border above Scene 56, in which begins the final slaughter leading to Harold's death in Scene 57.

Thus, the upper border of Scene 56 seems to reinforce a message latent in the main field. Above the *Franci* riding to meet the *Angli* in combat, the hound engaged in the futile endeavor of trying to catch its tail (upper border), seems to imply and reinforce the error of Eustacius' advice to retreat. As intimated by Odo's accoutrement, which depicts him clearly as an alter-William, Odo was the true hero, who gave heart to the young *Franci*, and probably saved the day for William.

In summary, while there is no incontrovertible evidence to prove that Odo was the patron, there is plenty of circumstantial evidence to allow the researcher to come to this conclusion. There is little doubt that the Tapestry was used as a propagandistic tool, and that it might have been Odo's. It is probable that elements in Scene 55 served to cast a doubt upon William's resolve to go on fighting. Indeed, to fulfill his own agenda, it is probable that Odo wanted the post-Conquest reader/viewer to believe that without his (Odo's) personal intervention, William, who is placed next to Eustacius de Boulogne, would have followed Eustacius' advice and retreated. In addition, the symbolism associated with the griffins probably aimed to suggest that it was the prospect of fame and fortune that impelled William and his men to advance. Perhaps the lions mutually signaling to stop suggest that, after breaking the resistance of the Anglo-Saxons, the two leaders could and should have brought the battle to an end. Instead, William and his *Franci* (birds of prey) were determined to catch and kill Harold (the lamb) thus actualizing the moral of *The Wolf and the Lamb*.

There is only one comment to be made about the lower border of Scene 56, and McNulty has already made it. As the end of Scene 56 approaches, the archers abruptly disappear from the lower border and make way for corpses and looters.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, some scavengers have begun their gruesome occupation and started to undress the dead and steal their clothes and arms.

11. SCENE 57: “*HIC HAROLD REX INTERFECTVS EST*”

As laconic as usual the inscription informs the reader that “this is the place where Harold is killed,” mentioning nothing about the manner of Harold’s death. Yet, Harold’s death has been the subject of many inquiries, and long arguments.¹⁹¹ Frank McLynn offers the best summary to date, outlining the pros and cons of the arrow-in-the-eye theory.¹⁹² The *Carmen de Hastingae proelio* is the only source to give a complete description of the death of Harold, and it does not mention the arrow in the eye episode.¹⁹³ Although attempts have been made to discredit it, the *Carmen* remains a worthy testimonial to the events that took place during the Battle of Hastings.¹⁹⁴ While they give little detail about Harold’s death, neither Guillaume de Poitiers, nor Guillaume de Jumièges, nor Orderic Vitalis makes any allusion to the death of Harold by an arrow in the eye.¹⁹⁵ In spite of the assertion, found in the *Adelae Comitissae* of Baudri de Bourgueil, that Harold was dealt a fatal wound by the shaft of an arrow, the same chronicler remains mute about the spot where the arrow pierced Harold.¹⁹⁶ The actual mention of Harold’s death by an arrow in the eye, is found only in the works of the later chroniclers, i.e., William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and Wace.¹⁹⁷ To add to the confusion, this area of the Tapestry was extensively restored, leaving lingering doubts about the legitimacy of the representation of the arrow piercing Harold’s eye.¹⁹⁸ However, there may be a compromise to the dilemma born out of contradictory narratives. Bruce and Stothard already alleged that Harold may have been represented three times in the death scene.¹⁹⁹ After exploring this possibility, Brooks and Walker found that Harold was only represented twice.²⁰⁰ Indeed, an examination of the Tapestry in situ, shows a knight, with the name “Harold” directly above him, being struck in the face by an arrow, but not conclusively in the eye. It also shows another knight, or the second representation of the same knight, being struck on the thigh by a pro-Norman knight on horseback.

Guillaume de Poitiers, who did not know the cause of Harold’s death, mentions nevertheless that Harold could not be identified from his face, which may suggest that he had received a disfiguring wound.²⁰¹ While probably mortal, it is possible that the wound did not immediately kill Harold. Perhaps blinded in one eye, with blood running profusely from his wound, Harold was easy prey for William’s four handpicked knights, who, according to the *Carmen de Hastingae proelio*, included Walter Giffard, Guy de

Montfort, Hugh of Ponthieu and Eustacius de Boulogne, which may also explain why Eustacius would have been portrayed so prominently in the Tapestry, next to William in Scene 55.²⁰² Indeed, the juxtaposition of William and Eustacius in Scene 55 may have been the mnemonic trigger used to remind a post-conquest audience of William's less than honorable role in Harold's death. When one considers "the barbarity of the age," to kill an enemy was part of the normal course of war.²⁰³ However, for four knights to hack a king to death, and perhaps even castrate him, was considered to be an "unchivalrous treatment of the enemy."²⁰⁴

From left to right, Scene 57 represents an English standard bearer who, struck by a lance, is in the process of keeling over, while the dragon of Wessex standard lay on the ground. However, the dragon itself seems to be imbued with a life of its own. Perhaps in an effort to insinuate the resiliency of the Anglo-Saxon, ready to fight to the death, with its wide open jaws the dragon is about to bite the hoof of the Norman horse galloping in its direction. Next to the dragon and the falling knight, from behind a shield struck by many arrows, a large Anglo-Saxon is in the process of throwing his lance at an oncoming pro-Norman knight. Behind him, another Anglo-Saxon is holding what may be a second standard adorned with the dragon of Wessex (or it may be the same one, as Brooks and Walker suggest?).²⁰⁵ In this case, the dragon also appears to be alive, holding onto the pole by its teeth. The warrior, standing directly below the name, *HAROLD*, was probably meant to represent the English king being wounded in the face. Indeed, William of Malmesbury and Wace mention that Harold stood next to his standard when he was killed.²⁰⁶ From his posture and gestures, it is obvious that the man identified by the above inscription as Harold has just been wounded. He seems to be swaying backwards, probably because of the pain inflicted by the wound, and he has lowered his shield exposing himself to further blows, which probably would not have occurred unless distracted by the gravity of the wound he had just sustained. Behind the wounded Harold, one of the *Franci* on horseback is hacking at the leg of a man falling backwards, probably the dying Harold. According to the *Carmen*, one of the knights sent to kill Harold, cut off his leg, which may be viewed as a metaphor for castration.²⁰⁷

In the lower border, the human vultures, foretold by the vultures in the borders of the previous scenes, are at work undressing the dead to rob them of their clothing. They are also gathering swords, and two scavengers are fighting over a shield.

11.1. SCENE 57: Eagles, Taunting Lions, Birds and Old Lions – Upper Border

A sad eagle facing right stands and looks back (to the left) and downwards at the name Harold in Scene 56. Facing left, the other equally mournful eagle looks down and to the right at Harold and at the last of his housecarls who are being slaughtered below. Following the diagonals formed by the extension of their wings and tails, the royal birds effectively link the name *HAROLDO*, and the prostrate dragon on the shield in Scene 56, the man wounded by an arrow in the face or to the eye in Scene 57, who stands directly below a repetition of the name, *HAROLD*, and the legs of the man to which a pro-Norman knight is applying a debilitating blow. Thus, through the eagles, the portrayals of two knights being struck are linked to the name Harold and to the serial episodes that contributed to his death, i.e., the arrow wound to the face area, and the despicable act of hacking off the leg of the dying king.

Next to the royal birds, in a supreme act of evil contempt, two lions stick their tongues at each other at the very moment of Harold's death. Following the movement of the narrative and the placement of the figures vis-à-vis the pictographs in the borders, William was probably the lion on the left, whose red tongue protruded as he made ready to lunge toward the lion on the right, probably meant to represent Harold, dying below. The ghostly, colorless appearance of the tongue of the lion on the right, may safely be interpreted as a sign of Harold's impending death. By the movements of their wings, the two birds of an indeterminate species, perhaps ravens, link the lion on the right, the words *INTERFECTUS EST*, the dying Harold, the last stand of Harold's few remaining housecarls, and the old lion in the upper border.

These old lions, looking down from the upper border are almost identical to the ones above Scene 24. They draw attention back to the scene in which Harold returned to England after being forced to swear an oath which he probably considered invalid. In Scene 24, the two old lions act as reminders of King Edward's pervading presence and of the devious intrigue into which Harold had stumbled, because he (Edward) was following "obscure, Byzantine and Machiavellian diplomatic pathways."²⁰⁸ Indeed, in spite of the promises Edward made of the crown to William and others, which probably meant little since "English kingship was not hereditary and he could not force the witan to do his will," he (Edward) remained undecided until, in the very last moments of his life, he entrusted England to Harold, perhaps simply because he (Harold) happened to be there at

the right moment, and/or because Edward knew that the witan would probably recognize Harold as king without much argument.²⁰⁹ Thus, the old lions above Scene 57 may be a reminder of the role that Edward played in setting in motion the tragedy represented in the Tapestry.²¹⁰

12. SCENE 58: “*ET FVGAVERTERVNT ANGLI...*”

As it is today, the Bayeux Tapestry ends with Scene 58 and the remnants of the Anglo-Saxon army fleeing for their lives. Fowke observes astutely that while “the heavy-armed Thegns and Housecarls still fought on...this desperate valour was not shared by the light-armed and irregular troops...”²¹¹ Indeed, Scene 58 shows the Norman cavalry pursuing Anglo-Saxon fyrdmen on foot or mounted on horses, probably stolen. However, the Tapestry was in such bad shape at this point that it is difficult to comment any further on the extensively restored main field or the borders. Indeed, even the inscription is a nineteenth-century fake.²¹² Additionally, although researchers have advanced suggestions about what may have been represented in the Tapestry beyond this scene, it seems futile to speculate. In the last book published on the Tapestry, Lucien Musset contends that he personally doubts that the Tapestry was prolonged beyond what exists today.²¹³ Since there is a strong possibility that the patron was Odo, he may have considered that it would be to his benefit if the Tapestry ended almost immediately after the death of Harold. After all, when the Tapestry was produced, the dissension between the two half-brothers had almost reached its zenith. So why, as some researchers have suggested, should the Tapestry, probably a work of propaganda made by and for Odo, include the crowning of a half-brother he (Odo) had learned to despise, and perhaps even hate?²¹⁴ Suzanne Lewis commented that “notwithstanding the finality of William’s victory over the English fleeing from the battlefield at Hastings in 1066, the post-Conquest narrative remains unfinished.”²¹⁵ However, contemplating the events from a twenty-first century perspective, Lewis forgets to take into account that when Odo produced the Tapestry, William’s victory over the English was far from final, as William had to fight rebellions almost to his dying day. Additionally, while there is little doubt that the end portion of the Tapestry is missing, taking into account Odo’s continual attempts to disparage William to achieve his own aggrandizement, it is doubtful that the Tapestry would have depicted the kind of closure that included William’s coronation.²¹⁶

After the representation of the old lions, probably meant to remind the viewer/reader of Edward and his role in this bloody affair, the few animal pictographs in the upper borders seem to lose their definition. Indeed, they are nineteenth-century embroideries and may not reflect what was originally there. In the lower border, looters and scavengers continue their nefarious work, while bloodless cut-up bodies and body parts are strewn on the ground, the last reminders of the battle which seems to fade into oblivion.

CONCLUSION

In Scenes 48 through 58, the depiction of the Battle of Hastings provided Odo with one last chance to use the Tapestry as an instrument to help fulfill his propagandistic agenda, which probably included destabilizing, and perhaps even subverting, the newly established Norman dynasty, since Odo did not approve of William's choice of William Rufus as heir to the English throne. My examination of the borders and my analysis of their elements of composition in the last ten scenes suggest that William, the man who had vanquished Harold, exhibited fundamental defects of character and personality, and that, as a result of these inherent deficiencies and perpetrated offenses, his victory, and his subsequent rule over England were irremediably diminished and somehow flawed.

The viewer/reader is already aware through various means (fables, repeated animal pictographs, elements of design) that William is a low-born bastard; that he is wily, envious, cunning and cruel; that he is duplicitous, because he hides his true intentions behind deceptive words; that he is deceitful because he hides his true nature; self-righteous, because he believes, and rightly so in William's world, that his role as liege lord places him above anyone else, and that he can do no wrong; but that he is also tenacious and patient when he knows that the reward warrants it. One does not have to look very far afield to find an individual whose ambition may have led him to make such detrimental innuendoes and who may have benefited from them. As mentioned above, it seems to have been paramount for Odo, the most likely patron of the Tapestry, to continually bring up the fact that William broke or did not fulfill entirely the promises he made to his peers and underlings, regarding the sharing of power and wealth in the conquered land. Indeed, because he was avaricious and greedy, William probably never intended and was not motivated to share anything with anyone to the promised and/or anticipated degree. In his attempt at destabilizing William's rule, Odo also needed a

post-Conquest audience to believe that William was a coarse bastard (ass), who could be easily duped because of his inordinate conceit, just as he had almost been deceived by Harold (wolf/leopard), who would have succeeded in surprising William and his men except for the vigilance of Vital, one of Odo's men.

In the last ten scenes, the patron seems to have been particularly intent on insisting on specific flaws, and on adding new defects to William's already impressive list, while Harold seems to have fared considerably better, perhaps because death had rendered him unimportant in the political context of post-Conquest England. Thus, the audience is reminded time and again that William is a low-born *canaille* (the dogs), additionally, he is a deceitful hypocrite (the ostriches, quails), who is probably well aware that his claim to the throne is essentially bogus and the result of ambitious pretensions born out of a megalomaniac and avaricious nature (the griffins). While eloquent, and charismatic to the point that he is able to persuade other men to accomplish his will, William is also impetuous and shows no restraint (winged horses), even if his actions lead to the devastation and rape of the land (ostriches), and bring death to countless people (carrion birds). Adding to William's twisted nature, Odo was wont to remind the audience that William was cunning, and that he had guessed that Harald Hardrada, and especially Tostig, were eager to attack Harold, probably hoping that they would put an end to Harold's career, or that his strength would be so diminished by the encounter that he would be unable to face and fight William.

Besides individual pictographs, as mnemonic cues to address areas of specific concerns, Odo used scenes of chase and capture, two pairs of naked figures, and previously illustrated fables, i.e., *The Pregnant Bitch* and *The Goat that Sang*, perhaps to indoctrinate the viewer. The scenes of chase and capture serve to forewarn the viewer/reader about Harold's impending fate. The two sets of nudes are satiric comments on Harold's and especially on William's actions. In the first set, William seems to be portrayed, first as a prepubescent, androgynous and, by definition, innocent girl, pretending to welcome the powerful Anglo-Saxon man just back from the hecatomb of the battlefield at Stamford Bridge (lantern); in the second set of nudes, William is transformed into an accusing hag, facing an equally indignant Harold, who is not about to bow down to him (William).

It is probable that the fables were mentioned above towards the end of the battle for specific reasons. The first rendition of *The Pregnant Bitch* below Scene 4 was probably meant to suggest that while William always had the intention to take England away from Harold, though impatient to claim his prize, he had to wait for Edward to die before taking any action. However, the second rendition below Scene 51 probably aimed to show that the roles of William and Harold were reversed. Indeed, William was the usurper. Pressed by time and by William's invading forces, Harold was marching towards William and his troops to take back the territory that they had invaded and were about to settle. The first representation of *The Goat that Sang* mocks William (wolf) by depicting Harold, his enemy, as the goat who escapes by tricking the wolf with a false oath. The second representation above Scene 51 probably suggests that Harold was left an easy prey for William because of William's diplomatic skills, and especially because of Harold's lack of foresight and belief that no one would dare interfere with the choice made by the Witan. Warned by a series of skillfully placed psychopompic birds (cranes, geese) and carrion eaters (ravens, vultures), the viewer/reader awaited the known conclusion, i.e. Harold's death and the Anglo-Saxon debacle. In order to berate William, he (William) was depicted in the company of a known traitor, Eustacius de Boulogne, perhaps implying that "birds of a feather flock together." Additionally, Odo is represented attired in a manner similar to William, as he (William) departed for the successful Brittany Campaign, probably to insinuate that he (Odo) was the deciding factor who turned the Battle of Hastings from a Norman rout into a Norman triumph. Perhaps in order to suggest that William would have hounded Harold if he (Harold) had escaped the slaughter, above the dying Harold a taunting lion (William) is sticking a large red tongue straight out at an opposing, retreating lion (Harold), whose tongue is only a pale outline.

