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Cut on the Norman Bias; Fabulous Borders and Visual Glosses on the Bayeax Tapestry

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> ... the tendency of artists to breach the supposed boundaries between temporal and spatial arts is not a marginal or exceptional practice, but a fundamental impulse in both the theory and practice of the arts, one which is not confined to any particular genre or period.[2]

Harold Godwinson, King of England for nine months in 1066, was undeniably an assertive opportunist - albeit a brave one -and perhaps a traitor; Edward the Confessor was a misguided monarch -or at least a bad judge of character-and William of Normandy was a righteous conqueror, a ruler asserting his legal right to the English crown. This, at least, is the interpretation of historical events presented by the Bayeux Tapestry, the late eleventh-century embroidery that Otto Pacht has called the 'earliest work of secular art on a monumental scale which has survived from the Middle Ages.'[3] In this study, I posit an interpretative program that shows how the Tapestry's Norman bias was manifested and emphasized by its designer's intratextual, interactive use of imaginal marginalia, specifically the eight appearances of the Norman chevrons and the pictographs representing the Tapestry's nine Aesopic fables.[4] 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.

Before outlining and deploying my interpretative plan, I pause here to summarize quickly the events depicted in the main narrative panel for the reader unfamiliar with the historical events. This summary does not distinguish between 'subjective' and 'objective' representations of various images, nor does it take the Norman chevrons or parallel border panels into account.

I. Narrative Summary

A good percentage of the Tapestry's scenes represent historical events which are elaborated upon by the Tapestry's designer. I refer here to scenes like the one portraying Harold's oath-taking - his swearing allegiance to William on what appear to be Bayeux Cathedral's reliquaries;[6] the wonderfully prescient, foreboding depiction of Halley's Comet streaking over London and the townsfolk's reaction to it; and, finally, the still-controversial image of Harold, mortally wounded by an arrow in the eye.

The Bayeux Tapestry depicts the events leading up to and including the Norman Conquest of England, essentially covering the years 1064-66.[7] The three main characters in the drama are Edward the Confessor, King of England from 1042 to 1066; Harold Godwinson, King of England for a short time

in 1066, son of Earl Godwin and brother of Edward's Queen Edith; and William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy and King of England from 1066 to 1087. Also playing an important, albeit brief, role is Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Earl of Kent and William's half-brother.[8]

The story begins with Harold and Edward meeting at the king's palace before Harold's voyage to France. After this conference, the substance of which has been much disputed, Harold rides toward his home at Bosham for a *bon voyage* feast, stopping off at a church on the way,[9] He and his men set sail for France and are blown off course, landing at Ponthieu. There he is taken captive by Guy of Ponthieu and led to Beaurain, where he is held. Messengers bring news of this to William, who send to Guy two other messengers in order to secure Harold's freedom. Guy then leads the newly indebted Englishman to William, who meets them, dressed in all of his ducal splendour. Harold and William proceed together to the latter's palace in Rouen where they confer.

Following this comes the still-enigmatic scene labelled, 'UBI UNUS CLERICUS ET ÆLFGYVA',' in which a tonsured man suggestively touches the face of a lady who seems to smile.[10] William, Harold and their combined troops then ride for Britanny to do battle with Conan of Dol. On the way they pass a nicely rendered Mont St Michel, in front of which Harold rescues two men from the River Cousenon's (COSNONIS) quicksand. Conan escapes down a rope from his burning stronghold, and the combined Norman and English troops pursue him past an uninhabited Rennes to Dinan, where battle ensues. Conan surrenders the keys to the gates on the tip of his lance to William, who receives them in the same manner. William arms Harold (WILELM DEDIT HAROLDO ARMA), thus placing the English earl in 'a position of vassalage' to him (Wilson, p. 180). The scene shifts to Bayeux (BAGIAS), where Harold swears allegiance to the duke, each of his hands on one of the cathedral's reliquaries.[11]

Harold then sails for home and another meeting with Edward in 'late 1065' (Wilson, p. 182), whom he approaches in a posture of humility. The next section is to be read in reverse order, from right to left, and covers Edward's bestowal of the kingdom on Harold and the king's death.[12] Harold is offered the English CORONA REGIS, as he is informed of Edward's death, following which he is invested by Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury. In the succeeding scene Harold is shown seated on a shaky throne, listening to a messenger who provides him with 'secret intelligence' (Wilson, p. 182). While this transpires, Halley's Comet streaks portentously overhead, and a crowd of townspeople gaze up in wonder at the heavenly marvel. News of the coronation is taken across the Channel to William, who is shown seated in conference with Odo and another counselor.

A wonderfully constructed section of tree-felling, ship-building and provisioning follows, as the Normans set sail for Hastings.[13] A long stretch then chronicles the Normans' voyage to and landing in England, where they forage and hunt for the food later blessed by Odo at the feast.[14] Orders are given for the construction of a CASTELLUM with a Norman motte, an English house is razed while a woman and a small boy stand by and William prepares to mount his warhorse for battle. The remainder of the Tapestry treats the Battle of Hastings and the Norman victory over the English, who are shown at the end in full flight.[15]

I. I. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND READING PROGRAM[16]

> ... the meaning of one picture is not transferred to another, but rather both pictures are seen to express a single meaning when viewed sequentially or in combination -a meaning neither is capable of supporting in isolation. (Dane, p. *27)*[17]

The Bayeux Tapestry's Norman prejudice is not readily apparent and is not fully recoverable without energizing its five-part narrative schema, its complete 'pictorial syntax' (Dane, p.27). A systematic reading scheme, one incorporating all of its intratextual components, has not been offered by anyone writing on the bewildering variety of border panel images or on the nine Aesopic fables. In the two most extensive recent studies, both J. Bard McNulty and David Bernstein have posited reading theories. For example, Bernstein writes: ' ... 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' (p.7). Similarly, McNulty feels that a 'full understanding of the narrative art of the Tapestry requires a recognition of 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' (p. 3). Although each of these books outlines an interpretative schema somewhat like mine, neither fully implements it. McNulty's book -the most complete on the subject of the Tapestry's narrative intratextuality -gives a number of the fables short shrift, glossing over the more problematic ones (pp. 24 39 *passim).* Although Bernstein acknowledges that a comprehensive study is necessary, he says that such 'a full-scale study will have to await a different context ... ' (p. 128). This study provides both that 'context' and, with it, 'a full-scale study' of the Tapestry's intratextuality, one that weaves its multilevel construction into a more coherent, interactive narrative.