In the final analysis, the last ten scenes of the Tapestry, starting with William about to mount his stallion to ride into battle, seem to have been constructed to act as potent reminders of the indispensable role that Odo wanted a post-Conquest audience to believe he had played in the Conquest of England, while downgrading William's role at every opportunity, perhaps to reflect Odo's increasing discontent with the policies and politics of William and of his heir, William Rufus. Therefore, it would have been out of character for a rebellious and dissatisfied Odo to have requested that the Tapestry

designer portray William as the crowned and anointed king of England, especially a decade or more after the battle of Hastings, when Odo knew that his actions were increasingly offensive to William. As a final point, a reading of the pictographs in the borders of the last ten scenes, especially the upper border, in conjunction with the main field and inscriptions seems to imply that, eager to push his own agenda, Odo, the most likely patron, probably meant to insert doubts about the righteousness of William's claim.

¹ Cowdrey, Gameson, ed. (1997): 97.

² McLynn (1999): 239.

³ To find out what kind of man William was, see ASC, "E," 1086 and 1087; Douglas (1964): 372; Freeman, 3(1869): 263-66; Zumthor (1978): 374; McLynn (1999): 102-103.

⁴ For the quote, see above n. 2.

⁵ For the quote, see R. A. Brown (2000): 178; For William Rufus, see also Zumthor (1978): 409.

⁶ For the identification of the knight as William, see Fowke (1913): 114; Gibbs-Smith (1957): 172; Wilson (1985): 188; Cowdrey, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 105; Musset (2002): 218; Rud (2002): 72. For the similarity between the pennant in Scenes 46 and 48a, see Musset (2002): 218.

⁷ The man who brought the stallion to William was probably Walter Giffard (a.k.a., Gauthier Griffart), see Freeman, 3 (1875): 456; Fowke (1913): 114; Jean Verrier, *The Bayeux Embroidery known as Queen Mathilda's Tapestry* (1946): 29; and Gibbs-Smith, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 172.

⁸ For the gift of the stallion, see Fowke (1913): 114; Gibbs-Smith, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 172; Bertrand (1994): 23; Cowdrey, in Gameson (1997): 105; Rud (2002): 72; Musset (2002): 218. For the pope's approval and the laissez-faire attitude of William's peers, see *Monumenta Gregoriana*, P. Jaffe, ed (1865): 414-16; Morton (1975) 362-382; McLynn (1999): 182-183.

⁹ For sources regarding the description of the ostrich, see above Chap. 7, n. 29. For the identification of the ostriches in the upper border of Scene 48a as "dragons," see McNulty (1989): 127. For an illustration of the ostrich with camel feet, see *Bestiary*, early 13th cent., Oxford, Bodleian Library, *MS. Ashmole 1511*, illustrated in Payne (1990): 69; and in Grape (1994): 41, fig. 28.

¹⁰ For the exchange of envoys between William and Harold, see William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed. 2 (1889): 301-02; Wace, Holden, ed., 2 (1972): 135-40, 148-49; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 11; R. A. Brown (2000): 141, and n. 106.

¹¹ For the raven, see Rabannus Maurus, *De Universo*, PL CXI: 254C, 255B; *Isidorus*, XII, VII, *De Avibus*, André, ed. (1986): 43; Voisenet (2000): 127.

¹² For the raven as guide and messenger, see Krappé (1952): 245; Voisenet (2000): 299, 314.

¹³ For the time when the battle started, see McLynn (1999): 216; for the quote, see R. A. Brown (2000): 141 and n. 109.

¹⁴ For examples of how William's character influenced his actions, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 263-266; R. Latouche, *Histoire du comté du Maine pendant les Xe et XIe siècles* (1910): 34; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 193-194; Douglas (1964): 372, 408-415; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. 2 (1969): 252, 259, 269; McLynn (1999): 103-104; for the quoted words, see McLynn (1999): 103.

¹⁵ See above n. 14; and McLynn (1999): 95.

¹⁶ For William's compulsion "to occupy the moral high ground," see McLynn (1999): 95, 104.

¹⁷ Gibbs-Smith (1957): 173 counted 10 men, 8 horses and 25 legs.

¹⁸ For the banner with a bird, see Freeman, 3(1869): 461; Fowke (1913): 114-115; Gibbs-Smith (1973): 7, 13; Derek Renn, "Burhgeat and Gofannon: Two Sidelights from the Bayeux Tapestry," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, XVI (1993): 177-198.

¹⁹ For the nudes, see Bruce (1856): 120; La Rue, partial reprint in Jubinal, 1 (1938): 20.

²⁰ Fowke (1913): 116; Rud (2002): 76.

²¹ For the fable of *The Widow and the Soldier*, see Herrmann (1964): 49.

²² For the nude females as symbols of Harold's vulnerability, see McNulty (1989): 37-38, 76, 129.

²³ For the nude females as symbols of "the feminized 'other,' or the enemy," see Caviness (1998): 172.

- ²⁴ For the nude females as symbols of the obscenities that Norsemen hurled at their enemies to provoke fights, see Caviness (1998): 172, and n. 61.
- ²⁵ For William's devotion to Mathilda, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 79-80; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 145; Douglas (1964): 76-80; McLynn (1999): 102; R. A. Brown (2000): 50.
- ²⁶ For the quote see, James Hall, *Illustrated Dictionary of Symbols in Eastern and Western Art* (1994): 72. For the symbolism of the lantern, see also Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 562.
- ²⁷ For the goose as psychopomp, messenger and rumormonger, see esp. Duchaussoy (1972): 141-46, esp. 144-45; Voisenet (1994): 287-88; Thibaud (1995): 298.
- ²⁸ For the evolution of the symbolism of the goose, see above, n. 27; see also Cazenave, ed. (1996): 471.
- ²⁹ For the goose as symbol of the cautious man, see above Chap. 3, 131, n. 31.
- ³⁰ For the fable of *The Young Man and the Courtesan*, see Herrmann (1964): 51.
- ³¹ See above n. 22 and 23.
- ³² For the symbolism of kneeling figures, see Garnier, I (1982): 112.
- ³³ For the meaning of similar gestures performed by opposing figures, see Garnier, I (1982): 54.
- ³⁴ For the manner in which William acquired territory, see Latouche (1910): passim; J. Dhondt, "Les relations entre la France et la Normandie," *Normannia*, 12 (1939): 465-486; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 77-80, 98-100; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 18; O. Gilot, *Le Comte d'Anjou et son entourage au XIe siècle*, 1 (1972): 457-458; R. E. Barton, "Lordship in Maine: Transformation, Service and Anger," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 17 (1994): 41-63; McLynn (1999): 85-96; 103.
- ³⁵ For the fable of *The Ass and the Wolf Doctor*, see Herrmann (1964): 51.
- ³⁶ Fowke (1913): 117.
- ³⁷ McNulty (1989): 129, 27.
- ³⁸ For the symbolism of the ass, see Rabannus Maurus, *Homelieae de festis praecipuis*, in *Homelieae XIV*, PL CX: 29; Rabannus Maurus, *Asinus in Allegoriae sacram scripturam*, PL CXII: 867-68; Voisenet (1994): 85-87, and ns. 117, 124; Voisenet (2000): 44-45, and n. 216.
- ³⁹ For the race to take Battle Hill, see ASC, "D," and "E," *sub anno* 1066; Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed. (1848): 227; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, ed. (1972): 24, vv. 341-42, 363-68, 381-82; McLynn (1999): 217.
- ⁴⁰ McLynn (1999): 217, 294 n. 19.
- ⁴¹ For the *guardant* lions and Harold's arms, see McNulty (1989): 107.
- ⁴² For Edward's character, see ASC, "D" and "E," *sub anno* 1051; Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed., 1 (1848): 207; Freeman, 2 (1870): 24-8; Barlow (1970): 38, 105-116; *Vita Edwardi*, Barlow, ed. (1992): 17-19; McLynn (1999): 13-15, 67-68, 71, 73, 78, 138-39, 158, for the quote, McLynn (1999): 73; R. A. Brown (2000): 92-93.
- ⁴³ McNulty (1989): 1-2; 129; for the ostrich, see also above Chap. 7, ns. 29 & 33.
- ⁴⁴ For carrion birds, see Cazenave, ed. (1996): 705;
- ⁴⁵ William of Poitiers, in Thorpe, ed. (1973): 44.
- ⁴⁶ Eadmer, Bosanquet, ed. & trans. (1964): 6; for arguments for and against Edward's "promise" to William, see Barlow (1970): 107-08, 117; M. Campbell, "Earl Godwin of Wessex and Edward the Confessor's promise of the throne to Duke William," *Traditio*, 28 (1972): 141-58; McLynn (1999): 75-78, 83-84, 158, 176-77; R. A. Brown (2000): 104-07, 110, 113, 115, 119-120.
- ⁴⁷ For Edward's "promises" of the English throne: to Svein Estrithson, see *Codex diplomaticvs aevi Saxonici*, J. M. Kemble, ed., 4 (1848): 74-110; Freeman 2 (1870): 526-531; Körner (1964): 138-45, 154-57; McLynn (1999): 13, 15; R. A. Brown (2000): 119; to Edward the Atheling (son of Edmund Ironside) c. 1054-57, see Eric John, "Edward the Confessor and the Norman Succession," *English Historical Review*, 94 (1979): 241-67, esp. 257; McLynn (1999): 141-43; R. A. Brown (2000): 120; to Edgar the Atheling (Edward's son), see William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed. 2 (1889): 297; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. 2 (1969): 276; 4 (1973): 90.
- ⁴⁸ Edward named Harold as his successor, see *Vita Edwardi*, Barlow, ed. (1992): 123-25; Barlow (1970): 249.
- ⁴⁹ For the fable of *The Hare and the Sparrow*, see Herrmann (1964): 52.
- ⁵⁰ McNulty (1989): 131.
- ⁵¹ For the hawk as *raptor*, see *Isidorus*, André, ed. (1986): XII, VII: *de avibus*, 55, 56; Payne (1990): 76; Voisenet (2000): 132.

- ⁵² For the symbolism of the hawk, see Rabannus Maurus, PL CXI :254C ; PL CXII : 853 ; Voisenet (2000): 132.
- ⁵³ *Monumenta Gregoriana*, P. Jaffe, ed (1865): 414-16; Morton (1975): 362-382; McLynn (1999): 182-183.
- ⁵⁴ For the symbolism of the rabbit or hare, see Miquel (1991): 181; Seringe (1995): 51; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 362; Voisenet (2000): 84-85.
- ⁵⁵ Dodwell (1966): 549; Dodwell (1966): 232.
- ⁵⁶ McLynn (1999): 14.
- ⁵⁷ See above note 47.
- ⁵⁸ McLynn (1999): 116.
- ⁵⁹ S. A. Brown (1977): 79.
- ⁶⁰ Odo (?) or Robert de Mortain (?), see Wilson (1985): 190.
- ⁶¹ For the identification of the same knight as Odo, see Bertrand (1994): 23; Bertrand & Lemagnen (1996): 23; McLynn (1999): 219.
- ⁶² For Vital, see Fowke (1913): 117-118; Loomis (1923): 5; Stenton (1957): 2; Brooks & Walker, Gameson, ed. (1997): 68-69, 69 n. 22; Prentout, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 26-28. For the identification of the vantage point, see *ASC*, "D" and "E," *sub anno* 1066; Marx, ed. (1914): 135; *Carmen*, Morton & Muntz, eds. (1972): 18-22, 24; Wilson (1985): 190; McLynn (1999): 216.
- ⁶³ Maclagan (1949): 13, suggests that the first knight may be another representation of Vital.
- ⁶⁴ Harold was probably taller than William, see Ian W. Walker, *Harold. The Last Anglo-Saxon King* (1997): 121-127; McLynn (1999): 135.
- ⁶⁵ McNulty (1989): 131.
- ⁶⁶ For the fable of *The Ass and the Old Man*, see Herrmann (1964): 53; for the fable of *The Weasel and The Man*, see Herrmann (1964): 54.
- ⁶⁷ Wilson (1985): 191.
- ⁶⁸ For an interpretation of the stalking episodes, see Fowke (1913): 118; McNulty (1989): 131.
- ⁶⁹ For Battle Hill, see R. A. Brown, "The Battle of Hastings," *Proceedings of the Battle Conference of Anglo-Norman Studies – 1980* (1981): 1-21, esp. 8-21; Wilson (1985): 191; *ASC*, "D," *sub anno* 1066, Whitelock et al, eds. (1986): 143; Nicholas Hooper, "The Anglo-Saxons at War," *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England*, S. C. Hawkes, ed. (1989): 191-202; McLynn (1999): 216-217.
- ⁷⁰ For the symbolism of the leopard, see Rabannus Maurus, PL CXI: 220; *Isidorus*, André, ed. (1986): XII, II, 10-11; Voisenet (2000): 58-59.
- ⁷¹ For Battle Hill, see above note 68.
- ⁷² *Carmen*, Morton & Muntz, eds. (1972): 12.
- ⁷³ The battle of Hastings is named "The Battle of the Hoary (gray) Apple-tree" in the *ASC*, "D," *sub anno* 1066, Whitelock et al, eds. (1986): 143; for the rendezvous point, see McLynn (1999): 216; R. A. Brown (2000): 139, & n. 95.
- ⁷⁴ McNulty (1989): 132.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, 133.
- ⁷⁶ The "*Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*" of *Guy of Amiens* gives an imagined rendition of William's speech, see *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 16-19; for William's speech as reported by Guillaume de Poitiers, see Thorpe, ed. & trans. (1973): 47-48. For the quote, see Thorpe (1973): 18.
- ⁷⁷ For a reconstruction of William's speech, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 453; see also Fowke (1913): 120.
- ⁷⁸ Fowke (1913): 120-121; Guillaume de Poitiers, Thorpe, ed. & trans. (1973): 48.
- ⁷⁹ R. A. Brown (2000): 143.
- ⁸⁰ McLynn (1999): 220.
- ⁸¹ R. A. Brown (2000): 140-152.
- ⁸² Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 188, 190; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 26, 28; David C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway, eds., *English Historical Documents*, II (1981): 226-229; McLynn (1999): 219-220.
- ⁸³ Yapp (1987): 61.
- ⁸⁴ McNulty (1989): 133.
- ⁸⁵ Cazenave, ed. (1996): 510-511; Chevalier & Gheerbrant (2000): 736-737.

- ⁸⁶ Chevalier & Gheerbrant (2000): 737.
- ⁸⁷ For the fable of *The Two Mules*, see Herrmann (1964): 57.
- ⁸⁸ McNulty (1989): 135.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 135.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.
- ⁹¹ For the fable of *The Fox and the Ram*, see Herrmann (1964): 59.
- ⁹² Fowke (1913): 124.
- ⁹³ McNulty (1989): 30.
- ⁹⁴ For William and Pope Alexander II, see Monumenta Gregoriana, P. Jaffe, ed (1865): 414-16; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 152; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 122; Morton (1975) 362-382; McLynn (1999): 182-183.
- ⁹⁵ For examples of William's expansionism and building of alliances before 1066, see Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 42-44; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 126; Douglas (1964): 58-67; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. 2 (1969): 46-48, 3 (1969): 134-138; Bates (1982): 255-257; L. Musset, J. M. Bouvris and J. M. Maillefer, eds., *Autour du pouvoir ducal normand, X-XIIIe siècles* (1985): 175-206; Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kingship and the Creation of Norman Power* (1988): 20.
- ⁹⁶ McLynn (1999): 183.
- ⁹⁷ For the pope's power or lack thereof in late eleventh-century England, see above n. 94.
- ⁹⁸ For Morcar's and Edwin's actions after Stamford Bridge, see Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed., 1 (1848): 228; William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 306-7; Körner (1964): 282-4; McLynn (1999): 206-7; Brown (2000): 71-72.
- ⁹⁹ For Harold's success in breaking the first cavalry attack, see McLynn (1999): 219-21; R. A. Brown (2000): 146-7.
- ¹⁰⁰ McNulty (1989): 137.
- ¹⁰¹ McLynn (1999): 212.
- ¹⁰² Freeman, 3 (1875): 728-29; J. F. A. Mason, "The Rape of Sussex and the Norman Conquest," *Sussex Archeological Collections*, 102 (1964): 75-77; for the quotes, see McLynn (1999): 212.
- ¹⁰³ William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 304; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 202; F. Barlow, *The Norman Conquest and Beyond* (1955): 211; Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 34; Jean Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie - XIe-XIIIe siècle* (1986): 66-68; McLynn (1999): 226.
- ¹⁰⁴ Wace, Andresen, ed., 2 (1877): 320; William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 302; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed (1914): 196; see also, Wace, *Le roman de Rou*, Holden, ed., 2 (1970-73): 156; McLynn (1999): 212; R. A. Brown (2000): 137.
- ¹⁰⁵ Fowke (1913): 124.
- ¹⁰⁶ For the fable of *The Cat, the Sow and the Eagle*, see Herrmann (1964): 55.
- ¹⁰⁷ For the fable of *The Pregnant Bitch*, see Bernstein (1986): 130-131; McNulty (1989): 30, 133; Terkla (1995): 271.
- ¹⁰⁸ Bernstein (1986): 131.
- ¹⁰⁹ McNulty (1989): 133.
- ¹¹⁰ Terkla (1995): 271.
- ¹¹¹ McNulty (1999): 133.
- ¹¹² *Ibidem*, 133.
- ¹¹³ For the fable of *The Wolf and the Dog*, see Herrmann (1964): 56.
- ¹¹⁴ Fowke (1913): 124.
- ¹¹⁵ For the fable of *The Cat and the Chickens*, see Herrmann (1964): 58, 60.
- ¹¹⁶ McNulty (1989): 135.
- ¹¹⁷ Voisenet (2000): 58-59.
- ¹¹⁸ Rabannus Maurus, PL CXI: 220A, 220B.
- ¹¹⁹ Pastoureau (1991): 40; Pastoureau (1995): 30-31.
- ¹²⁰ For the quotes, see above n. 119.
- ¹²¹ McNulty (1989): 135.
- ¹²² Fowke (1913): 124; McNulty (1989): 135.

- ¹²³ For the rooster, see Pliny the Elder, *Naturae historiarum*, III, 31; X, 24-25; XXXVII, 144; Ambrose (St.), *Hexameron*, V, 24, 88, PL XIV: 240-241; Voisenet (1994): 115; Duchet-Suchaux (1992): 19.
- ¹²⁴ For the symbolism of the rooster/cock, see Gregory the Great, PL LXXVI, 527-532; *Isidorus*, XII, VII, André, ed. (1986): 50; Cazenave, ed. (1996): 160-61; Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2000): 281-83; Voisenet (2000): 129; 161; 401.
- ¹²⁵ Fowke (1913): 124-125.
- ¹²⁶ McNulty (1989): 23.
- ¹²⁷ Gibbs-Smith (1957): 174.
- ¹²⁸ For the sources, see ASC, "E," *sub anno* 1066; Florence of Worcester, Thorpe, ed., 1(1848): 227; John of Worcester, Darlington and McGurk, eds. (1998): 604.
- ¹²⁹ McLynn (1999): 215.
- ¹³⁰ McLynn (1999): 222-225, 240; According to R. A. Brown (2000): 144, 150, the scene in the Tapestry depicting the deaths of Leofwine and Gyrrh is the proof that both died early in the battle.
- ¹³¹ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 240.
- ¹³² *Ibidem*, 221.
- ¹³³ Stephen Morillo, *The Battle of Hastings* (1995): 224; Lewis (1999): 130-131.
- ¹³⁴ R. A. Brown (2000): 147; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 188-190; McLynn (1999): 223.
- ¹³⁵ McLynn (1999): 222.
- ¹³⁶ Fowke (1913): 127; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 34-35; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 64, 78; Körner (1964): 228-236, 254; Régine Le Jan, *Histoire de la France – Origines et premier essor – 480 -1180* (1996): 22; McLynn (1999): 185-86.
- ¹³⁷ For the quotes, see McLynn (1999): 227; About the *Malfosse* incident, see W. H. Stevenson, "Senlac and the Malfosse," *English Historical Review*, 28(1913): 292-303; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 202-04; C. T. Chevalier, "Where was the Malfosse? The end of the Battle of Hastings," *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 101(1963): 1-13; *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, Eleanor Searle, ed. (1980): 38; R. A. Brown, "The Battle of Hastings," *Proceedings of the Battle Conference of Anglo-Norman Studies - 1980* (1981): 18-21; Wilson (1985): 192-193; R. A. Brown (2000): 151.
- ¹³⁸ R. A. Brown (1981): 19.
- ¹³⁹ Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 174; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 190; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 28; Morillo (1995): 223-224; McLynn (1999): 221.
- ¹⁴⁰ For the Breton retreat, see William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 302-303; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 120; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 194; Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (1996): 130; McLynn (1999): 219, 221-224; R. A. Brown (2000): 147 downplays the Breton retreat, proposing instead that it was planned.
- ¹⁴¹ J. F. C. Fuller, *The Decisive Battles of the Western World* (1954): 378-379.
- ¹⁴² For various interpretations of the two unhorsing incidents, see Fowke (1913): 127; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 192; McLynn (1999): 222; R. A. Brown (2000): 42, n. 163.
- ¹⁴³ For the quotes, see Yapp (1987): 58.
- ¹⁴⁴ Cazenave, ed. (1996): 475.
- ¹⁴⁵ For the symbolism of the partridge, see *Isidorus*, XII, VII, André, ed. (1986): 63; see also, Rabannus Maurus, *De universo*, PL CXI, 249D.
- ¹⁴⁶ See above n. 144.
- ¹⁴⁷ For the quail, see *Isidorus*, XII, VII, André, ed. (1986): 64, 65; Voisenet (2000): 134.
- ¹⁴⁸ For the use of the terms *ANGLI* and *FRANCI*, see Fowke (1913): 126; Werkmeister (1976): 577; ASC, "D," Whitelock, ed. (1986): 143; Grape (1994): 61.
- ¹⁴⁹ Fowke (1913): 127; McLynn (1999): 222.
- ¹⁵⁰ For Tostig's family ties, see McLynn (1999): 187; R. A. Brown (2000): 123.
- ¹⁵¹ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 187. As mentioned in R. A. Brown (2000): 123, n. 9, according to Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 192, and Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 138-40, 142, Tostig probably "negotiated with and sought the help of" William against his brother Harold.
- ¹⁵² For the interactions between William and Tostig in early 1066, see above n. 150; see also Zumthor (1978): 302; McLynn (1999): 187-188.

- ¹⁵³ For William Rufus, see Zumthor (1978): 377; R. A. Brown (2000): 178, 196, who is partial to William and the Norman kings, does not hesitate to mention that William Rufus was inferior to his father, and did not have his father's ambition nor his creative powers.
- ¹⁵⁴ For William's conquest of Maine, see Latouche (1910): passim, esp. 34; Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 193-94; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 77-80, 98-100; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. 2 (1969): 18, 252, 259, and 269; Barton (1994): 41-63.
- ¹⁵⁵ For examples of William's expansionist policy and the various ways that he used to acquire territory prior to the Battle of Hastings, see Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 46-48, 505-06; and 3(1969): 134-38, 254-260; Bares (1982): 78-79; Musset, Bouvris and Maillefer, eds. (1985): 175-206; K. Thompson, "Family and influence to the south of Normandy in the eleventh century: the Lordship of Bellême," *Journal of Medieval History*, II(1985): 215-216; Searle (1988): 209; McLynn (1999): 85-104, and n. 4.
- ¹⁵⁶ O. Gilot, *Le Comte d'Anjou et son entourage au XIe siècle*, 1 (1972): 457-458.
- ¹⁵⁷ For anecdotes concerning William's brooding, vengeful nature, see Bates (1982): 255-57; Douglas (1964): 58-67; McLynn (1999): 86-87, 94.
- ¹⁵⁸ Musset, Bouvris and Maillefer, eds., (1985): 175-206.
- ¹⁵⁹ For William's coercion of his vassals, see Freeman, 3 (1869): 293-299; Wace, Holden, ed., 2 (1978): 111-114; McLynn (1999): 184-185.
- ¹⁶⁰ McNulty (1989): 140.
- ¹⁶¹ Fowke (1913): 128.
- ¹⁶² For Odo's *baculum* in Scene 54, see P. F. Thorne, "Clubs and Maces in the Bayeux Tapestry," *History Today*, 32 (1982): 48-50; Wilson (1985): 225; Grape (1994): 54; Cowdrey, Gameson, ed. (1997): 95, n. 6.
- ¹⁶³ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 221.
- ¹⁶⁴ Most writings on the Tapestry report this incident. For example, see Fowke (1913): 131; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed (1952): 190; McLynn (1999): 221; Brown (2000): 147.
- ¹⁶⁵ For the medieval concept of physical vision, see Margaret R. Miles, "Vision: The Eye of the Body and the Eye of the Mind in Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Other Works," *Journal of Religion* (Apr. 1983): 125-142; Miles (1985): 7.
- ¹⁶⁶ Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed., 2 (1969): 172; Wace, Holden, ed., 2 (1970-3): 166-168.
- ¹⁶⁷ Charles Stothard, "Some observations on the Bayeux Tapestry," *Archaeologia*, 19 (1821): 184-192, in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, Richard Gameson, ed. (1997): 1-6; for the quote see, Stothard, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 2.
- ¹⁶⁸ For the identity of the man next to William in Scene 55, see Bernstein (1986): 141; Shirley Ann Brown, "The Bayeux Tapestry: why Eustace, Odo and William?" *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 12 (1989): 7-28. Grape (1994): 161; Bertrand (1994): 27; Bertrand and Lemagnen (1996): 28; Stothard, Gameson, ed. (1997): 2; S. A. Brown and Herren, Gameson ed. (1997): 147; Bridgeford (1999): 155-185, esp. 180. Lewis (1999): 129-30; Musset (2002): 250; Rud (2002): 85. Regarding the pennant, it has been suggested that Eustacius is holding his own banner, see Bridgeford (1999): 181-182, 182 n. 72.
- ¹⁶⁹ Bridgeford (1999): 159 shares this opinion.
- ¹⁷⁰ For Eustacius II, Count of Boulogne, see Edmond Rigaux, "Recherches sur les premiers comtes de Boulogne," *Bulletin de la société académique de l'arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-mer* (1894): 151-177; H. J. Tanner, "The expansion of the power and the influence of the Counts of Boulogne under Eustace II," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 14 (1992): 264-268; Bridgeford (1999): 155-185; see also McLynn (1999): 68-69, 74-75, 88, 186, 191, 219, 221, 222, 226, 227, 232; R. A. Brown (2000): 70 n. 101, 95 n. 9; 101 n. 48; 103, 106, 128, 147, 151, 180-181, 183.
- ¹⁷¹ Eustacius II (died c. 1087) was not the son of Guy de Ponthieu as McNulty states, see McNulty (1989): 143. Eustacius II was the son of Eustace I, son of Arnulf I, and great-grandson of Baldwin II, count of Flanders.
- ¹⁷² McLynn (1999): 186.
- ¹⁷³ *Chronicon Malleacense (La chronique de Saint-Maixent, 751-1140)*, Jean Verdon, ed. (1979): 104, 112, 170, 176, 192; S. A. Brown, (1989): 7-28; for the quote, see McLynn (1999): 186.
- ¹⁷⁴ Grape (1994): 23.
- ¹⁷⁵ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 190; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 28-30; Morillo (1995): 169.

- ¹⁷⁶ For the Dover incident in the Spring of 1051, see *ASC*, "D" and "E", sub anno 1051, Whitelock, ed. (1961): 117; Douglas (1964): 168-169; Körner (1964): 31-43; McLynn (1999): 68-69R. A. Brown (2000): 101 & n. 48, 103 & n. 56.
- ¹⁷⁷ For Eustacius de Boulogne, see above ns. 169 and 175.
- ¹⁷⁸ Fowke (1913): 131; McLynn (1999): 68-69, 221, 227; Brown (2000): 103, 147, 151.
- ¹⁷⁹ McLynn (1999): 227, 297 n. 46; Brown (2000): 151 and n. 159.
- ¹⁸⁰ McLynn (1999): 227.
- ¹⁸¹ Fowke (1913): 134; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 34-36; McLynn (1999): 237.
- ¹⁸² Lewis (1999): 129, 152 n. 40; McLynn (1999): 222.
- ¹⁸³ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 164-165.
- ¹⁸⁴ For a meaning of crossed limbs, see Garnier, 1 (1982): 216-217.
- ¹⁸⁵ For an additional symbolic meaning of crossed limbs, see Garnier, 2 (1989): 146.
- ¹⁸⁶ Wace, Holden, ed., 2 (1970-73): 188; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, D. Greenaway, ed. (1996): 394-395; McLynn (1999): 225, 296 n. 40.
- ¹⁸⁷ Charles Stothard, "Some observations on the Bayeux Tapestry," *Archaeologia*, 19 (1821): 184-192, esp. 185, reprint in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, Richard Gameson, ed. (1997): 1-6, esp. 1.
- ¹⁸⁸ McNulty (1989): 145.
- ¹⁸⁹ Hallé (1987): 77.
- ¹⁹⁰ McNulty (1989): 143.
- ¹⁹¹ For Harold's death, see Henry of Huntingdon, Arnold, ed. (1879): 204; Wace, Andresen, ed., 2 (1879): 189, 213-14; William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 303-04; *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 119-120; Gibbs-Smith (1973): 20; Brown (1977): 24; S. A. Brown, "The Bayeux Tapestry: History or Propaganda?" *The Anglo-Saxon; Synthesis and Achievement*, J. Douglas Woods & David A. E. Pelteret, eds. (1985): 11-25, esp. 24; Grape (1994): 24; Cowdrey, Gameson ed. (1997): 104; Brooks & Walker, Gameson, ed. (1997): 82-91; McLynn (1999): 226, 237-241.
- ¹⁹² For the summary of arguments, see McLynn (1999): 234-239.
- ¹⁹³ For the death of Harold according to the *Carmen de Hastingae proelio*, see *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 34-36.
- ¹⁹⁴ For discussions about the *Carmen*'s validity, see R. A. Brown (2000): 124, n. 12. For the circular argument used to discredit the *Carmen*, see McLynn (1999): 237-238.
- ¹⁹⁵ Guillaume de Jumièges, Marx, ed. (1914): 135; Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 206-108; Ordericus Vitalis, Chibnall, ed. (1969): 176.
- ¹⁹⁶ S. A. Brown and Herren, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 148.
- ¹⁹⁷ Henri of Huntingdon, Arnold, ed. (1879): 203; William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 303; Wace, Holden, ed., 2(1970-73): 189, lines 3161-3166, and 214, lines 8811-8818.
- ¹⁹⁸ Stothard, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 1.
- ¹⁹⁹ Bruce (1856): 148; Stothard, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 5.
- ²⁰⁰ Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 82, 89-91.
- ²⁰¹ Guillaume de Poitiers, Foreville, ed. (1952): 204.
- ²⁰² *Carmen*, Morton and Muntz, eds. (1972): 34-36.
- ²⁰³ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 237.
- ²⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, 226, for the quote.
- ²⁰⁵ Brooks and Walker, in Gameson, ed. (1997): 89-90.
- ²⁰⁶ William of Malmesbury, Stubbs, ed., 2 (1889): 326-327; Wace, Holden, ed., 2(1970-73): 213, line 8805.
- ²⁰⁷ S. A. Brown and Herren, in Gameson (1997): 148; for the allusion to castration, see McLynn (1999): 237.
- ²⁰⁸ For the quote, see McLynn (1999): 79.
- ²⁰⁹ *ASC*, "E," sub anno 1051; J. Earle and C. Plummer, *Two of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, 2 (1899): 235-36; Barlow (1970): 109, 307-08; McLynn (1999): 68; for the quote, see McLynn (1999): 79.
- ²¹⁰ For Edward's role in the crisis of 1066, see McLynn (1999): 74-80; R. A. Brown (2000): 97-110.
- ²¹¹ Fowke (1913): 135.

²¹² Musset (2000): 266.

²¹³ *Ibidem*, 266.

²¹⁴ Digby, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 53; Gibbs-Smith, in Stenton, ed. (1957): 188; Stenton (1957): 23; Parisse (1983): 36-40; Wilson (1985): 200; Brilliant (1996): 114.

²¹⁵ Lewis (1999): 131.