The interpretive program offered here is an analogic one in which the border images gloss the scenes in the main narrative panel.[18] This liminal system of the 224-foot by 15-18-inch (68-38 m X 45'7-53'6 cm) embroidery is quite complex. There are three sets of frames on the Tapestry, the first of which functions much like a standard picture frame: it is the outer line that surrounds the other two framing systems and the main panel. This rectangular box has vertical and horizontal elements, which would meet to form roughly right angles (figure 1)*.** (I say 'would meet' because the right edge of the Tapestry is missing, and thus the closing vertical bar is missing, leaving the right extremity open. As noted above, it therefore seems that one of the fleeing, defeated English soldiers rides off, quite literally, into space.) The second frame -the inner frame -is made up of the rectangular border that parallels the outer frame and contains within it the main narrative panel, the space in which the primary story is told by images and inscriptions. Bracketed by the inner and outer frames are the spaces of the border panels, which run the entire length of the Tapestry. The third set of frames is contained within these spaces and is demarcated by hundreds of paired trapezoids which enclose - among a host of flora and fauna -the Aesopic pictographs and the Norman chevrons. Between these diagonals, stylized vinous scrolls often appear, the design of which is reminiscent of the larger flora of the main panel.[19]

* Reproducing the entire textile here would be unnecessary and would require an inordinate amount of space. I have, therefore, provided at the end of this essay drawings of only the scenes most germane to my argument. These are numbered sequentially as they appear on the Tapestry, beginning with figure I, and are referenced in the usual way: (figure I). (I have provided Wilson's plate numbers in my captions for cross-referencing.) Since they follow the Tapestry's chronology, and since I have not reproduced it in its entirety, my figure numbers do not run sequentially through my text. This is done to maintain the chronological integrity of the narrative and to facilitate comparison of sequential plates. Throughout I have left quotations of the Latin inscriptions in upper case characters, as they are on the Tapestry, omitting only the colons that separate most of the words. These pen-and-ink drawings were done by Dottie Reed of Reed and Nichols, Drawings and Calligraphy, whose patience, good humour and artistic sensibilities have added immeasurably to this study.

The second frame, the inner border closest to the main panel, is the one most often transgressed. At times its upper segment is crossed, when, for example: Halley's Comet streaks ominously over the newly crowned Harold, when the Norman ships in full sail rush across the Channel, when various creatures break free of the upper panel constraints, or when the Latin inscriptions intrude there. Incursions occur from the bottom as well, either analogically, in the case of the fables, or literally, in the later scenes detailing the Battle of Hastings. There the lower inner border gives way completely and the carnage of battle spills out of the main panel space, filling the lower border panel. This inner frame, then, is by far the most significant divisional marker or framing element on the Tapestry.

The interaction between the Norman chevrons, the Aesopic pictographs and the main panel is the key to my interpretive program, which focuses on the main panel's narrative by engaging it through its pictorial, marginal glosses. As I have indicated, the border panels that enclose the fabulous images - the two outer frames - constitute two of its five narrative strands, the other three being these border panels' networks of intraconnected trapezoids, the 53 Latin inscriptions and, finally, the main panel itself. These strands are interwoven in a number of analogic ways: first, the lower panel's fable pictographs provide the viewer with a relatively systematic commentary upon the main panel, one which moralizes the actions of the main characters, Edward, Harold and William. Second, similar images from the fables in the upper border panel gloss events in the main narrative strip. These upper panel images are always tied to a fable that has first been illustrated in the lower panel. These recurrent images do not duplicate the originals, but illustrate different scenes from the same fables. Thus, it helps to have the first image in mind while decoding the second and while considering the fable's overall relevance to the main story. Third, the images within each border are at times intraconnected, creating expanded tales which gloss the main panel's story in more complicated moralizing ways. This occurs mainly in extended lower panel sections where, for example, the fable of 'The Lion Hunting with His Companions' (figures 6 and 7)* is continued by that of 'The Lion and the Stag' (figure 7)*. Intraconnections of this sort work in general thematic ways, in this instance by providing *exempla* of pursuit and capture which recur frequently in both upper and lower panels in locations apposite to the central one. Fourth, the Latin inscriptions provide a running guide to the essential plot. They can be read alone for a quick declarative summary of the story or in combination with the fables and the main panel for a composite, subjective interpretation that reveals the Tapestry's

Norman bias. The viewer is therefore presented with a multilayered narrative: the inscriptions can be read alone, even without the pictures; they can be read in conjunction with the main panel's images; or they can be read along with both the main panel and its two parallel border panels. Each time a layer is added, the tale becomes fuller and more complex.

Like most borders, the Tapestry's are most epistemologically compelling and most troublesome when violated: the tension inherent in any such arbitrary geometric system of separation is heightened when its integrity is compromised. These violations -like certain oddly postured fauna and suggestively placed flora within the border trapezoids -slow the viewer's progress and visually punctuate, as it were, the main narrative. At these moments the viewer's peripheral gaze is engaged, the narrative flow is retarded and isolated scenes or images are foregrounded, privileging them and their relationship to the Tapestry's main story. Indeed, it is difficult to read the central panel in isolation, since the border panels constantly pull the viewer's eye away from the central narrative. Nonetheless, the Tapestry's border lines do not separate the three panels from one another; rather, they encourage their own transgression by optically decentering the viewer's gaze and pulling it across themselves, as the main strip is followed from left to right.[20] In this way, the Tapestry's viewer is drawn into confrontations with its marginal images and is invited to conflate the three narrative strands, experiencing them simultaneously as mutually inclusive parts of its total narrative.