²¹⁶ For arguments in favor of the Tapestry ending with the Anglo-Saxon rout, see Lewis (1999): 131-34; Musset (2002): 266; for the position that it ended with William's coronation, see Parisse (1983): 38-40; 55; Brilliant (1988): 99; S. A. Brown and Herren (1997): 59, 66-67.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Modern opinion differs widely concerning the extent to which these decorative images in the upper and lower margins can be interpreted as a commentary on the scenes they frame, and it seems likely that this has always been the case. While some eleventh-century beholders may have had the time, knowledge and inclination to draw parallels between certain beasts or fables and the nearby historical narrative, others probably did not.¹

The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry
Richard Gameson

Savoir n'est pas connaître; *c'est savourer ce que l'on entrevoit à mi-chemin...* Ainsi, la parole toujours voilée du symbole peut-elle nous garder de la pire erreur: celle de la découverte *d'un sens définitif et ultime* des choses et des êtres. Car personne ne se trompe autant que celui qui connaît toutes les réponses, sinon, peut-être, celui qui n'en sait qu'une seule.²

La science des symboles
René Alleau

Shortly before the end of the twentieth century, Richard Gameson argued that, whether one was a *participant* or is a modern or post-modern observer, the type of message, if any, that one may retrieve from the "decorative images" in the borders, and the level of understanding that one may reach, may be commensurate with the amount of time spent in deciphering the pictographs; with the essential knowledge to be able to decipher the images; and with the desire to acquire a fuller understanding of the Tapestry. In spite of the validity of Gameson's assessment, one needs to add that, in order to achieve a comprehensive analysis of the Tapestry borders, it is necessary to establish the various relationships of the Tapestry to its environment, i.e., to the eleventh-century cultural, socio-economic and political history that enabled its production, and to its reception by a select public, in so far as these relationships may be determined. Additionally, it is necessary to have or acquire an adequate knowledge of eleventh and early twelfth-century historical figures, with a particular emphasis on Edward, William, Harold, and Odo, as well as on the events surrounding their lives.

Some researchers are of the opinion that one may "read" the Tapestry without referring once to the borders. However, a detailed review and analysis of the animate and inanimate objects in the upper and lower borders, as well as a thorough examination and research into the symbolism of their contents, has shown that omitting the borders renders incomplete an analysis of the Tapestry, since such a fragmentary reading disrupts the web of relationships between the center field, the inscriptions and the borders. Thus, I have found it impossible to support the position that the borders serve no other purpose than to decorate.

In spite of the many books, articles, pamphlets and other literary works devoted to the Bayeux Tapestry, this dissertation is the first document dedicated entirely to the interpretation of the borders, and to the synergic process that takes place between the borders, the central panel and the inscriptions, with the purpose of achieving the most complete reading of the Tapestry to date. My research into the meaning of the pictographs in the borders has uncovered new elements which help to clarify problems, quandaries, and unresolved "enigmas," and to focus on points of interest hitherto neglected, or conveniently ignored. Additionally, it is my position that, taking into account the syntax of the elements of design, i.e., placements, postures/positions, gestures/movements of pictographs, as well as the semantics of these elements, i.e., their intrinsic meaning and symbolism -- individually, and in combination with similar elements in the main field -- the pictographs in the borders have proven instrumental in providing cogent bits of information which complement, enlighten, and on several occasions, offer a latent and subversive glimpse into the events depicted in the main field.

In my conclusion, I attempt to summarize and synthesize the meanings, imagery, and symbolism of all the elements in the borders that were explained in detail in each scene in the main text of this dissertation. Likewise, while I based my interpretation of the symbolism of animals on the writings of men who influenced early medieval culture, such as Isidore of Seville and Rabannus Maurus, I found it helpful to heed René Alleau's warning that symbols always "speak in a veiled voice..." and that "the worst error one can make is to believe that one has discovered the definitive and ultimate meaning of things and beings."³ Indeed, at times this dissertation has shown the possibility of several interpretations of symbols in the same image. However, it is difficult to accept Alleau's statement in its entirety when one considers that symbolism does not exist in a vacuum.

Indeed, any understanding or interpretation of an historical artifact, such as the Tapestry and its borders, is delineated by a timeframe, a culture, a set of *res memorabiles*, and the need for the narrative to follow a time line. Paraphrasing Michael Baxandall, my analysis of the Bayeux Tapestry is not an attempt to explain Odo's artifact to Odo or to his contemporaries. Thus, my interpretation of the borders is the result of, and limited to what I, as a twenty-first century art historian, constructed by mental synthesis after studying the relationships between the late eleventh-century culture that produced this embroidered cloth with its borders, the set of historical events that preceded its production, and its reception by a hand-picked public which shared a commonality not duplicable today. While, as an *observer*, I may not be able to reclaim meanings that would have been instantaneously and perhaps "instinctively" understood by a *participant*, I strove to reconstruct the border's original meaning(s) in twenty-first century terms.

While researching the possible purpose(s) for the creation and execution of the Tapestry, including its borders, I failed to discover either a strong pro-Norman or a pro-Anglo-Saxon influence. However, I uncovered a well-concealed, yet deeply rooted and well-orchestrated anti-William bias, mostly in the last part of the Tapestry, (starting with Scene 35), in which Odo's achievements are showcased. Since I agree with the specialists who propose that Odo was the patron who commissioned the Tapestry, such a discovery was not surprising, especially when taking into account pertinent elements of contemporary history. According to historical records, within ten years of the invasion of England, Odo was engaged in subversive actions against his half-brother, William, as he was later against William's chosen heir, William Rufus. Indeed, Odo favored William Rufus's older brother, Robert Curthose, as a successor to William on the throne of England. Subsequently falling from favor, Odo was jailed in 1082 for what William planned to be the rest of his (Odo's) natural life. William's refusal to release Odo until he (William) was at death's door, together with the dire words of warning that William supposedly uttered on this occasion, concerning the havoc Odo would wreck if allowed to go free, shows the depth of the mistrust and perhaps even the hatred that flourished over the years between these two ambitious men. It also demonstrates how intimately these two men knew each other.

Thus, rather than eulogizing William and promoting his victory, it seems that the Bayeux Tapestry, and especially the marginal locus of the borders served as a medium, to

promote Odo's purported achievements which resulted in Odo's aggrandizement at the expense of his powerful half-brother, William. Odo's fall from favor tends to indicate that, in spite of his Machiavellian schemes, he may have underestimated William's reactions, and the reactions of the keen minds of William's close personal advisors, especially those of the well-educated Lanfranc. As my analysis progressed through the scenes toward the end, it seems that there was a link between the disintegration of Odo's relationship with William and the increase in the sarcastic tone of the Tapestry. Indeed, I noted that the worst innuendos and deleterious comments against William are reserved for the second part of the Tapestry, i.e., the preparations for the invasion and the final battle, in which attempts were made to usurp and/or sabotage, by devious means, William's starring role.

When one considers the media that were available to a late eleventh-century "politician" in search of a way to disseminate his ideas and convey a message to a select, powerful and potentially subversive audience, I could not fail to realize the paucity of available instruments/means. This scarcity, combined with a desire to ensure public viewing, albeit a viewing restricted to a select group, limited one's choices considerably. Because of the existence of only a few modes of communication in the late eleventh century, portability was a quality required from the instrument/medium used in the process of transferring propaganda. Additionally, because such a transfer is time sensitive, the instrument/medium need not be durable beyond the lifetime of the individual or group of individuals who conceptualized and produced it. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the established and convenient medium of embroidery was chosen. The few bits of contemporary embroidered cloth that have reached the twenty-first century, often in tatters, offer a vivid reminder of the extraordinary set of circumstances that allowed for the Tapestry's survival.

Ostensibly, the Tapestry was produced to take its place among the many similar items which were probably manufactured to serve as a form of entertainment for contemporary courtiers and knights, who, like their modern counterparts, enjoyed reminiscing about exploits in which they were involved, even vicariously. Beyond possessing entertaining qualities, the Tapestry is a valuable commodity. It contains a well-organized series of tableaux, similar to a succession of modern posters, conceived to sell a product to a targeted public. There is little doubt that the product that the patron,

most likely Odo, was eager to sell was his own propagandistic agenda. Lewis acknowledges this very idea when she states that “the Bayeux Tapestry rewrites the Bishop’s role at Hastings in terms that flaunt his powers with a blatant kind of arrogance.”⁴ However, no matter how creative Odo may have been in his effort to sway the opinion of his contemporaries, “creating an object for remembering -- even using means that every *memoria* handbook says should be forcefully and vigorously memorable – doesn’t guarantee that it will play a particular role in people’s memories.”⁵ As a final point, the fact that Odo was unsuccessful in his ultimate bid for power does not detract from the genuine inventiveness and originality which is found in one of the means (the Bayeux Tapestry) which he may have used to convince his contemporaries of the value of his personal agenda.

As mentioned earlier, the Tapestry may be read and analyzed on different levels. The analysis that I achieved goes beyond the evolved description of an historical artifact. After examining the possible interactions and relationships at play between the Tapestry and its environment, it seems that the transmission of ideas and the desire to shape collective memory toward accepting one’s brand of history required that the object used as a communicating tool be endowed with the following: establishment of a time line and a time frame for the epic; choice of figures that would have the most impact to achieve a propagandistic design; selection of elements of design and animate objects whose symbolism was either part of the medieval cultural vocabulary or could be easily explained; consistent pairing with the major actors in the narrative, of certain types of animals, either common or mythical, but with specific symbolic functions, such as lions, eagles, birds, dogs, dragons, and winged lions; use of unique or seldom used animals, with specific symbolic attributes, to qualify particular individuals at a given point in time; deformity in the animals’ appearances, and quirks in animal behavior to suggest human flaws; depiction of ordinary animals that are trapped, caged or otherwise constrained or handicapped; use of male nudes, or pairs of naked figures to qualify the intentions or actions of the main actors in the narrative; and, last but not least, showcasing, by using fables and their morals, the character and personality flaws of the major participants. The possibility that the above means and concepts were used in an attempt (perhaps Odo’s) to shape contemporary thinking only adds an interesting ingredient to the discovery of the

interactions between the various elements at play inside and outside the frame of the Tapestry and its borders.

In any epic narrative, especially one that may have some propagandistic connotations, a time line and a time frame are necessary to anchor and make believable the events described therein. When considering the time line, it is plain that, in order to clarify the root cause of the Battle of Hastings and the invasion of England, in a manner conducive to his "brand of history," the patron needed to go back to past events that could be used as the premise for the rest of the action. In this case, the choice fell on the meeting between Edward and Harold, in which the notoriously glib Edward is depicted in the process of placing his trust in Harold, symbolized by the touching fingers of their right hands. In depicting Edward in the process of performing an act which, in view of his alleged promise to William, appears incongruous, if not devious, it is obvious that a desire to discredit William's claim to the throne was at play from the very beginning.

Contrary to the position of some researchers who suggest that the Tapestry ended with William's coronation, it is my belief that the merciless killing of Harold, and the flight of the remnants of the Anglo-Saxon army fleeing for their lives was chosen deliberately to showcase William's villainy.⁶ In order to concretize a time frame in which to fix the events, and to allude to periods of elapsed time, parameters may have been set through the imagery in the main field and the borders. In the main field, changes in the appearance of Edward were probably used to indicate the passage of time and Edward's declining health. In the borders, animals, whose symbolism may have been linked to zodiacal signs were possibly utilized to establish set periods of time. Thus, with the combined symbolism of horses (Scene 16), connected metaphorically to water, and thus to the zodiacal sign of Aquarius (20 Jan – 18 Feb), and of the linked fish (Scene 17), suggestive of the zodiacal sign of Pisces (19 Feb – 20 Mar), it is possible that the reader/viewer was made aware that, before the Brittany Campaign was in full swing, William and Harold waited out the winter months, as was customary in pre-modern warfare. In this case, elements in the upper border point to the Mont-Saint-Michel, a symbolic location for the Dukes of Normandy, as the place where the two leaders waited out the worst of the winter. The comet (Scene 32), which was first detected in February, and remained visible until May 1066, was also probably used to establish a time frame. The second representation of Pisces, under the guise of linked fish (juncture of Scenes 33

and 34), may have further restricted the events to a time between 19 Feb and 20 Mar, the possible time frame when Harold was informed about William's plan to invade England, and (Harold) expressed his fear at hearing the news. There is little doubt that this same representation of Pisces was used to establish that William was informed almost concurrently about Harold's crowning, setting in motion the final preparations for the invasion.

Besides the establishment of a time line and time frames for the epic, perhaps in order to give the maximum punch within the minimum amount of space, the cast of actors who are named was limited to nine individuals: four major figures, i.e., Edward, Harold, William, and Odo, whose actions played a decisive role in depicting the patron's own brand of history; and to five ancillary individuals, whose interactions with the major figures were potentially determinant for his agenda, i.e., Guy de Ponthieu, Turolde, Wadard, Vital and Eustacius de Boulogne.

In the very first scene, Edward's weaknesses were exposed to show that the main cause for the dispute about to escalate into an all out war was rooted in the temperament and actions of one man, King Edward. Indeed, Edward was a weak, angry and resentful man who had developed a penchant for playing tricks as repayment for the humiliations that he had suffered.⁷ Harold and his family had humiliated him, and so had William's father, who had treated him like a poor relation.⁸ Additionally, Edward made several so-called promises of the throne during his lifetime, which had little value according to contemporary English law.⁹ It is doubtful that his promise to William was anything but an exercise in expediency. Thus, it is not surprising that in Scene 1, which probably takes place in the Spring of 1064, a smiling and relatively strong looking Edward was portrayed in the process of playing a trick on both Harold and William: on William, because Edward probably wanted to disengage himself from his so-called promise to William, which he never intended to fulfill; and on Harold, because Edward was using him (Harold) to disengage himself (Edward) from the promise made to William.¹⁰

It seems that Harold's show of courage in the first part of the Tapestry (Scene 18) was exploited for a propagandistic scheme. By depicting Harold in the act of saving the lives of two of William's men from the quicksand, the sole act of true heroism represented in the Tapestry (Scene 18), it is likely that William was intended to look like an inadequate leader in comparison. Indeed, according to the Tapestry, William is absent

from the fighting during the Brittany Campaign, and is not depicted as leading his troops at Hastings. Even when he uncovers his face to show that he is still alive, he is facing his troops, not leading them. Additionally, William's accomplishments were undermined not only by suggesting the adverse side of his character and personality, but also by including the figures of two individuals: one, who was William's reluctant and rebellious vassal, i.e., Guy de Ponthieu; and the other who was a cowardly, ambitious and seditious nobleman, Eustace de Boulogne. It is a well-known ploy employed by politicians to use someone's misdeeds to bolster one's role and achievements. Conversely, the audience was reminded of the role played by Odo, the most likely patron, by introducing three men who were already associated with him before the Conquest, namely Turolde, Wadard and Vital, at decisive moments in the epic (Scenes 10, 41, and 49).

However, William's potentially explosive reactions probably prevented the representation of obviously deleterious elements in the design of the Tapestry. While restraint was necessary, elements of imagery with mischievous, injurious or ominous symbolic meanings that were far from obscure in the late eleventh century, were found in the main field and/or the borders. These elements may have had a place and been of help in a propagandistic scheme. In this category, I placed elements of *diversitas*, such as zigzags, stripes, and checkers; fleur-de-lys or three-petal fleurons, and cruciform vegetation. I included hairstyles and changes in hairstyles which are found mainly in the main field, but the importance of which deserves a mention. While unique, the comet is another important element of design, both as a device to establish a time frame, and as an ominous sign known to all. Finally, tongues protruding out of the mouths of fantastic beasts and animals seem to play a mischievous and/or deleterious role, which would be useful to propaganda.

Regarding signs of *diversitas/varietas*, in the Middle Ages, stripes and other signs of *varietas*, such as zigzags, checkers, and lozenges, to name only a few types of variegation, were reserved as distinguishing marks for undesirables, such as bastards and prostitutes. While some may argue that illegitimacy is a modern construct, events in William's life, such as the gruesome fate suffered by the besieged burghers of Alençon, because they dared to taunt William about his bastardry, prove that William was morbidly sensitive about his illegitimate origins.¹¹ When considering that the Tapestry is strewn with reminders of William's unenviable birth, and knowing William's potential

reactions, it is obvious that the patron did not expect the Tapestry to be read to William (if he ever examined it), in the same manner as he intended it to be read to those he aimed to convince about the validity of his claims. Indeed, introduced as early as Scene 1, stripes adorn posts framing the word *REX* which, because of the stripes, may be an allusion to the post-Conquest king, William, sequestering King Edward directly below.