All of this is not to say that the Tapestry's story cannot be followed by focusing only on its central section; it is certainly possible to read its main narrative without reference to its fabulous borders, as the narrative summary above shows. In fact, this is precisely the way it was engaged until recently; the borders were largely excluded as interesting but irrelevant oddities, and the inscriptions were followed along with the main panel. However, when the literally marginal images are taken into account -when they are employed as exegetical tools -the central panel's tale of the Norman Conquest and Harold's treachery becomes fuller: less schematic, less puzzling and decidedly less reportorial.

I.II. THE SUCCESSION CONTROVERSY: HIC RESIDENT HAROLD REX ANGLORUM

Some historical background is necessary, and questions need answering, if we are to understand fully the events depicted on the Tapestry. Who was the rightful heir to Edward's English throne?[21] Was William of Normandy promised the throne in 1051 by his kinsman, Edward the Confessor? What right was Harold Godwinson granted in 1065 by Edward on his deathbed? How did these issues affect the Tapestry designer's Norman bias? These issues surrounding Harold's and William's claims to the throne of England will never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction; and here I sketch in just enough of the hazy picture to support my argument about the roles of the Norman chevrons and the fables.

While, as my interpretive schema will show, the Tapestry's Norman bias is readily apparent, it is also abundantly clear that Harold is not portrayed throughout as the villain.[22] In the main panel he is accorded the respect due an earl, and his heroic deeds are duly represented. For example, he pulls an Englishman and a Norman from the River Cousenon's quicksand, and he rides with William into battle against Conan II, Duke of Brittany, who surrenders his castle at Dinan to the troops. The Tapestry gives us no reason to assume that Harold acquitted himself in these instances in anything less than an

honorable manner.

Another picture emerges, however, if one reads the chronicles, the Tapestry's Norman chevrons and its border fables in conjunction with its main panel images: doing so makes clear that in his political relations with both Edward, his king, and William, Duke of Normandy, Harold was anything but honorable. His first loyalty was to Edward; but, as the Tapestry shows and as William of Malmesbury wrote, Harold made a 'covenant between himself and William' (Giles, p. 271). He accepted arms and English lands from the Norman duke and swore an oath of allegiance to William on the reliquaries of Bayeux Cathedral, where 'Harold ... performed fealty to [William] in respect of the kingdom with many oaths' *(English Historical Documents*, ii, p.229). R. Allen Brown has argued for this chronicler's trustworthiness: '[Guillaume de Jumièges] goes out of his way to assure us of the authenticity of his account -"as men perfectly sincere and trustworthy, who were witnesses of it, have related it" -and we should be unwise to ignore it, for contrary evidence there is none' ([1968], p. 129). Guillaume de Poitiers provided the oath that he believed Harold swore to William:

> ([i] that he would be the representative of duke William at the court of his [Harold's] lord, king Edward, as long as he [Edward] should live.
> [ii] that he would employ all his influence and resources to assure him [William] that possession of the English kingdom after the death of Edward.
> [iii] that he would meanwhile hand over to the custody of his [William's] knights the castle of Dover, fortified at his [Harold's] own effort and cost.
> [iv] that he would similarly hand over, amply provided with supplies, other castles in various parts of the land where the duke should order them to be fortified.) ([1968], pp. 129-30)[23]

Harold broke this covenant when he accepted the CORONA REGIS from the English on the day of Edward's death. The Tapestry depicts this, indicating the immediacy of Harold's acceptance by having the man who stands to the new king's right point to the death, enshrouding and burial of the Confessor (figure 15)*.

William's claim to the throne and Edward's Norman bias arose from their rather complicated common ancestry.[24] Richard I, Duke of Normandy's (942-96) children were Richard II, who succeeded him (996-1026), and Emma. Edward the Confessor, King of England (1042-66), was the son of this Emma and Ethelred II, King of England (987-1016). William, Duke of Normandy (1035-87) and later King of England (1066-87), was the bastard son of Herleve of Falaise and Robert I, Duke of Normandy (1027-35) and son of Richard ii. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049-90), was William's half-brother by virtue of Herleve of Falaise's marriage to Herlouin, vicomte of Conteville. So, three of the four main actors in the Bayeux Tapestry's narrative were descendants of Richard I: Edward the Confessor was his grandson, William the Conqueror his illegitimate great-grandson, and Odo of Bayeux his legitimate great-grandson. The fourth principal, Harold Godwinson, had no blood link to the English crown; he was, however, Edward the Confessor's brother-in-law.

Added to this genealogical link is the probability that Edward offered William the Bastard the crown of England in 1051, in order to assure the crown a successor and to protect it from Northern

invaders. Such nominations were the custom, since there was no codified system of primogeniture in England during this time:

> … in the 11th century the English throne, even when there were eligible male heirs, was not passed on in any such strict order as primogeniture. The reigning king would designate his successor, usually the most suitable from the royal family, and the nominee would be 'elected' or 'recognized' by the leading nobles in the land. (Bernstein, p. 120)[25]

William certainly would have qualified as 'the most suitable from the royal family' on the basis of his ancestry, not to mention his remarkable martial accomplishments in his own duchy of Normandy.[26]

Both primary Norman chroniclers discussed the nomination; first, Guillaume de Jumièges:

> Edward, king of the English, being according to the dispensation of God, without an heir, sent Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, to the duke with a message appointing the duke as heir to the kingdom which God had entrusted to him. He also at a later time sent to the duke, Harold the greatest of all the counts in his kingdom alike in riches and honour and power. This he did in order that Harold might guarantee the crown to the duke by his fealty and confirm the same with an oath according to the English usage. *(English Historical Documents,* ii, p. 228)[27]

Guillaume de Poitier's chronicle is more concise:

> About the same time, Edward, King of the English, who loved William as a brother or son, established him as his heir with a stronger pledge than ever before… . He therefore dispatched Harold to William in order that he might confirm his promise by an oath. *(English Historical Documents,* II, p. 231)

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that this upset the Godwins, who were then among the most powerful and influential of English families (Stenton, Anglo-Saxon, pp.576-77).[28] As if Edward's offer of the crown to William were not enough, the king in 1051 ordered the Godwins into battle against their own
subjects, whom Edward's brother-in-law, Eustace II of Boulogne, along with his troops, had abused on their way back home to France:

> Then Earl Godwine was indignant that such things should happen in his earldom, and he began to gather his people from all over his earldom, and Earl Swein his son did the same all over his, and Harold his other son over all his. And they all assembled in Gloucestershire and Langtree, a great and innumerable force all ready to do battle unless Eustace were surrendered and his men handed over to them, as well as the Frenchmen who were in the castle. (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 'D' pp. 119-20)[29]

Following this uprising, Earl Godwin and his supporters were exiled 'by a coalition of his opponents headed by the king himself (Stenton, *Tapestry*, p. 12). With the earl and his men out of the country, Edward had a prime opportunity to secure for William the Norman succession he desired. These hopes

were dashed, however, in the following year when Earl Godwin and his sons returned with a vengeance, forcing 'the expulsion of many Normans who had lately received places at court and official positions in the country from King Edward' (Stenton, *Tapestry,* p. 12). This brief chronicle brings us to the year 1064, one year before Edward's death and the next date of importance for this study of the Bayeaux Tapestry. 1064 is the year in which the Tapestry's events commence, the year in which we come upon Harold Godwinson and King Edward the Confessor in deliberate conference.

II. UBI HAROLD SACRAMENTUM FECIT WILLELMO DUCI: HAROLD'S TREACHERY EMBLEMATIZED

In the Tapestry's first scene (figure 1)*, the viewer sees that most of the heraldic-looking creatures in the upper and lower border panels face each other and fit well within their diagonal frames.[30] These instances of pictorial balance indicate, by association, moments of harmony in the main story panel. When such symmetry is present the eye is not jarred, nor is the attention distracted in any significant way: the viewer can comfortably scan the Tapestry, relying upon peripheral vision to take in what are essentially decorative border panel images. This is borne out in the main panel's first scene: Edward confers confidently with Harold and another man. There is nothing in the scene itself which indicates the subject of their conference, only that the king - whose large size speaks to his importance - is dominant and that he and Harold are deep in conversation.[31] Their dialogue surely concerns the grant of succession Edward made to William. It is, after all, 1064, the Tapestry's opening scene, and history records that after the meeting Harold embarked upon his ultimately fateful voyage to France.

In the next scene the viewer quickly senses that all is not well, temporal progression is delayed and the seemingly harmonious talc is quickly problematized. As Harold and his men ride off, one of them points upward, and the viewer's eye is drawn away from the central panel to the Latin inscription above and then to the upper border panel (figure 2)*. There appear the words dux ANGLORUM, which refer to Harold, and above them two diagonals, which are decorated in the Norman sawtooth or chevron pattern.[32] This is the first –and most prescient -of eight occurrences of this motif on the Tapestry. Each time the motif appears it is in a Norman context, often in close proximity to William himself For example, a single diagonal supports Odo's chair as he confers about the upcoming invasion of England with William, his half-brother (figure 16)*. There is also one scene in which William himself is robed in chevrons (figure 10)*. These occurrences are not accidental; in fact, they constitute subtle
and pervasive indications of the Tapestry designer's Norman bias.

In perhaps the most important Tapestry scene, certainly from the Norman perspective, two chevron diagonals solidly support William's Norman throne, while he points tellingly to Harold, who swears an oath of fealty to the duke (figure 11)*. [33] These diagonals appear again a little farther along in the upper panel, hovering like a bad conscience over Harold as he approaches Edward, his king (figure 13)*. Harold's stooped posture, unusually extended and bared neck, and the fact that he is followed closely by a man with a rather large battle-axe illustrate the Tapestry designer's suggestion that Harold

was aware of his perjury, that he knew he had pledged himself to two lords, neither of whom he supported. As indicated above, Harold pledged to uphold William of Normandy's right of succession to the throne, and, according to Allen Brown, he swore to be William's man: 'Harold did homage to the duke by the *immixtio manuum,* and the duke, evidently before the oath of fealty with its crucial additions, and at Harold's request, gave him, i.e. invested him with, his lands and powers in England' ([1968], p. 130).

By accepting the English crown, Harold broke three pledges: that of regnal support for and his oath of fealty to William, along with his pledge of allegiance to Edward, his king. The Tapestry designer docs not allow us to forget this, for the pattern seems to reappear on Edward's burial shroud (figure 14)* and again under Harold as he is offered the CORONA REGIS by two Englishmen - the crown that Edward promised to William in 1051 (figure 15)*. Here the diagonal s tightly frame a bird while pinning it by the neck. The bird must signify the treacherous Harold - soon to be 'pinned' himself by the Conqueror for breaking his oath and assuming the English throne. In later scenes the decorative theme reoccurs, although it is present only in outline. In the first of these two instances, it is under the group of Normans tying up the ships after arriving in England; in the second they appear above and to the left of a pointing William on horseback.

Returning to the Tapestry's second scene (figure 2)*, one can see the significance of this first manifestation of the pattern. It signifies that Harold is on his way to Norman dy, where he will be involved in some way with the DUX NORMANNORUM. Reading retrospectively, it becomes clear that these first Norman chevrons assume an ominous aspect, foreshadowing - like Halley's Comet and the ghost ships that later frame his shaky throne - Harold's ultimate demise some two years hence.

III. BORDERLINE VITALIY AND FABULOUS COMMENTARY

I offer here an integrated reading of the Tapestry's scenes, which are bordered by the nine beast fables: 'The Fox and the Cow,' 'The Wolf and the Lamb,' 'The Dog and Her Puppies,' 'The Wolfand the Crane,' 'The Rule of King Lion,' 'The Mouse and the Frog,' 'The Goat Who Sang,' 'The Lion Hunting with His Companions,'[34] and 'The Farmer and the Cranes.' Most of the fables appear early on in the Tapestry's narrative program, and all appear initially in the lower panel. With exception of the recurrent 'The Fox and the Crow,' 'The Dog and Her Puppies,' 'The Wolf and the Crane' and 'The Goat Who Sang,' these fabulous images occur in the first sixth or so of the embroidery, in what might be called its 'prologue.' In this early section the Tapestry's main characters are introduced, fleshed out and the designer's Norman bias is established. The fables-which come from a long tradition, established by Aesop and continued by Babrius and Phaedrus, as well as by later authors like Marie de France-add depth to the characters' development, comment upon and moralize their personal motives for their political actions. The interplay of border and main panels indicates that the seemingly objective tale told by many of the primary images and the Latin inscriptions is not the full one. If it were, there would have been no need to 'clutter up' the embroidery with hundreds of images that slow down our progression through what seems a quite straightforward tale. As each fable is encountered, I

summarize it briefly before discussing its function as part of the Tapestry's narrative scheme.[35]