Furthermore, one of those posts serves to cage Edward, represented metaphorically by an old lion, pushing on the post to get free. In conjunction with the elements of depiction in the center field of Scene 1, the imagery in the border suggests that Edward was probably trying to escape from the so-called promise he had made too hastily to William the Bastard. The repetition of stripes, checkers and zigzags in the architectural structures of buildings or on posts was reserved to identify them as William's, or as indicative of William and his cause (Scenes 14 and 23). It is also probable that similar elements of *diversitas* on buildings or on representations of Breton cities suggest that they belonged to or were captured by the Norman leader, a fact upheld by history (Scene 18). It seems almost certain that diagonal stripes were applied to the aperture delineating Aelfgyva's space (Scene 15), not only to mark Aelfgyva as a member of William's family, but also to showcase her promiscuity and venality. I suggest that the representation of an inverted V adorned with zigzags supporting William's seat of power (Scene 23), and of a post apparently bearing the weight of one side of the building in which William is meeting with his two half-brothers (Scene 44), was probably intended to remind the audience that William's power rested solely on his position as a bastard son of Duke Robert. I further suggest that, in order to represent the danger that William embodied for Harold and to illustrate William's negative presence, Harold was portrayed standing atop the arms of an inverted V, adorned with zigzags. At the same time, one of these posts is holding a bird by the neck, a satirical aside to indicate Harold's predicament when he accepts the crown (Scene 29). Williams' permeating influence may have been indicated, and signs of *diversitas* may have been used as reminders of William's invisible, yet overbearing presence even where he is not represented physically (Scenes 24, 25, 33), or where his presence is only suggested through animal pictographs (e.g., dogs with striped necks, Scene 53). Finally, in Scene 53, in which Odo rallies the *FRANCI* after the Breton rout, Odo wears a suit of armor adorned with *varietas*, similar to the one William used in Scene 16 during the successful

Brittany Campaign, perhaps to suggest to the audience that, as a leader, he was a valid alternative for William. As this summary contends, from beginning to end, the scenes were peppered with obvious reminders of William's bastardry. In the end, through the marks of *diversitas*, the audience was not allowed to forget the origins of the man who had become their king. In addition, the individual who probably commissioned the Tapestry and/or the person responsible for the design, perhaps Odo, managed to utilize these distinguishing marks to his own advantage.

In the same category as *diversitas*, fleurs-de-lis and/or three-petal fleurons and crosses were used as early as the ninth century in conjunction with rulers to suggest that their power came from God. In Scene 12, William is placed below a large, black fleur-de-lis. Even in the environment of the Tapestry, where it is difficult to consider the symbolism of colors, this unique choice of the color black, for a fleur-de-lis associated with William, was probably meant to foreshadow the negative effect of William's kingship after the Conquest. Above Scene 14, in view of the determinant role played by Edward in the narrative, the small fleur-de-lis contained within an inverted V may be an allusion to King Edward's invisible presence while William and Harold argue in the main field.

In Scene 15, an elaborate fleur-de-lis is set above the portrayal of Aelfgyva, probably to insinuate that she was a queen, despite her promiscuity and venality implied by the stripes adorning the columns framing her. Perhaps anticipating the tug of war for the royal prize between William and Harold, at the border between Scenes 22 and 23, two birds, below a mound, a metaphor for the city of Bayeux, are engaged in pulling with their tightly closed beak on the ends of a branch, the extremities of which are each adorned with a fleur-de-lis. I posit that this episode, represented immediately before the Scene of the oath, is the locus of one of the many hints -- perhaps willed by the patron -- concerning the escalating fight between William and Harold over the possession of the English crown.

In Scene 24, another of the many allusions to anointed kingship, via a fleur-de-lis, adorns the prow of the ship taking Harold back to England, perhaps presaging the role Harold played not long after his return to England. In Scene 25, a small, drooping fleur-de-lis, probably a reflection on the health of the anointed king, sits precariously on top of the room in which Edward receives Harold. In Scene 26, Edward's newly built Church

of St. Peter Apostle is adorned with two wilting fleurs-de-lis with a black heart, as a probable indication that after Edward dies, the kingdom is no longer going to be blessed. From Scenes 26 through 34, fleurs-de-lis dwindle, wilt, or metamorphose into plants with disheveled tendrils. This vegetation “gone wild” above and below the scenes related to Edward’s death and Harold’s kingship may have suggested God’s dwindling support of Harold after Edward’s death. Starting with Scene 35, the fleurons/fleurs-de-lis, which had turned ghostly or deformed, disappear completely from the borders. I submit that the lack of fleur-de-lis, starting in the scene when the Norman fleet is being built, was meant as a deleterious comment on William’s plans to invade England and on his kingship after the Conquest. Indeed, the transformation of the fleurs-de-lis and their disappearance probably suggest that, in spite of William’s desire to appear righteous by flaunting the papal pennant in later scenes, neither William nor his actions, nor those of his chosen successor were sanctioned by God. In fact, to support this allegation and insinuate that nothing good could possibly come out of the invasion, above Scene 40, a second evil mask, known as a “vorant-de-lis,” (a devourer of the fleur-de-lis and destroyer of what is pure and holy), was inserted between two beasts identified tentatively as winged lions, a recognized emblem for William (the first such beast is set above Guy and his men who are arresting Harold in Scene 7).

In addition to signs of *diversitas* and fleurs-de-lis, a few crosses were placed above and below sorrowful scenes, or scenes that imply future evils for the kings of England. Below Scene 25, an elaborate cross was probably meant as a sign of Edward’s impending death. Above the burning house in Scene 47, crosses on either side of a lion, (probably symbolizing William), may have been used as additional incriminating references to the fact that William had ordered his men to burn English homes, especially those around Hastings, which were part of the domain of Harold, the anointed king. Last but not least, in Scene 49, above Vital, who announces that he has discovered Harold’s whereabouts, crosses ending with fleur-de-lis probably presage the death of King Harold.

As mentioned above, because it appeared in the sky at a given point in time, the comet is one of the elements that may have been used to set a time frame for the events described in the Tapestry. Additionally, among the various signs of foreboding, which have found their way into the Tapestry and its borders, the comet is the one element whose ominous symbolism cannot be denied. Thus, on one level, the comet may be read

as a forewarning sign of Harold's impending, disastrous end. On a second level, by capitalizing on the contemporary beliefs that any strange celestial bodies appearing in the heavens presaged the coming of great afflictions, the ominous symbolism of the comet may have also been utilized to remind a post-Conquest audience of the great turmoil and tribulations that befell England after the Conquest, perhaps with the ultimate aim to subvert William's rule.¹²

Within the category of mischievous and/or injurious elements of design, I have included hairstyles and the differences in hairstyles between Normans and pro-Normans and their English counterparts. In the main field, changes in the appearances of the two leaders are meaningful because the symbolism of similar changes is documented in eleventh-century writings. Likewise, the meaning attributed to these changes offer another *aperçu* into medieval modes of expressing one's political agenda. According to early eleventh-century writings, the hairstyles and modes of dress of individuals in positions of power, which differed from the normally accepted styles (be it in a city or a whole kingdom), implied concerns about the legitimacy of change and the lawful exercise of power of those individuals. Thus, in Scenes 7 and 8, Guy de Ponthieu sports hair reaching to his nape in an old style favored by aristocratic families of Gaulish extraction, perhaps to intimate that he is acting independently of William; while in Scene 9, the back of Guy's head is completely shaven in the Norman manner, probably to indicate that he is acting as William's vassal. Until Scene 24, types of hairstyle and mustache, or the absence of mustache, clearly differentiate Anglo-Saxons from Normans and pro-Normans. From Scene 24 onwards the differentiation between Anglo-Saxon/English and Norman hairstyles and facial hair, or lack thereof, becomes blurred. William adopts Harold's longer hairstyle in the scene of the oath (Scene 23), and does not change back to his Norman haircut, perhaps to indicate that from this scene onward William visualized himself as the English king. Conversely, Harold loses his mustache after the oath (Scene 24), perhaps to signify that he had to bend his will to William, and was no longer a powerful English magnate. The recovery of his mustache, once he has been named king (Scene 30), seems to illustrate his renewed independence from William. However, his sudden loss of facial hair when he hears news of William's preparations to invade England, may hint at Harold's future loss of integrity at William's hands. Finally, when the battle at Hastings commences (Scene 50), Harold sports a large mustache once

more, and keeps it to the end (Scene 57), perhaps to convey that Harold battled William's forces as a true Anglo-Saxon king. When taking into account the symbolic meaning attributed to differences in hairstyle and fashion in the eleventh-century, together with elements of contemporary history, it is my belief that the changes in Guy de Ponthieu's hairstyle in the episode relating Harold's capture, detainment at Guy's hands and release to William, was introduced in part to suggest that William had little control over the actions of some of his vassals. Likewise, the changes in William's hairstyle in the oath scene and thereafter, and the alternating hairstyle and facial hair that Harold adopted from Scene 24 onwards, seem to indicate a blurring of the line between legitimate and illegitimate rule in England, which started prior to the Conquest. Keeping in mind that a propagandistic ingredient may also have been involved, the contemporary symbolism attributed to changes in the appearance of leading figures probably had a two-fold meaning in a post-Conquest environment: firstly and overtly, these differentiations questioned Harold's right to rule England. Secondly and covertly, by reminding the viewers of pre-Conquest episodes of lax obedience to their liege lord, William, by one of his vassals, Guy, these changes may have been introduced to cast doubts in the mind of the post-Conquest viewers not only about the legitimacy of William's rule in England, but also about his ability to govern and be obeyed.¹³

The profusion of exposed tongues represented in the Tapestry and its borders also falls in the category of mischievous, injurious and ominous elements. While predatory animals are represented in the act of licking their chops with their tongues, an animal that sticks its tongue straight out of its mouth performs an unnatural action, since it requires an act of will, which is incongruous with its nature. Exposing one's tongue falls into the category of repeated devices used when depicting fantastic figureheads in the main field, as well as lions and dogs in the borders, in order to indicate the dangers associated with pronouncing words out of a desire to please, and without forethought about the consequences of one's speech. In this manner, the display of a tongue sticking straight out may have first referred to Edward, and his documented "habit" of making idle promises of the crown to assuage various pretenders (Scene 1). As Harold crosses the Channel with his men (Scenes 4 through 6), he seems to be haunted by protruding tongues, perhaps also symbolizing Edward's idle promises. In addition, extended tongues may refer to the constant taunting which was part of any posturing between

medieval warring chieftains. Thus, the mocking dog above Scene 7, and the spiteful deformed lions above Scene 8, seem to intimate that Harold and Guy are engaged in a taunting match. Additionally, since the winged lions are emblematic of William, their performance of an irreverent action aimed at a holy place, i.e., sticking their tongues upwards at the depiction of the Romanesque church at Mont-Saint-Michel (Scene 17), may have been part of a denigrating campaign aimed at convincing a post-Conquest audience of William's ruthlessness, and of his purported contempt for the Christian Church. For similar reasons, a profusion of extended tongues may have been used in the borders of the oath scene (Scene 23), and of the following scenes, expressing not only the hypocritical mockery that was part of this particular so-called sacred exchange, but the trickery that continued on both sides throughout the remainder of the Tapestry, almost up to the end (Scene 57). Indeed, in a final show of complete spite, William sent his knights to kill Harold ignominiously, which is reflected by the mocking action of a large lion sticking its tongue, stitched in red, at the exsanguinated lion facing it, whose tongue has lost all color.

Mischievous, injurious and/or ominous elements of design aside, the method used to recapture past events for a chosen audience, in a manner conducive to the shaping of collective memory in order to subvert the established order, also included the symbolism of animals. Thus, the borders were populated with animals whose symbolism was widespread in a medieval society that cohabited comfortably with "*le merveilleux*." Regal symbols, such as lions and eagles, are reserved for Edward, Harold and William, and/or for the men who are in a position of power, acting in place of their liege lords, like Guy de Ponthieu (Scene 9). At the very beginning of the epic, lions were used to underline and explain the problem as it existed in the Spring of 1064 between two pretenders (William and Harold), both vying for the English crown, probably because of one man's indecisiveness and desire to be free of a promise he made without forethought (Edward), of another man's greed, ambition, and acquisitiveness (William), and of yet another man's pride, stubbornness and gullibility (Harold). Between the lions in Scenes 1 and 2, indicating and iterating the determinant for the epic, and the two lions with protruding tongues, engaged in a final act of utter spite toward each other above Scene 57, where Harold meets with his unsavory fate at the hands of William's knights, lions

were used consistently in the upper and lower borders to personify William and Harold, thus reminding the audience that the fight was between two royal pretenders.

Like the lions, by their appearances, placements, postures and movements, eagles may qualify the person(s) they symbolize, and comment on their actions. Thus, it is possible that eagles, preening themselves, were used to express Edward's and Harold's mutual satisfaction (Scenes 1 and 2). Perhaps in order to remind a post-Conquest audience of King William's bastardry, eagles either hover above William who is dressed in garments adorned with *diversitas* (Scene 10); or an eagle, depicted with varicolored feathers arranged in stripes (Scene 37), hovers above William as he prepares to leave for England. An eagle, probably symbolizing Harold (Scene 17), squawks his disappointment, perhaps to express Harold's anger at being detained in Normandy even after he had saved William's men from quicksand. It is also possible that eagles were used to mimic the actions of William and Harold engaged in a tug of war over the English succession (main field, Scene 23). In the same scene, eagles may have also served as a satirical aside. Indeed, in imitation of Harold, who is trying to "smooth William's ruffled feathers" with an oath, two eagles are smoothing the feathers of their wings. It is also likely that eagles holding a twisted pose were used in connection with Harold immediately after his coronation (Scene 31, below), in order to express the king's foreboding after his followers acknowledged him as king with their raised left hand, a bad omen indeed. Eagles seem to mimic the confused reactions of the two royal leaders when individuals cross the Channel to bring news of Harold's crowning (Scene 34) to William. The eagles falling backwards in surprise above Scenes 46 and 47, were probably designed to emphasize the mutual reactions of the two royal individuals: William (still a royal pretender), who is being informed below of Harold's victory at Stamford Bridge; and Harold (the consecrated king of England), who is startled when he hears that William is ravaging the area around Hastings, especially his (Harold's) own land. In the upper border of Scene 51, adorsed squawking eagles, with extended wings pointing at lions, were placed on the left, and donkeys, linked by a rope, on the right, above William's mounted knights charging the English. The type of animals and their respective placements were probably used to convey the final suggestion that William and Harold may have desired to be viewed as noble and righteous (lions), but that they acted like jackasses in their effort to pretend that they could be reconciled, and live in

harmony. In the final analysis, they were both Edward's dupes. Indeed, although absent (Scene 24) or even dead (Scenes 48 and 57), Edward remains present vicariously throughout the Tapestry with the help of the old lions illustrated in the borders.

Above and below scenes depicting acts which have major significance for the rest of the epic, unique or infrequently reproduced pictographs of domesticated, wild or mythical animals, two naked male figures, and three pairs of naked figures, each containing one male and one female, were inserted in the borders. In addition, some of these animals are trapped, caged or otherwise restrained, and/or are performing unique actions. It is probable that the very uncommonness of some of these animals was used to set them apart and highlight their symbolic meaning vis-à-vis the episodes above or below. Keeping in mind that these pictographs of human and animal figures may have been an aid in a propagandistic scheme, the summary provided below reviews what was achieved by using these pictographs to qualify and gloss the main field. To facilitate my review, I approached them in the order in which they are represented in the Tapestry, while at the same time dividing the animals into categories: starting with common animals; progressing to unique or infrequently depicted animals; proceeding to mythical or fantastic beasts; moving on to explore the significance of animals involved in specific acts, such as mocking and taunting – including animals that are restrained; and, finally, concluding with the implications behind the representations of naked human figures.

Besides the eagles, that may have a specific meaning related to the three royal persons represented in the Tapestry, and the vultures, that signify the rapacity of men engaged in a conquest, the majority of birds represented in the Tapestry look like carrier pigeons, symbols of messengers and of the messages that they carry. These birds are placed above and below scenes that are newsworthy, often where changes are taking place. Two pairs of such birds may be found above Scene 4. Significantly, the bird on the left in the first pair is holding a worm in its beak, perhaps alluding to Harold's secret belief before he left for Normandy, that he held a trump card, i.e., Edward's pledge to him regarding the English succession (the worm). In this manner, the invalidity of William's claim may have been suggested. With the second pair of carrier birds pointing with their wings in opposite directions above Harold departing for Normandy, it is likely that the audience was reminded that Edward was not trustworthy when it came to agreements (lions/dogs touching heads, Scene 4), and that, as a result, Harold, depicted as

a hunter (*genettes*), synonymous with a man of substance in the middle ages, was on the verge of joining the ranks of the hunted.

Another pair of carrier pigeons is placed above the junction of Scenes 15 and 16, (beginning of the Brittany Campaign). These birds, rocking with laughter, placed directly above Conan's capital city of *Rennes*, which is not mentioned in contemporary chronicles in connection with this particular campaign, may have been introduced to insinuate that William lacked strategic know-how, since riding to *Rennes* may be viewed as a fool's errand, further intimating that William was not successful in gathering reliable information concerning Conan's whereabouts. Likewise, the birds above *Rennes* may have been used to refresh the memory of the audience regarding Conan's suspicious death by poisoning, rumored to have been ordered by William. Then again, because of its status as the first city in Brittany, *Rennes* may have been included as a mnemonic cue to remind post-Conquest viewers of the near defeat that William suffered on the battlefield at Hastings because he entrusted the defense of his left flank to the Breton contingent, and they were routed. Possibly, since *Rennes* was the capital of Brittany, the birds were placed in that location to disparage William by reminding the audience of the stinging defeat that he suffered in Brittany in 1076.