III. I. 'THE FOX AND THE CROW'

> He who takes delight in treacherous flattery usually pays the penalty by repentance and disgrace.
>
> When a crow, perched on a high tree, was about to eat a piece of cheese, which he had carried off from a window, a fox who coveted the prize spoke up as follows: 'Oh Mr Crow, what a lustre your plumes have, how graceful your face and your figure! If only you had a voice no bird would rate higher. ' Anxious to show that he did have a voice, the foolish crow opened his mouth to sing and let fall the cheese, which the crafty fox immediately snapped up with eager jaws. Too late the crow, betrayed by his own folly, moaned his loss.
>
> [This affair shows how much ingenuity can accomplish; cleverness is always more than a match for hardihood.] (Perry, pp. 206-9. P13, p. 97. B77)

The pictograph for this first fable is placed in the lower border panel beneath and just to the right of the feast that Harold holds just before his departure for Normandy (figure 3)*. It first interrupts the narrative flow, as the Norman diagonals and the pointing rider do in the second scene, and does so in the same way: by interrupting the symmetrical arrangement of the birds and animals in both the upper and lower panels. More specifically, it is placed under stairs upon which the messenger stands who informs Harold that his ships are ready, that it is time to sail. This messenger connects the banquet scene with the following one of loading and embarkation by turning his head, while pointing his index finger at the soldiers boarding the ship. He is literally connected to the succeeding action by the man standing two steps below him. He touches the messenger's leg with his right hand and holds a spear in his left hand, which is woven over the next man's right shoulder. We also notice that the waterline begins right at the foot of the steps and continues through to where the lead boat's anchor physically connects it to a disembarking Harold, there caught by Guy's men (figures 3-5)*.

The fable also plays a symbolically connective role in the narrative. This tale of 'The Fox and the Crow' is one the trickery and greed. It is represented on the Tapestry *in medias res,* much like the main panel narrative. The viewer knows that Harold is off on a sea voyage, but the Tapestry docs not indicate what his destination is. Nor will it until figure 6, and then, unless we know that Guy (WIDO) was Count of Ponthieu, nothing shows that the English have landed in France. Similarly, at this point we are not shown the denouement of the fable: the cheese hovers tantalizingly in the air, having been dropped by the crow but not yet caught by the fox. J. Bard McNulty comments on this scene: 'All this, by analogy, foreshadows the rivalry of William and Harold for the prize of the throne of England, which like the cheese is not yet in the possession of either contender and which is to be the subject of the entire Tapestry' (p. 28). True enough, but for this fable to work it must do so in a more fully analogic way, and for this McNulty's commentary is too imprecise. Since the cheese represents the English CORONA REGIS and succession to the English throne, the fox must represent Harold and his cause and the crow the cause shared by Edward and William. Having made Harold *vicarius,* Edward 'drops' the cheese into the earl's grasp when he. dies, unwittingly breaks his promise to William and forces the Norman invasion of his own country.[36] Edward's double bind and Harold's treachery are

reinforced in this scene depicting the king's death and enshrouding, which is followed immediately by four crucial scenes: first, while he perches upon two diagonals decorated with Norman chevrons, Harold receives news of his king's death; second, he is shown enthroned; third, Halley's Comet streaks ominously overhead; and, finally, a shakily enthroned Harold is supported by empty, ghost-like images of boats. 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. If the Tapestry did not reflect its designer's Norman bias, there would be no reason consistently to link Harold with the oath-breaking events that are connected metaphorically by Norman diagonals and images of the fox, marker of cunning and deceit.

The fable of 'The Fox and the Crow' is represented again in the lower panel farther along (figure 10)*.[37] Here, however, the tale is concluded and the fox has the cheese -much to the chagrin of the squawking crow. We notice also that Harold-the-fox's tail is pinned down by one of its diagonals. This closure of the fable foreshadows Harold's nine-month reign over England in 1066 and functions much like the Norman diagonals and the fable's first appearance, all of which adumbrated significant, negatively valenced events. It also alerts us to the moral 'He who takes delight in treacherous flattery usually pays the penalty by repentance and disgrace.'

The final appearance of the tale is just as telling as the first two, and is so precisely because it is so odd (figures 12 and 13)*. Both of the pictographs are found in the lower border panel, and their narrative progression is as expected. This one is in the upper panel, an occurrence odd enough in itself to attract our attention; but there is more. The tale is first represented, as I have said, in mid-narrative. We should logically expect that if the tale is to be used later in the Tapestry's main narrative, that it would depict the fable at a point further along in its own history. This is precisely what happens: the fox has the cheese, and the crow squawks in anger. This third manifestation, however, takes us back to the very beginning of the fable: here the crow is perched placidly in its tree, cheese firmly gripped in its beak. In fact, the fox is not even in the same border frame this time as it was in the other occurrences; rather, it moves to our right, towards the bird, and is just about to begin its speech. This seems to indicate that the story has not even reached the point where it was when it first appeared on the Tapestry. Why does the fable start over again at such a late point in the main narrative? Why was this opening scene of the fable not placed nearer the opening scenes of the Tapestry? Keeping in mind that the cheese signifies the kingdom of England, the CORONA REGIS, that Edward's and William's cause is represented by the crow and Harold's by the fox, all becomes clear.[38]