It is likely that the next set of news-bearing birds was included in the upper border, at the juncture of Scenes 21 and 22, to highlight Harold's reluctance to be so closely involved with William, which he (Harold) displays in the main field, and which was probably used as a sign to inflect the validity of Harold's oath in Scene 23. Above Scene 24, a similar bird was introduced to mimic surprise at Harold's return to England. In all instances, carrier pigeons served to carry news, especially the type of news that an ambitious, influential individual, like Odo, may have wanted to highlight. Thus, in the lower border of Scene 26, birds squawk to announce Edward's death. Birds comment on Harold's kingship, when he is assailed by premonitions in Scene 33. When William's spy lands in Normandy, a bird awaits, perhaps to relay the message he brings (Scene 34). Birds frame and point with their wings directly at the meeting in which the decision to build the invasion fleet is made (Scene 35). During the preparations for battle, many news-bearing birds are squawking, mimicking the exchange of news and the spying that probably took place between the two armies.

Vultures and carrion eaters are another species of bird in the borders. There is little doubt that carrion eating birds were depicted because the Tapestry is filled with men engaged in, or about to be engaged in some type of warfare. Vultures enter the Tapestry and proliferate beginning with Guy de Ponthieu, William's rapacious vassal, who literally fed on the dead, because he was the leader of a gang of men who lured ships to unsafe shores in order to take loot and capture prisoners whom they held for ransom. It seems that vultures were located in areas where the attention of the audience needed to be focused on William's and Harold's rapacity. Vultures may also play a role as foretellers of the unseemly fate that befell not only Harold, but also the fighting men on both sides. Thus, vultures hover above Scene 16, and squawk at William, followed by a forlorn Harold, departing for the Brittany Campaign. Above Scene 26, as Edward is about to die, a pair of vultures, the first one pecking contentedly at the three-petal fleuron adorning the top of the Church of St. Peter Apostle, and the second one nipping at a protuberance above the "P" of the word *CORPUS* in the inscription, probably symbolized the two rapacious pretenders, William and Harold, whose insatiable appetite for power and wealth was tearing at the very substance of English kingship.

Medieval observers would not have been surprised by the increase in the number of vultures that inhabit the borders after Scene 35, in which William starts the preparations for the invasion of England. However, they may have been intrigued at the daring approach to the design, which included equating William's efforts with those of vultures waiting for the kill. Like vultures that are the presagers of doom often associated with treachery, crows/ravens were known to follow armies on the move waiting to feast on the dead. With the battle of Hastings drawing near, vultures joined by lesser carrion birds, i.e., crows/ravens, occupy the borders above and below William's advancing army.

Dogs were common enough animals in the Middle Ages. Like vultures, dogs first appear in the Tapestry in connection with Guy de Ponthieu and Harold. Doubtless, dogs were illustrated in the borders to characterize Guy, Harold, and even William as low-born, aggressive, and greedy *canailles*. In addition, in the early Middle Ages, the symbolism attributed to dogs, especially black dogs, was particularly adapted to associate one of William's vassals (Guy) with the felonious forces of evil.¹⁴ Thus, above Scenes 7 and 8, two dogs were inserted: it seems that the one on the left (a light colored dog), with

its tongue stuck out, is used to personify Harold, who had a propensity to use words to get himself out of problematic situations before he had recourse to arms; the other one symbolizes Guy, whose character and contemptible actions may be compared to those of a *canaille*. In the upper border of Scene 14, dogs making a sign of agreement with their paws seem to be mocking the proceedings taking place below. Large hounds, biting their tails above Scene 16 and the nomen *WILLEM DUX*, go a long way to identify William with a low born *canaille*, i.e., a despicable individual, as he rides, followed by the forlorn Harold, to fight in the Brittany Campaign. Mocking dogs qualify Harold as being a *canaille* who mocked the sacredness of an oath by perjuring himself (Scene 23). Dogs are frequently illustrated in the borders of the Tapestry, perhaps to inflict (bestow?) on those who are somehow part of William's entourage the stigma accorded to low born *canailles*. Perhaps Guillaume de Poitiers heeded the many representations of dogs in the borders when he referred to William's men as "a rabble of miserable curs."¹⁵

Besides common animals, the borders are filled with unique or rarely illustrated, real and mystical beasts with specific symbolic meanings germane to the individual or the scene which they border. In the category of unique or infrequently used animals, one finds two pairs of cunning predators, the *genettes* (above Scenes 4 and 18), that were trained for the hunt during the Middle Ages. Placed above the departing Harold (Scene 4), the *genettes* were probably meant to satirize Harold, the hunter (a monicker for a person of quality in contemporary medieval society), and to forewarn the audience that the hunter was about to become Guy's prey, and later William's. The second rendering of *genettes* occurs above Conan (Scene 18) who is fleeing Dol. The placement of these cunning hunters next to badgers, and above William's men riding to catch a fleeing Conan, suggest the relentless hunt to which Conan was subjected, leaving little doubt that this scene was a prelude for the hunt that resulted in Harold's death at Hastings. This second rendering of the *genettes*, seems to hint at a pattern in William's actions, i.e., William first toyed with his potential victims before he gave them the *coup-de-grace*. Additionally, viewers were probably aware that, like the *genettes* pushing the frame of the upper border to freedom, Conan, and later Harold did their best to escape. However, in the end both became William's victims.

A pair of badgers was placed next to the second representation of *genettes*. The badgers, biting the restraining post of their "cage" above Harold and William's men

departing toward Dol, may reflect Harold's reactions to his being "caged" and taunted while a guest/prisoner of William in Normandy. The badgers offered a perfect opportunity to portray William as a ruthless, cruel leader who liked to toy with his victims, and to reveal the kind of deadly game that William was playing with Harold, first letting his vassal, Guy de Ponthieu, "badger" Harold, then indulging in some "badgering" of his own.

Similarly, one may look upon the roosters represented above Scene 11 as part of the infrequently illustrated animals, since the only other rooster is part of a hunting scene below Scene 51. In the case of Scene 11, the pair of cocks associated with William's envoys in the main field riding hard to announce that William had acceded to Guy's request, were probably meant not only to herald the envoys' return, and to intimate their success in securing the ransom for Harold's release, but, because of their symbolism, the cocks may contribute to satirize William, insinuating through their triumphant cries that, by demanding that William pay Harold's ransom, the thieving Guy was acting no worse than William, his one time jailer, who had demanded and secured a ransom for Guy's release. The second representation, depicting a rooster held by the neck between the clenched jaws of a wolf (below Scene 51), foreshadows Harold's final defeat and death. Indeed, despite the vigilance implied by the rooster, Harold fell under the blows of the knights handpicked by William, the cruel and cunning wolf, bent on stealing the crown of England at all costs.

In the category of unique or rarely used animals, one may include rams, represented only once above Scene 12, in which William is receiving an Englishman from Harold's entourage who came to plead with William to obtain Harold's release. The Englishman was probably meant to be Guy's pawn, since while pleading for Harold's release, he was *de facto* pleading Guy's case for ransom. Thus, the well-known symbolism of the ram may have been another way to remind the audience that both William and Guy were stubborn, bellicose and prone to violence.

In pursuing the recapitulation of infrequently depicted animals and their use in areas of the Tapestry critical to the epic, one is brought into contact with geese, psychopompic animals whose symbolism was slowly evolving in medieval culture to encompass the meaning of news bearers and rumor mongers. In the case of Scene 12, the dual symbolism of the geese, exchanging signs of friendship, as Harold is about to be led

to William, was probably meant to mock Harold and satirize William, since William's "friendship" proved notoriously harmful, and even deadly to Harold.

The next pair of geese connects the two pairs of nudes above Scene 48b. In this case (Scene 48b), the geese's functions were probably fourfold: first, they may have acted as psychopomps, and warned the audience of the impending death of many of the pro-Norman knights assembled for battle below. Secondly, it is likely that they symbolized the news mongers spreading rumors on the battlefield. Thirdly, the geese probably played a covert role. Through the actions of their wings, directed at the mustachioed Englishmen that are part of the two naked pairs, the geese may be interpreted as guiding Harold to a "warrior's paradise." As a fourth function, the pair of geese, separating the two sets of nudes, may have acted as a mnemonic cue, taking the viewers/readers back to Scene 12, in order to show them that even when William freed Harold from Guy's grasping hands, he (William) already intended to be rid of, i.e., kill, Harold when the occasion presented itself, as it did at the Battle of Hastings. Such an insinuation would show intent on William's part. Indeed, in spite of William's protests that he had nothing to do with the murderous frenzy of the knights who killed Harold, the manner of Harold's death became part of the rumors that circulated widely after the Conquest and tended to discredit William and taint his victory.

Besides playing a part in a few of the fables, harts/deers were represented only once as paired animals in the borders of the Tapestry. They were placed in the upper border, at the beginning of Scene 13. Because these animals are usually victims of the hunt, it seems fitting to place them above a scene representing Guy in the process of delivering Harold into William's hands, between psychopompic geese and rapacious vultures, one of which is extending its long featherless neck in the hart's direction, thus hinting at the predicament into which Harold is being led.

Represented only once, in the upper border of Scene 13, the camels play a unique role in the Tapestry. It is obvious that their placements were picked carefully, locating the first partially above Guy, and the second completely above William, thus making it clear that their symbolism was meant to apply to Guy and especially to William, ridiculing these men by insinuating that they suffered from the defects attributed to camels, i.e., conceit, a tendency towards sudden bursts of anger, and an uncommon tenacity when holding grudges.

Except for the two dead or dying horses (below Scenes 53 and 54), which have no symbolic significance beyond suggesting the extent of the slaughter at Hastings, the borders contain only one set of horses below Scene 16. In this scene, because of the uniqueness of their presence and placement below William and Harold, and because of their prone posture, actions, and the fact that they were gelded, these two horses may have been symbolically multivalent. On one level, the association of the horses with water, Saturn, and the zodiacal water sign, Aquarius, seems to set a time frame for the beginning of the Brittany expedition (20 Jan – 18 Feb). On another, the prone and gelded horses may be indicative of a lack of Harold's and William's virile strength which would impede their ability to lead.

The *Physiologus* and medieval bestiaries describe the ostrich as a bird with short legs and camel's feet.¹⁶ Three pairs of birds answering this description grace the borders of the Tapestry: below Scene 42 and Scene 44, and above Scene 48a. In the early Middle Ages, these birds, which were believed to frequent lands turned into barren wastelands, symbolized the hypocrites who pretend to be righteous, but are impelled by their twisted nature to perform evil deeds. Because of the symbolism attributed to them in the early medieval period, it is not surprising to find them in the proximity of William and the invading pro-Norman soldiers who are preparing the food they had pillaged from the local inhabitants, leaving nothing behind (Scene 42). Ostriches are also encountered below Scene 44, and above Scene 48a, both times in the proximity of William himself. In addition to the obvious metaphor in Scene 42, in the case of Scene 44, the ostriches probably reveal the attitude of the individuals portrayed in the main field. Thus, the ostrich on the left, which is trying to flee its enclosure adorned with zigzags below Odo and his name and go back from whence it came, may have conveyed, to a post-Conquest audience, Odo's disapproval of William's plan (being discussed in the main field), to remain in England; and the larger ostrich on the right, which is rushing forward, below William and Robert de Mortain, may be an expression of William's anxious desire to proceed with the invasion, and of Robert's eagerness to follow in his footsteps.

Of the many birds illustrated in the borders, the partridges or quails are represented only once. Isidore of Seville does not mince his words when he refers to the partridge, as "*avis dolosa atqve immvnda*," and when he describes the actions of the quail.¹⁷ It seems that the outward appearance of these two birds (partridge and quail)

were conflated into one, illustrated in the affronted birds with a fanciful curlicue on their heads in the upper border of Scene 53. Such a conflation may have occurred because the symbolism attributed to the partridge and the quail offered an opportunity to sully William's reputation and that of his chosen heir, William Rufus. First, the perfidious quail may be associated with William. Tostig acted as the sacrificial *ortygometra* (bird) for William (quail) by giving him the opportunity to test vicariously Harold's resolve and the strength of his army at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. By this action, Tostig also gave William and his men the chance to land safely in England.¹⁸ Secondly, the presumed mating habits of the partridge may have referred to the sexual habits of William Rufus, who preferred to mate with persons of his own sex, which was undoubtedly common knowledge amongst the Duke's relatives and courtiers.¹⁹

Aside from the unique or seldom represented animals, fantastic or mythical beasts were employed in the Tapestry borders and may have helped to convey a propagandistic message. While griffins are probably depicted to emphasize aggressivity and the lust for power and wealth in the major participants, pairs of sphinxes, female centaurs, amphisbaenas, and winged horses are illustrated only once to specify particular character flaws or to qualify the actions of the main participants at a given moment in the narrative. Aggressivity and greed were so manifest in Guy and his men, that it is not surprising to find griffins represented in both borders of Scene 8, directly above and below Guy. Perhaps, griffins were meant to indicate similar flaws in William and Harold as they prepare for their first formal meeting (Scene 14). Through the lone griffin above Scenes 27/28 stopped by a black diagonal, it is probably suggested that either Harold's or William's aggressivity and anticipatory greed are stymied by the political stumbling block personified by the dying Edward. In the case of Scene 41, the appearance of winged lions and griffins above a knight, who may be William, may have been conflated to showcase the aggressive nature, rapacity and greed of the Norman leader who is leading his men in the plunder. The last two illustrations of these fantastic animals occur directly above the charging pro-Norman knights: the first immediately before they reach the Anglo-Saxon shield wall; the second as they approach the last remnants of Harold's army; leaving little room for post-Conquest observers to doubt that aggressive, predacious intentions rather than a noble, righteous design were foremost in the minds of William and his men.

With the unique pair of sphinxes, mythical creatures whose only task was to frighten and destroy adventurers seeking to pass through a threshold beyond which they were not supposed to venture, post-Conquest observers may have been reminded of the forewarnings that Harold should have heeded before crossing into Normandy (Scene 2). Centaurs, understood to symbolize duality in a person's character and personality, imply the constant struggle of an individual against his/her evil propensities. The female gender of this unique pair above Scene 11, seems to associate them with Harold, especially because it reiterates Harold's link with a symbol suggesting a lack of "balls," i.e., courage. Yet, these mythical creatures are placed above elements of *diversitas* imbedded in the roof of a building in Guy de Ponthieu's estate, and in close proximity to pro-Norman riders, a placement which may link the symbolism of the female centaurs to Guy, and by extension to his liege lord, William, whose pronounced duality of character made him desire ardently to appear in the right no matter how devious the cause he had embraced.

Again placement plays an important part in deciphering the meaning of the only pair of amphisbaena to be found in the Tapestry (Scene 16). It is likely that these monstrous reptilian creatures, known for their ability to avoid direct confrontation, were placed above Norman warriors following a sullen looking Harold, who was forced to accompany William to fight in Brittany, in an attempt to qualify the two leaders as sleek and slimy; and to demonstrate the impossibility of William and Harold's ever becoming allies.

Winged horses are the last mythical animals illustrated as part of the Tapestry borders (Scene 50). Once more because of their placements directly above William, the person that they probably symbolized, the winged horses offered an opportunity to qualify William with the dual symbolism attributed to this mythical animal. Overtly, one aspect of the winged horses' symbolism, i.e., a lofty imagination and ease of expression was bestowed on William who was in the process of addressing his troops prior to the final battle. However, a post-Conquest audience may have also been well aware of the negative symbolism of the winged horses, which could be used as a latent mode to disparage William's character, by suggesting that William's impulsiveness made it impossible for him to reflect on the consequences of his actions, and implying that

William's lack of restraint was part of a pattern of behavior that prevented him from making correct decisions.

Other animals that were placed in the borders may be construed as satirical asides similar to rebus in the manner of their assemblage. It seems that animals performing specific actions were utilized to incite medieval observers to respond in a manner favorable to a propagandistic agenda hostile to William. There are a number of animals that preen their feathers or clean their coat to indicate the contentment of the individuals they were probably meant to symbolize. A few animals in the process of preening seem to express Edward's and Harold's satisfaction after their first meeting (Scenes 1, 2 and 3), and a bird that proudly holds a worm in its beak is probably used to hint at Harold's belief that he had finally succeeded in getting a hold on the English succession (Scene 3). It seems likely that other preening animals symbolize Guy's contentment after he captured Harold, and held him for ransom (Scene 9). However, if the observer is to believe the brand of history that is being expressed in the Tapestry, the most self-satisfied individual is William, who is mocked and satirized copiously by the preening animals. Indeed, the greatest number of preening animals serves to convey William's pleasure: at being able to get hold of Harold (Scene 10), and at forcing him into swearing a solemn oath (Scene 23); when the decision was made to build the invasion fleet (Scene 35); when he prepared to depart for England (Scene 37); while he feasted before the final battle (Scene 43); and finally, when he held the papal pennant to prove himself righteous in the eyes of the whole Christian world (Scene 47).

In other instances, it is probable that animals were made to bite their feet, and bite or stuff their tails or wings between their jaws or in their beaks to indicate that a gaff had just been made or was about to be made in the center field, or to hint at the need for vocal restraint. Again, through various animals engaged in the above described activities, the person, who seems to have been the most involved in making gaffes or in attempting to restrain his tongue, was Harold (Scenes 2, 6, 14, 21, 24, 30). The most telling animals are those that are held or caught by the wing, the tail, or the neck, perhaps to suggest the detainment or constraints imposed on one of the major participants. Birds with one wing caught (Scene 2) foreshadow or confirm Harold's detainment, first by Guy (Scene 9), then by William (Scene 17). By their strategic placements, birds continue to demonstrate Harold's predicament, especially the bird with its head caught behind a diagonal bar

adorned with zigzags (Scene 29), which leaves no doubt about the perplexing situation into which Harold will fall when he accepts the crown presented to him. A lion, facing yet another bird caught by the neck in a *situation sécante* above the disembarking Normans, may suggest that Harold was forced to be somewhere else, in this case fighting Tostig and Harald at Stamford Bridge; and, because the bird is caught by the neck, to imply that Harold's absence was beyond his control. A winged lion and a plain lion (Scene 19), caught respectively by their hind legs and tail, as though to curb their attempts to run away, were probably depicted in this manner to disparage William by questioning his courage. Indeed, the *situation sécante* of these two beasts seems to imply that William was busy elsewhere and did not participate in the actual fighting in which his men were involved against Conan and his Bretons.

As well as common, unique, or rarely represented animals, mythical beasts and animals that may be construed as satirical asides because of variations in their appearances, placements, postures and actions, specific animals were also utilized to represent single individuals. Thus, old, heraldic looking lions seem to have been the sole metaphors for Edward, winged lions for William, and dragons, the emblem of Wessex, for Harold. The presence of Edward, who otherwise appears in human form in Scenes 1, 25, and 27-28, is suggested through the old lions (Scenes 1, 24, 48, 57). Likewise, the old lions probably represent Edward, when it is necessary to re-establish the root cause of the epic, i.e., Edward's Byzantine foreign politics, his frivolous promises of the throne to various pretenders, and his probable desire to find a release from his alleged promise to William. Indeed, Edward's need to find a way out of his promise to William is suggested by the placement of the old lion above Scene 1, and by the old lion's posture and actions against a striped post, an element of bastardry, while in the main field of Scene 1, Edward is toying with Harold by entrusting him with a mission which probably included finding an elegant and clever way out of his (Edward's) present dilemma, and, at the same time, playing a trick on William. Perhaps to suggest the nefarious influence that the so-called saintly King Edward had on England's destiny, and to remind the audience of the root cause of the epic, two heraldic-looking lions loom over Scene 24, in which Harold's boat sails back to England after the oath scene and Harold's fiasco in Normandy. Almost identical lions peer at the audience from the border below Scene 48, in which William and his pro-Norman mercenaries leave the fort at Hastings for the final encounter with

Harold. And two similar lions seem to be grinning approvingly from above, immediately after Harold was ignominiously put to death (Scene 57).

William's presence may be implied through the winged lions, even when physically absent from the scene. In Scene 10, the winged lions are strategically poised just before Guy de Ponthieu meets William's envoys. It is likely that this choice of placement and the actions of the winged lions suggest William's and Guy's combined attempts to find an adequate way to rid themselves of Harold. In Scene 16, winged lions seem to suggest William's presence among his fighting men at the start of the Brittany Campaign. In Scene 18, winged lions, howling lustily, perhaps to entice the Norman knights to fight, may imply that William did not participate in the actual fighting, but was present in the battle only vicariously. In Scene 19, winged lions are displayed above William's name in the inscriptions, even though William is nowhere near, perhaps to insinuate that William was there in name only, and that he remained somewhere on the fringe when the actual fighting was taking place. In Scene 20, paired winged lions are yawning, as though the fight was boring and victory over the Bretons was assumed from the very beginning. These royal predators seem to go a step further in portraying William as a ruthless and uncaring leader, who did not even appear to be interested enough in the Bretons' surrender to be present when it occurred. At the beginning of the scene of the oath (Scene 23), winged lions, placed directly above William, bite the tips of one of their wings, perhaps alluding to William's impatience to complete the ceremony and send Harold on his way, with the prospect of using Harold's oath as a further testimony to his (William's) right to succeed Edward on the English throne. Above Scene 26, it seems likely that the two mocking and aggressive winged lions above Edward's bier indicate that William was indifferent to Edward's passing, and was continuing to engage in some major taunting actions against Harold, who had become his nemesis.

Below Scene 35, the placement of the two winged lions below William, Odo, and the Norman who is about to execute William's order, suggests once more that their symbolism is linked to William and to the individuals, who, by birth or by choice, were connected to him (William). Their black coloring was probably picked to express the dark forebodings that moved all of those connected with the invasion of England, and to direct the attention of restless post-Conquest magnates and courtiers toward the uneasy peace and the troubles that originated with William's reign. Below Scene 38, paired

winged lions seem to bide their time patiently as the two animals wait for William's stallion to climb on board one of the vessels about to sail for England. Above Scene 40, after William reached England, two deformed, black-winged lions (the right one being a modern restoration) were probably used as mnemonic devices to remind the audience that the looting below was the direct result of William's warped decision to invade England, which decision was made in Scene 35. Paired winged lions rests majestically above the banquet taking place below (Scene 43). The differences in their sizes, physical appearances, positions, and actions seem to have definite implications for an understanding of the pictographs and their interactions with the main field. It is likely that the smaller, bi-colored winged lion on the left, with its head turned to the rear to bite one of its wings, was meant to imply a disturbing duality in the inner being of William, above whom it hovers, and to suggest turmoil and hesitancy in William's comportment while he made ready for the final combat with Harold. Conversely, the large, light-colored winged lion on the right, portrayed in a majestic, tranquil pose directly above Odo and his younger brother, Robert de Mortain, seems to suggest a lack of inner qualms, and a clear conscience. Above Scene 48a, in which William receives the stallion sent by the King of Spain, two winged lions have assumed a combative attitude. The lion on the right, lacking ears, implies a deficiency in the comportment of this beast, perhaps insinuating William's unwillingness to listen to advice. The last recognizable winged lions in the Tapestry, which happen to have deformed heads resembling those of griffins, are represented in the lower border straddling the demarcation between Scenes 49 and 50, a pivotal point at the beginning of the battle, when William is informed and perhaps sees firsthand that Harold has not only arrived at Hastings, but that Harold's army managed to beat William's to the top of the hill, later known as Battle Hill.

Until and including Scene 11, it seems that William's presence and his quality as a royal pretender is suggested only through the depiction of lions and winged lions in the borders. After Scene 12, various types of animal pictographs may have been used to qualify William's character, personality and actions. Thus, while the lion continues to suggest William's role as a royal pretender to the English throne, because of their placements, the griffins (Scenes 7, 8, 14, 49/50, 52, 55) may have implied William's aggressiveness and avarice; the rams (Scene 12) were probably used as a means to expose William's determination to get what he wanted, even through coercion; the camel (Scene

13), to indicate William's brooding and rancorous nature when faced with the equally hostile and vindictive Guy, a former enemy whom William reduced into vassalage; the striped eagle (Scene 38), to remind the audience of , and satirize William, the proud leader, for his bastardly origins; and, starting in Scene 44, the numerous dogs included in the borders qualify William and his men, the invaders, as low born *canailles*, "the rabble of miserable curs" mentioned by Guillaume de Poitiers.²⁰ In addition, besides the possibility that the peacock plays a role in a fable, it may also have been placed above Scene 14 to hint at William's pride and pretensions.

Among the specific animals whose symbolism is dedicated to one person, the dragons play an important role as signifiers for Harold, the "dragon of Wessex." Harold appears in the guise of a dragon, first in the central field of Scene 7, then repeatedly in the borders. Through the dragons' placements, postures, and actions, one is made aware of Harold's status and state of mind at various points in the epic. Thus, when Harold is about to be captured (Scene 7), the dragon is caged within the frame of a pro-Norman shield; its tail is tied indicating its inability to strike back and it is biting one of its wings as though Harold was realizing the mistake he had just made by landing in the wrong place. Dragons with loosened tails seem ready to jump off the two shields of William's messengers who are coming to demand Harold's release in Scene 11. When Guy is about to hand Harold over to William (Scene 13), the dragons' tails are untied and the dragons are spewing fire from both ends, perhaps to suggest the pent up resentment that Harold believed he could soon release. When, as a virtual prisoner, Harold is coerced into participating in the Brittany Campaign (Scene 16), the dragons' tails are tied once more, and the beasts are flapping their wings and blowing fire angrily, but only out of their mouths, probably to suggest Harold's anger at being unable to extricate himself from William's clutches. In the lower border of Scene 18, a lone, forlorn dragon, with its head bent in submission and its tail tied, seems to indicate Harold's utter powerlessness and forced compliance during the Brittany Campaign. Two dragons hover over Scene 22, the scene immediately before Harold swears the fateful oath to William. With their tails tied and their mute vociferous cries, the dragons seem to express Harold's anger at being cornered into performing an act to which he had no intention to subscribe. Two other dragons, represented below Scene 39, in which William and his followers are landing in England, are spewing fire angrily from their mouths, as they stretch out their untied tails.

The fully functional dragons, breathing fire from both ends, were probably meant to suggest Harold's intent to resist and fight back the invaders.

Besides being represented by dragons, Harold, the prime figure in the first part of the Tapestry (Scenes 1 through 15), appears in human guise, as well as metaphorically under the guise of regal animals (lions, eagles). It is also likely that less than regal animals (dogs) represent Harold, perhaps to convey his plebeian origins, the disreputable aspects of his character and personality, and/or the disgraceful part(s) of some of his actions.

Through the above mentioned elements of design, I have illustrated the possibility that variations in the physical appearances, poses and actions of the lions and the other beasts were not random, but meaningful, often adding a piquant comment. It seems that a rigorous process was followed, such as handpicking animals whose symbolism emphasized the defects, flaws and "sins" of each participant, and /or commented on particular events, with either mocking, satirizing or disparaging insinuations. My analysis shows that placements/ positions, postures/stances, and/or gestures/actions of the figures, both in the main field and the borders, were employed to suggest latent meaning(s) which a contemporary audience was probably able to capture. Thus, when William gives arms to a reluctant Harold in Scene 21, a lion with full lips is biting its tail directly below William. Besides the fact that in their natural state, lions do not have lips, much less large ones, the fact that, in medieval art, liars and hypocrites were often endowed with exaggerated lips, seems to convey the idea that William (lion with lips) was acting in bad faith towards Harold in order to further his right to the English throne when he knew that he had no legal right to it.²¹

The dog with crossed front legs, portrayed directly above William raising the frontal of his helmet in Scene 55, falls into a similar category. Besides using the symbolism of the *canis*, here as in other parts of the borders, to qualify William as being a low-born *canaille*, i.e., a dishonest person, the crossed front legs of this particular *canis* were probably used to reiterate the inference, already conveyed by the lion with full lips, that William was a hypocrite, i.e., someone other than the blameless individual he pretended to be; and that he wavered before making a decision, and relied exceedingly on the advice of others. Thus, to place a *canis* in a pose suggesting hesitation directly above William in the process of revealing his face to his men, who feared they had lost their

leader, especially when it is known that William was receiving the contradictory advice to proceed (from Odo) and to withdraw (from Eustacius), was probably meant as a deleterious comment directed solely at William.

To remind the audience of Edward's and Harold's agreement and to satirize its meaning, two beasts, neither wholly dogs nor lions but a combination of both, with heads and paws touching were inserted in the upper border of Scene 4. As well, two animals resembling dogs, with their tails between their hind legs, sharing a paw shake, i.e., another sign of acquiescence between two cowardly, smirking poltroons were placed above Scene 14, in which William and Harold met formally for the first time and may have arrived at some sort of agreement concerning the English succession. Besides being another detrimental comparison of William and Harold with *canailles*, I am of the opinion that the two sneering, cowardly beasts were positioned at the end of the formal meeting between William and Harold to suggest that each believed he had the upper hand, but that in reality, they had only succeeded in duping each other.

To indicate the forced companionship between William and Harold as they make their way to Brittany (Scene 16), two carrion birds, i.e., vultures with touching wings were inserted directly above William, whose accoutrement adorned with *diversitas* is another potential mark of his bastardry. Because of their placement, solely above William, the vultures probably implied that the Brittany campaign was the direct result of the duke's rapacity and greed.

Besides the paired animals that are touching each other in some way, the largest assemblage of linked beasts that may be found in the borders of the Tapestry belongs to the lower border of Scene 18, in which single-handedly Harold saves the lives of two Norman soldiers. Running counter to the action in the main field, this series of figures, which includes a centaur, a hyena, an eagle, and a wolf linked to a prone man who is spewing out a snake (which the man is trying to kill with a type of sword), was probably meant to illustrate and qualify Harold's predicament at William's hands. It is likely that William's duplicity is exemplified by the symbolism of the centaur. William's almost pathological need to appear noble, led him to pretend to act as a disinterested party, even when greed for land, power and wealth were his only motivating factors. William was willing to "eat at any trough" to achieve his ends (hyena). Edward's (eagle) abandonment of his purported promise to William (wolf), led this cruel, ruthless leader

(William) to grab Harold and hold him in a debilitating position (prostrate man) of enforced obedience. As guest/prisoner, Harold was obliged to fight on William's side during the Brittany Campaign. While Harold may have been wondering how to escape this predicament, the eels/snakes coming out of his mouth, and his attempt to grab and kill one of them, go a long way to allude to the words that were about to escape from his mouth when he was forced to swear an oath to William, and to the terrible consequences of the utterances that he was unable to take back.

Beyond this point in the Tapestry, no other animals are represented as touching or biting each other. However, two donkeys facing each other above Scene 51 are linked by a rope which they hold between their clenched teeth. It is my opinion that by continuing to pair the pictographs in the borders with the general movement of the narrative from left to right, both leaders were satirized by being depicted as coarse and stupid, via the two asses and a common link (rope). Likewise, the differences between the colors and facial appearances of these two beasts seem to suggest that William (symbolized by the satisfied, grinning tan donkey in the upper border above pro-Norman mercenaries and the allies that he sent to fight for his cause) is satisfied to be winning the tug of war with his long-time adversary, Harold, the somber, and reluctant donkey whose fate depends on him (William).

Besides and beyond the inanimate objects, the various elements of design and the varied animals, both commonly represented or unique, a total of three sets of naked figures, both male and female, and two nude men in various states of excitement were introduced in the borders of the Tapestry. Dismissed in the past as examples of "*luxuria*," or made to conform to a specific mode of modern thinking, or simply ignored, these figures are endowed with their own symbolism that is related to the individuals portrayed in the main field. Indeed, at a time when the notion of "private space" was almost non-existent, the portrayal of naked male and female figures, even sexually aroused males, did not have the impact it later acquired, and was probably used, not to titillate, but to impart the symbolic meaning that the figures and their actions signified. If one follows McNulty's contention, regarding the naked pair below Scene 13, that "Harold should be associated with a defenseless naked woman," the over-stimulated man would symbolize William and William's desire to "screw" Harold.²² However, I am of the opinion that the placement of William and Harold, their postures and gestures vis-à-

vis each other and the main field of Scene 13, seem to imply that Harold, who was undoubtedly angered by his unjust detention at Guy's hands, may have felt an overwhelming desire to "screw" William out of his so-called "promised inheritance," since Harold probably never intended to give up the power and wealth that he acquired while serving as *sub-regulus* to Edward.