Harold has returned from France to face Edward as a man of divided loyalties, having sworn himself to William while still owing allegiance to his king (figure 13)*. Edward is again shown securely seated in majesty with his throne firmly planted on the ground line and is woven much larger than any of the three men who surround him, including Harold. Indeed, the Confessor's crown nearly touches the roof of his palace, and he seems fully twice the size of the man standing behind him. His impressive size, secure enthronement and Harold's submissive posture show a king completely in control of his kingdom, his 'cheese,' at this particular moment and completely unsuspecting of his carl's coming treachery. Supporting this contention are all of the border panel flora and fauna, which

are all symmetrically arranged in compositional harmony, including, of course, the fable's pictograph.[39] Only Harold and the viewer who reads this pictograph in conjunction with its two predecessors are cognizant of his private deceit. Harold fairly creeps upon his sovereign, set to play the role of dutiful inferior and to begin the 'tale' of his quest for the 'cheese.' Even the positioning of the beasts matches that of their main panel counterparts: the fox moves beseechingly to the right, and the bird looks confidently to the left. Remembering the placement and postures of Edward and Harold in the very first scene, which parallels this one, we see that they too match the placement and postures of the fox and crow here. In this and the following scenes, the events set out earlier in the narrative really begin to run down to a swift conclusion. By now, all of the character development has been completed, motives have been set and sides drawn. All that is needed is the king's death, which comes in the following scenes.

III.II 'THE WOLF AND THE LAMB'

> Impelled by thirst, a wolf and a lamb had come to the same brook. Upstream stood the wolf, much lower down than the lamb. Then the spoiler, prompted by his wicked gullet, launched a pretext for a quarrel: 'Why,' said he, 'have you roiled the water where I am drinking?' Sore afraid, the woolly one made answer: 'Pray, how can I, wolf, be guilty of the thing you charge? The water flows from you downstream to where I drink.' Balked by the power of truth, the wolf exclaimed, 'Six months ago you cursed me.' 'Indeed,' replied the lamb, 'at that time I was not yet born.' 'Well, I swear, your father cursed me,' said the wolf, and, with no more ado, he pounced upon lamb and tore him, and the lamb died for no just cause. [This fable was composed to fit those persons who invent false charges by which to oppress the innocent. J (Perry, pp. 190-93. Pr, p.111. B89)

This next fable follows 'The Fox and the Crow' in the lower panel (figure 3)*. Much as the designer placed the fable centered on eating first under Harold's *bon voyage* feast, he placed this one centered on drinking under the first aquatic scene. The fable of 'The Wolf and the Lamb' is just beneath the English ship being loading before its departure for France. This fable, as J. Bard McNulty writes, applies 'in a broad, general way' (p. 33), unlike the previous one and most of the others. Nonetheless, it does not work if we cannot assign its animal actors historical counterparts. Like its predecessor, it is about greed, but the added element of provocation to needless violence plays a fundamental part here, as it does in the main narrative. Once again the guileful actor-the predator -is Harold, who takes what is not his, thereby unleashing unnecessary violence upon the innocent. To the lamb we can assign the character of an unsuspecting Edward and his rightful cause, the usurpation of which prompts bloodshed and slaughter. His kingdom is devoured by the power-hungry Harold, 'prompted by his wicked gullet.'

III. III. 'THE DOG AND HER PUPPIES'

> The fair-seeming words of evil persons conceal a trap; the following lines warn us to beware.

> A bitch about to have puppies asked another bitch to let her deposit her litter in the other's kennel, for which she easily got permission. Later on, when the owner asked for her kennel back again, the other dog resorted to supplications, asking but a brief stay till the puppies were strong enough for her to take with her. When this time also had expired the owner began to insist more stoutly on the return of her sleeping quarters. 'If,' said the tenant, 'you can prove yourself a match for me and my brood I'll move out.' (Perry, pp. 214 15. P19)

The tale of the 'Wolf and the Lamb' is followed in the tower border by one with much more specific significance for the main story. 'The Dog and Her Puppies' is a tale fraught with deceit and treachery. The pictograph for this moral tale is tellingly situated just beneath the English ships as they depart for France (figures 3 and 4)* and reappears in much the same form farther along when William leads his troops into battle (figure 17)*. The bitch without the litter is both Edward and William, and the occupying one with the litter is Harold. H ere in its first representation, the tale bears little more than the sort of general relevance to the main narrative as the 'The Wolf and the Lamb' did. Considered in relation to its second appearance on the Tapestry and to its role in the historical story, things change quite a bit. As noted above, in 1051 Edward intended to leave his kingdom to William who, like himself, was a descendant of Richard I, Duke of Normandy. However, it seems that on his deathbed Edward awarded a title, at least that of *vicarius,* to Harold:

> The one detailed near-contemporary description of the old king's last moments which we have in the Vita Edwardi certainly refers to the matter, though the form and manner of Edward's dying speech at this point seem somewhat inappropriate to so momentous an occasion as a grant of the succession, and may be thought to fit much better the context of putting the kingdom into the protection of Harold as the vicarius, executor or representative of Duke William, the previously nominated and recognised heir. (Brown [1968], p.135)

If we assume that Harold was to be regent only as long as it would take for William to assume his rightful place, the analogical relations are perfectly apparent. When William was set to return to England after Edward's death, Harold had already had himself crowned. This, then, is the most telling of the fables, conjuring as it does the most profound historical resonance on the Tapestry-Harold's treachery.

The work's designer placed a second pictograph representing 'The Dog and Her Puppies' much farther along to gloss his narrative (figure 17)*. The spatial arrangement of this image is a bit different, a bit less elaborate, but otherwise the same. The fable's narrative has not progressed, as it did in the second appearance of the 'The Fox and the Crow.' Again, to comprehend fully this fable's significance, it must be discussed in relation to the relevant lower border scenes that bracket this fable's pictograph. By reading these other images in conjunction with the glossal tale, its function *vis-a-vis* them and the main narrative is revealed, and it is tied to its first appearance. William has come in pursuit of Harold, the 'dog' whom he intends to dethrone, to drive out of his and Edward's 'cave' so that he can rightly

occupy it. This second representation of the fable is placed here to remind the viewer of William's right of succession and of Edward's desire to have him become king of England upon his death. Not accidentally does it appear under scenes linked by the inscription in which William exhorts his troops to prepare themselves manfully and wisely for their battle with the English: HIC WILLELM DUX ALLOQUIT [UR] SUIS MILITIBUS UT PREPARARENT SE VIRILITER ET SAPIENTER AD PRELIUM CONTRA ANGLORUM EXERCITU [M] . As such, it works both as a reminder and as a kind of 'pep-talk' for the viewer, much as the Tapestry itself did for Napoleon and as the *Chanson de Roland* is said to have worked for the Normans at Hastings.