Below Scene 14, a naked male involved in manual labor may have been a way to remind the audience that Harold's ancestors were commoners who worked with their hands. Other elements of Scene 14, i.e., the jackdaw in the fable of *The Peacock and the Jackdaw*, the placement, postures and gestures of the participants in the main field, and Harold's straddling over two spaces, one inhabited by a lion, the other by the naked working man, demonstrate the satiric ingenuity of the patron and/or of the designer in portraying Harold's desire to pretend that he is regal, and Harold's reluctance at being reminded that his ancestors were commoners who had shown that they had the "balls" to become leaders.

Another nude, whose posture is a mirror image of the clothed figure of a cleric in the main field, was placed below Scene 15. Both are performing sexually potent gestures. Yet, in the case of the naked man, the flaccidity of his sexual organ proves that he is far from excited by the lady Aelfgyva, who is floating above the ground line as a reminder that this event occurred in the past. The arrangement and contents of this scene may have been a way of suggesting that someone's impotence, perhaps Cnut's, and the adulterous conduct of one of his queens with a cleric, which may have facilitated the crisis of succession after Cnut's death, was a prelude to the current state of affairs, and that a similar crisis could engulf England once more after the death of Edward, the childless king, if the right heir was not chosen to rule.²³ Since the enclosure in which this nude is contained touches one end of William's hall, it is probable that Scene 15 was part of William's and Harold's discussion about the English succession.

Towards the end of the Tapestry, two sets of nudes separated only by a pair of geese were introduced in the upper border of Scene 48b. My analysis of Scene 48b and its borders leads me to believe that McNulty's and Caviness' solution to lump the two pairs of nudes together, and to equate the nudity of the two women figures with Harold's weakness, and, in the case of Caviness, to the custom of Scandinavian warriors as a way to insult their enemies, is neither sufficient not sustainable.²⁴ After my analysis of the

two pairs, I believe that it is necessary to analyze the two sets separately before arriving at an understanding of their combined symbolism. Because of its placement vis-à-vis William's advance from left to right, I am of the opinion that the androgynous/nubile female is emblematic of William, who was known for his fidelity to his wife, Mathilda. William's well-known lack of interest in sex outside marriage may have been a tool used to persuade William's contemporaries, who equated fidelity with lack of virility, to question William's ability to rule. In the same vein, I posit that the mustachioed male with large, darkly outlined testicles, who is carrying the typical Anglo-Saxon axe, is a personification of Harold who was known for his sexual prowess. In the early medieval period, the lantern that this man is carrying may have symbolized the light that guided the souls of the dead to their eternal rewards. It seems that faced with the prospect of fighting William, Harold demonstrated his readiness to fight (axe), his courage (balls), and accepted the possibility that he might die (lantern), or conversely, that this lantern may be used to guide William's soul to the netherworld.

Because of the differences in their depictions, i.e., changes in the positioning of the figures, changes in their appearance, and lack of extraneous objects carried by the male figure of the second pair, it is impossible to lump together the two pairs of nudes, as McNulty and Caviness have done. In both cases, the male figures are placed next to the geese to suggest that they are the main focus of these psychopompic messengers. The second male figure has lost his "balls," i.e., his courage, and he is now faced with a formidable, fully endowed female. I believe that, via the fable of *The Swallow and the Birds* (Scene 10), William had already been compared to the lowly flax plant, which, if allowed to grow, would destroy those (the birds) who could have destroyed it when it was still weak. Thus, this second nude female may be equated with William, who had evolved from a lowly bastard son of a Duke (symbolized by the nubile, androgynous female in the first set of nudes), and in a few short years, had managed to become the feared and powerful leader (the formidable, endowed female in the second set of nudes) who was about to face Harold (the "ball-less" male figure), already weakened by the Battle at Stamford Bridge and the subsequent hard riding to reach Hastings. It is obvious that the use of female imagery and the "ball-less" male figure were masterful ways to satirize William and Harold. In addition, the nudes above Scene 48b invite a comparison with those below Scene 13. However, in the case of 48b, the lack of overt sexual

excitement led me to conclude that the time was past when Harold felt a formidable desire to “screw” William.

Finally, the most condensed and most informative gloss, as well as the most expressive commentary on the qualities and especially on the flaws of the main participants may be found in the fables and the iterations of fables. Starting with Scene 4, several fables were introduced in the marginal area provided by the borders. Odo, the almost universally acknowledged patron of the Tapestry, was probably well aware that fables had been used since antiquity to divulge, and showcase without fear, particular character flaws, and evil acts of specific individuals whose power, wealth and influence had led them to believe that they were above the law, and, therefore, resorted to following their own appetites. In the case of the Bayeux Tapestry, circumstantial evidence, provided by the placement/location, posture/position, and gestures/actions of the pictographs in the border vis-à-vis the figures in the main field, and the movement of the narrative, indicates that the symbolism of the animal pictographs found in each fable is germane to the epic; that it helps establish the framework of the story and foretells its evolution; that it helps fine tune and emphasize the character and personality flaws of the main participants, i.e., Edward, William, and Harold, thus mocking, satirizing, and even disparaging them with trenchant qualifiers; and that the moral drawn from each fable is appropriate to the various situations in which the major actors in the unraveling drama find themselves. A thorough examination of the fables also points to the conclusion that the fables are so organized as to increase in crescendo and intensity the revelation of the main participants’ genuine defects and “sins,” which seem to have been picked with particular care, perhaps in order to expound unobtrusively the patron’s personal propagandistic agenda. It is manifest that the character, personality and actions of the main participants, i.e., Edward, William, and Harold, as well as those of minor figures, such as Guy de Ponthieu, were derided with impunity by the types of animals, their symbolic meanings, and the morals of the fables in which these animals play a role.

Keeping these parameters in mind, there is ample circumstantial evidence to conclude that, with the help of *The Fox and the Crow*, William was successfully exposed as a cunning flatterer (fox), who was not adverse to use any means at his disposal, including fulsome praises and lies, to obtain the English crown (cheese); and Harold (crow), as a vain and gullible man, easily swayed by flattery. The fable of *The Wolf and*

the Lamb may have gone one step further by focusing on the results of William's harsh upbringing which taught him to be deceitful and cruel (as recorded in historical chronicles), and on Harold's (lamb) gullibility and guilelessness (which is also documented) when faced with the formidable William (wolf). Likewise, the illustration of the fable of *The Pregnant Bitch*, provided a surreptitious way to point out that William (dog facing the bitch in the house), always the devious opportunist, was a patient man waiting for the right excuse to boot Harold and his family (bitch and its litter) out of the seat of power, thereby gaining control of England. Moreover, *The Wolf and the Crane* seems to insist on Harold's (crane) gullibility, by portraying that Harold (crane) believed one should abide by his word, which resulted in his (Harold's) own failure to recognize the extent of William's (wolf) deceit when he (Harold) was in Normandy.

The Lion King offered another avenue to qualify Edward, William and Harold. According to this fable, despite Edward's (the old lion king) warning Harold about William's cunning and cruelty, Harold (monkey) may have tried to convince William (wolf) that his plans to become the next king of England were groundless. However, Harold ("ball-less" ape) lacked the necessary courage to confront William (wolf) then and there, and outwit him. When Harold finally succeeded in mustering the strength to fight back, it was too late, and William destroyed him (wolf ate the ape).

With *The Eagle, the Mouse And the Frog*, another figure and another twist is added to the story. This fable suggests that while William (eagle) rules in Normandy, Harold (mouse) is just an interloper, a victim who is caught by the deceitful Guy as he (Harold) lands on the Continent; and that he (Harold) does not know how to survive in an environment so foreign to him, and is finally swallowed up by his enemies. However, Guy realizes too late that he is completely out of his league when he deals with William. Like Harold, Guy, who had recently become William's vassal, was also "devoured" in the process. Indeed, the fable of *The Goat that Sang* hints at the fact that, in spite of his desire for revenge, Harold's (goat) victory was to be short lived. The first time, Harold (goat) escaped from Guy (wolf), but, as the repeat of this fable demonstrates, a better prepared wolf (William) was not about to let him escape a second time.

The use of the fable of *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, presents another aspect of the continuing saga. William (lion) promised rich rewards to his motley crew of allies and mercenaries (the cow, the ewe and the goat) to entice them

to follow him in hunting Harold (the hart). However, as the moral of this fable discloses, William (lion) proved less than eager to share the spoils, which angered his followers. Although legends soon surrounded Harold with a mystique he lacked during his life, his demise was an accepted fact among knights and courtiers. The fable of *The Lion and the Stag* foreshadows a known event, i.e., Harold's final destruction at the hands of William's knights on the battlefield at Hastings. Thus, it is possible that the reason why *The Swallow and the Birds* (Scene 10) did not follow the other fables immediately, was to place it directly below the nomen *WILLELMI* in the inscription, in order to associate this fable more closely with William (the flax, a lowly plant that can grow and be made into an instrument of destruction). By using this stratagem, the audience was reminded of words similar to those that Eadmer believed Edward (the swallow) uttered to Harold prior to his departure for Normandy, i.e., that if one allowed the cunning, cruel, deceitful, yet patient, William to grow more powerful, like the lowly flax plant, he would grow into the very instrument that would destroy the conceited, gullible, guileless, and incredulous Harold (the bird) and his followers.

While not universally acknowledged as a fable, the two vain birds above Scene 14 probably represent *The Peacock and the Jackdaw*, a fable that befits the scene of Harold's formal reception by William. Indeed, the choice of birds, a proud peacock to symbolize William, and a lowly jackdaw as a metaphor for Harold, satirizes the two opponents. Ultimately, the fable was probably used to expose William's (peacock) pride, class consciousness, and snobbery, as well as the pretensions of the lowly Harold (jackdaw), who is made to realize the fragility of his position.

Two pigeons, which may be an abbreviated rendering of the fable of *The Two Pigeons*, were inserted partially above the enigmatic Scene 15. This area of the Tapestry seems appropriate for this fable which sums up Harold's adventures and anticipates his desire. After leaving Edward, Harold ran afoul of the *canaille* Guy (hawk), was saved momentarily by a royal predator in the person of William (eagle), and, barely escaping with his life, a spiritually battered, and, as the fable goes, wiser Harold returned to England and Edward.

Through a careful analysis, I have also explained the possibility that a few fables were reiterated with variations in their illustrations to indicate and forewarn the audience about major changes occurring in the main field, and/or forewarn the viewer/reader about

the imminent occurrence of ills predicted in previous representations of the same or a similar fable. Thus, five fables are repeated, i.e., *The Fox and the Crow*, *The Pregnant Bitch*, *The Wolf and the Crane*, *The Goat that Sang*, and *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, which the patron probably conflated with *The Lion's Share*, to obtain a result similar to changing the placement, postures, and/or gestures of the animal figures, as he had done in iterations of other elements such as paired animal pictographs and sets of nudes.

The fable of *The Fox and the Crow* is represented three times perhaps in order to apprise the viewer/reader of the changes in the situations of the opponents: below Scene 4, to suggest that the throne of England is still up for grabs; below Scene 16, to indicate that William believed he had finally received the coveted crown, after his formal meeting with Harold, where the fate of England was probably discussed and the two leaders apparently came to an agreement after William forced Harold to accompany him on the Brittany Campaign; and above Scene 24, to illustrate that Harold had the crown firmly in hand, after he had escaped from William's clutches, leaving an irate William waiting in Normandy.

The fable of *The Pregnant Bitch* is illustrated twice. Always keeping in mind the importance of the movement of the narrative and the opponents, in its first rendition below Scene 4, this fable probably suggests that under Edward's auspices, Harold, the *sub-regulus*, is well ensconced in England, and that William is the interloper waiting patiently for a chance to intervene and dislodge Harold and his relatives. In its second rendition below Scene 51, the fable seems to indicate that the tables are turned, William has invaded the territory of Harold, the newly anointed king of England, and Harold is advancing post-haste to attempt to dislodge him.

The Wolf and the Crane is also represented twice. Following the same parameters, the first version of the fable probably suggests that Harold's agreement to help Edward disentangle himself from the promise he had made to William sent him (Harold) directly into the wolf's (William) mouth, and therefore, Harold (crane) was lucky to escape with his life. In the second version, the movement of the crane's right wing seems to allude to the oath used by Harold (crane) to escape intact from William's (wolf) grasp; at the same time, it is probably poking fun at William, who believed himself

to be so cunning, yet, finds himself fooled by Harold, the very man whom he attempted to disenfranchise.

The two depictions of *The Goat that Sang* differ only in the final outcome. In the first rendition, the audience learns that through Harold's superior wit, and probably with the help of the unseen Edward, whom William could not contravene if he wanted his claim to the English throne to be taken seriously, Harold (goat) managed to get away from William (wolf) the first time. However, in the second illustration above Scene 51, the fable warns the audience that Harold (goat) will not be so lucky, and that he will realize too late that he needed help. According to historical records, William and his adviser, Lanfranc, devised a shrewd diplomatic plan and succeeded in garnering the support of Pope Alexander II, and, through alliances, promises, and veiled threats, minimized the resistance of other European leaders to his invasion plan. In the meantime, Harold, who was busy at home with defections and the betrayal of his brother Tostig, and who believed that he was the rightfully chosen and elected king of England, could not fathom how any legitimate leader would interfere with his election, not even William, and hence, failed to seek and make alliances, which failures contributed to his demise at Hastings.

While the animals in the *The Lion's Share* differ from those in *The Lion Hunting with the Cow, the Ewe and the Goat*, the morals are similar. With these two fables, the viewer/reader is forewarned that one should never trust a leader who makes promises that, because of his position of strength, his predatory nature and his avarice, he has no intention to fulfill. This fable was probably meant to be used as a mnemonic cue to bring to the attention of a post-Conquest audience William's frailties and despicable deportment toward the many vassals, allies and mercenaries whom he called to his support for the invasion of England, and whom he managed to persuade with the promise of loot and land, but never fully recompensed.

Through a painstaking analysis of the pictographs in the borders, in connection with the main field and the inscriptions, I have achieved the goal that I set out to accomplish at the beginning of my dissertation. Using the Bayeux Tapestry's own testimony, the evidence provided by historical records, and relying on the "general condition of rational human action, which I posit[ed] in the course of arranging my circumstantial facts," I have come to the conclusion that every part of the Tapestry, i.e.,

main field, inscriptions and border, plays a role in determining its meaning, and that the symbolism of the pictographs in the borders inflects, reflects and modulates the meaning of the images in the central, narrative field.²⁵ I have also concluded that the interchange and synergy between these three fields have opened new avenues toward a novel understanding and interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry.

¹ Gameson (1997): 159-160.

² René Alleau, *La science des symboles* (1977): 21.

³ Partial translation of Alleau's statement.

⁴ Lewis (1999): 125.

⁵ Carruthers (2000): 41.

⁶ For arguments in favor of the Tapestry ending with the Anglo-Saxon rout, see Lewis (1999): 131-34; Musset (2002): 266; for the position that it ended with William's coronation, see Parris (1983): 38-40; 55; Brilliant (1988): 99; S. A. Brown and Herren (1997): 59, 66-67.

⁷ For the quote and for Edward's personality see above Chap. 8, 278 n. 53.

⁸ Keynes (1990): 173-205.

⁹ Barlow (1970): 107-08, 117; McLynn (1999): 75, 79.

¹⁰ Edward never forgave his mother. He deprived her of her wealth, giving her a paltry allowance instead, and keeping her at Winchester, away from court life and intrigues; see Frank Barlow, "Two Notes: Cnut's Second Pilgrimage and Queen Emma's Disgrace in 1043," *English Historical Review*, 73 (1958): 651-56.

¹¹ Freeman, 2 (1870): 280-86; Douglas (1964): 58-67; Bates (1982): 255-57; McLynn (1999): 86.

¹² Lewis (1999): 113, & n. 27.

¹³ Radulfus Glaber, France, ed. and trans. (1989): 164 -67; also in Geary (1994): 3.

¹⁴ Rowland (1973): 60-61, 66; Voisenet (2000): 75.

¹⁵ Thorpe, ed. (1973): 44.

¹⁶ For the symbolism of the ostrich, see above chap. 7, n. 29.

¹⁷ For the partridge and the quail, see Chap. 8, 321, n. 145, 146 and 147.

¹⁸ See Chap. 8, 321, n. 147.

¹⁹ For William Rufus, see esp. Zumthor (1978): 377.

²⁰ For the quote, see Guillaume de Poitiers, Thorpe, ed. (1973): 44.

²¹ see Garnier, 2 (1989): 95.

²² McNulty (1989): 38.

²³ See above Chap. 3, n. 114.

²⁴ McNulty (1989): 37-38, 76, 129.

²⁵ For the quote, see Baxandall (1985): 41.

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