As the Norman fleet sets sail for England, a hare is pursued across the lower panel by what looks like a hound. As the 'elite of the Norman army' (Wilson, p. 188) ride out from Hastings (hestenga) to do battle with Harold, they are bracketed by two odd border scenes and followed by three others. In the upper panel is an ass, framed *solum,* followed by what looks like an approaching fox, also framed alone. In the lower panel a hare is pursued by a bird, and both are framed within the same trapezoidal shape;[40] Next appears an image of a grazing donkey stalked by what seems to be a leopard. Following the fable's pictograph, we see two more images of pursuit and capture: Two quadrupeds (wolves? dogs? foxes?) are shown in forward motion, each with a bird (a goose and a chicken?) firmly gripped in its jaws. And finally, a few scenes before Harold is killed by an arrow in the eye, a lamb appears in the upper border, framed *solum* but bracketed by two rather fierce looking birds.[41] There are no tales that correspond to these five sets of images in the collections of Aesop, Babrius, Phaedrus or Marie de France.[42] In most cases there is not enough pictorial information given to tie these images securely to one particular tale. Images of the fleeing lamb and the pursued hares do not provide the viewer with enough information to do much with, aside from drawing general parallels with the main story. I suggest, then, that they do not refer to fables, at least not to fables with which these authors were aware; nonetheless, they function thematically like the fables. Reading them this way, their relationship to the main panel becomes evident, especially considering that this section is centered - like these border decorations -- on themes of the hunt, pursuit and capture.[43]

III. IV. 'THE WOLF AND THE CRANE'

> He who wants to serve rascals and be duly paid for it makes two mistakes: first, he helps the undeserving, and, secondly, he enters into a deal from which he cannot emerge without loss to himself.
>
> A bone that he had gobbled stuck in a wolf's throat. When the pain was too much for him he went about offering pay to one and another as an inducement if they would remove the offending object. At length a crane accepted, on the strength of a solemn oath. She mortgaged her full length in the wolfs throat and performed a successful operation on him with great danger to herself. In return she demanded her fee according to contract, but the wolf retorted: 'You ungrateful thing! Your head was in my mouth and you got it out intact, and now you stipulate that I am to pay you a bonus.' (Perry, pp. 200-1. P8)

The Tapestry's fourth fable follows 'The Dog and Her Puppies' and directly precedes 'The Wolf King' in the lower border panel (figure 6)*. 'The Wolf and the Crane' is repeated later in the narrative, where it appears in the upper border preceding the second rendering of 'The Fox and the Crow' (figure 12)*. In the first instance, the pictograph is placed under Harold's ships as they sail for France. Above the first ship the designer placed two border beasts, each twisted toward the ground in an odd posture (figure 3)*. Of these animals McNulty says: 'Inversion, upside-downness, is a common medieval metaphor for things going wrong, as they do on Harold's crossing the Channel' (p. 87).[44] This seems to be the case here and follows on what I have argued about the fables, not to mention the main narrative events. The most significant analogy between the fable and Tapestry's main panel is their common reliance upon a broken oath.

I have outlined the historical events surrounding Harold's oath, showing them - and it -to be key in understanding the Tapestry designer's bias. Following this, the specific analogical parallels between the fable and the historical characters appear obvious: the crane represents William, who has done Harold the services of arming him and investing him with his English lands; the wolf, then, is Harold, who breaks these oaths and betrays William's trust in him.[45] The moral is particularly appropriate to the Tapestry's political tale and the designer's Norman bias: 'He who wants to serve rascals ... enters into a deal from which he cannot emerge without loss to himself.' William has done Harold the services of vassalage and of freeing him from Guy of Ponthieu, only to be treacherously repaid.

In the second instance the pictograph is situated above the English coastal lookout tower, which functions as a marker of visual punctuation and separates the incoming voyagers from the riders who move out to Edward's court (figures 12 and 13)*. This tower also serves to connect the two narrative scenes, implicitly connecting Harold's overseas exploits to his approaching reconciliation with Edward. The fable's representation enhances this connection and reminds the viewer that it was in France that the earl swore his oath and that this pledge will be broken upon his return to England. This border image immediately precedes the second appearance of 'The Fox and the Crow,' which I have discussed in some detail above. Suffice it to say that, taken together, these two pictorial images call up all of the most relevant political issues represented by the Tapestry, while moralizing them and coloring them with the designer's Norman bias: Harold's hierarchical relationship with Edward, his arming by William, his sworn oath to the conqueror and his future treachery.

III.V. 'THE WOLF KING'

> A lion once decided to go and live in another land. So he assembled all the animals and revealed his plan to them and told them that since he didn't intend to return, they must choose a new king. There wasn't a single animal who didn't plead with him to give them another lion, but he explained that he had no heir - he had not raised one because he hadn't dared to. They must look among themselves, he told them, for the one who might govern them best.
>
> Thus it happened that they chose the wolf, because there was no one bold enough to choose any but him. They considered him to be very disloyal, but he had promised many that he would always

be true to them. They went to the lion and told him that they had chosen the wolf, and he replied that they had chosen a shrewd animal, to be sure –one who was alert and quick and enterprising, if he were as ethical in his way of thinking and acting as he should be. But the lion feared one thing: that the wolf might choose as his advisor the fox, who knew well how to deceive; both of them were treacherous and evil. If they wanted to have peace from the wolf, they should make him swear on the saints not to touch any animal or ever in his life eat meat in any shape or fonn. The wolf willingly swore even more than they asked him to. But when he had been bound by oath and the lion had left, the wolf had a terrible craving for meat. Through a ruse he wanted to get the animals to grant and carry out his wish. [Here the wolf calls a succession of animals before him, all of whom he eats.]

Shortly afterwards, the wolf saw a fat, well-fed monkey. He had a great craving for him - he wanted to eat and devour him. One day he went to ask him if his breath stank or if it was sweet-smelling. The monkey was very sly and didn't want to be condemned, so he said that his breath was between the two. The wolf didn't know what to do, because he couldn't put him to death unless he wronged him. So he pretended to be sick in bed. He complained to all the animals who came to visit him that he would not recover. They had doctors come to find out if he could be cured. The doctors were perplexed; they saw nothing and found no injury that hurt him, if only he would want to eat. 'My only desire,' he said, 'is to eat monkey meat. But I don't want to touch any animal I must keep my oath unless I have such a reason that my barons would grant it.' Then they advised him that he should surely do so - he should never keep an oath against his heart and his wish. They could never prevent him from doing anything that would cure his body from ill. When he heard what they advised him, he killed the monkey and ate him. Afterwards, they all got their sentence for he kept no oath with them.

Thus the philosopher shows us that for no reason should one make a treacherous man lord or bring him to any honor. He will no more keep loyalty to strangers than to his intimates and will behave toward his people as did the wolf with his oath. (Marie de France, pp. 94 100)

This fable, I fear, is longer than my commentary on it. It is a particularly well-chosen one, however, and deserves to be recounted in full. McNulty refers to it as 'one of the happiest strokes of the Master of the Tapestry' (p. 32). The pictographs representing it are placed beneath the second of Harold's boats in which he and his men sail for England (figure 4)*. It is so well-suited that it needs little explication: the lion represents Edward, who leaves his kingdom without providing a male successor. The wolf who swears on the saint is Harold, who has pledged himself to William on Odo's holy relics. It is the wolf-like Harold who breaks this oath and 'eats the monkey,' 'the cheese,' the succession, the CORONA REGIS, all of which represent the crown of England, which Edward leaves upon his death.[46] Harold, like the wolf, replaces the king, although his role should have been that of *vicarius* and not king.

'The Wolf King,' while it points out Harold's treachery and moralizes it, also comments rather unfavourably on Edward's Lear-like folly: he apparently left his kingdom to William but then also granted Harold some position of authority, fertilizing the seeds of treachery sown by Earl Godwin in the rebellion of 1051. One cannot help but wonder why Edward made no provision for keeping the Godwins out of power. After all, he did exile them following their uprising in 1051. Why did he make one of his most potentially troublesome earls vicarius? Undoubtedly, Harold's power and holdings

made him a likely protector of the kingdom. They also made him capable of assuming the kingship with apparently little dissension, of defeating Harold Hardrada at Stamford Bridge in 1066 and of marching back south to Hastings to meet William in a matter of days. By promising the crown to William in 1051, 14 years before his death, the king seemed to have provided in ample time-perhaps too ample --for his kingdom's security. By trying to secure a smooth transition of power for a distant member of his own family, that is, by appointing the powerful Harold Godwinson as intermediary, Edward ironically opened the way to arguably the single most significant battle in English history.

III.VI. 'THE MOUSE AND THE FROG'

> Aesop said, 'Once when the animals all spoke the same language, a mouse made friends with a frog and invited him to dinner. He took him into a very well-stocked storeroom where there was bread, meat, cheese, olives, figs. And he said 'Eat.' When he had helped himself generously, the frog said: 'You must come to my house for dinner, too, and let me give you a good reception.' He took the mouse to his pool and said: 'Dive in.' But the mouse said: 'I don't know how to dive.' The frog said: 'I'll teach you.' And he tied the mouse's foot to his own with a string and jumped into the pool, pulling the mouse with him. As the mouse drowned, he said: 'Even though I'm dead, I'll pay you off.' Just as he said this, the frog dove under and drowned him. As the mouse lay floating on the water, a water bird carried him off with the frog tied to him, and when he had finished eating the mouse he got his claws into the frog. This is the way the mouse punished the frog. Just so, gentlemen, if I die, I will be your doom. The Lydians, the Babylonians, and practically the whole of Greece will reap the harvest of my death.' (Perry, pp. 490-91)

This fable follows 'The Wolf King' in the lower border panel and precedes 'The Goat Who Sang' (figure 5)*. 'The Mouse and the Frog' too is placed underneath the sailing English ships, only here we have come much closer to Harold's landing at Ponthieu.[47] Following the sails that invade the upper panel, the first figures are contorted birds, which seem to be biting their feet or at least to be in some kind of discomfort, much like the mouse in the tale and Harold in the Tapestry's story. Again, if we assign characters to the animal actors, the analogic significance of the fable comes clear. The 'water bird' is William who swoops down –here represented by the apprehending Guy of Ponthieu -and captures both the dead mouse and its unkind host. The frog is Harold, who will have submerged Edward's deathbed wishes (the mouse?) by assuming the crown instead of passing it on to William.[48]

III.VII. 'THE GOAT AND THE WOLF'

> A she-goat, while pasturing among the bushes, met a wolf who said to her: 'What are you doing here in the woods?' The goat replied that she had long-avoided the wolfs haunts, but now she had come there of her own accord, resigned to her fate, only she begged that he would show her some little consideration. 'I don't ask for my life,' 'she said, 'but that you extend it just long enough for me to sing two masses, one for myself and one for you.' 'I grant it,' said the wolf Then said the goat, 'Lead me up on to the high place yonder, in order that, being nearer to the heavenly ones, they themselves may hear me better as a I sing and pray, and the other she-goats, on hearing me, may be inspired with

> devotion and join in praying for us both.' This was done, as the goat requested. Standing on the high place and looking up to the sky, the goat began to call out very loudly, while the wolf stood by supposing that she was singing a mass. All the goats in the neighbouring countryside heard the clamour; then the dogs and rustics came out of the farmyards, pursued the wolf, caught him, beat him with clubs, and freed the goat from his jaws. As he was being dragged along and beaten, the wolf turned to the goat and said, 'My hard luck; I see that you didn't pray much for me, but very well for yourself' 'I'm satisfied,' said the goat, 'that the prayers which I made for myself were heard.' (Perry, pp. 581-82)

The fable of the goat singing is placed directly under a pointing Harold who stands in the bow of his ship, about to disembark and be taken captive at Ponthieu (figures 5 and 6)*. It appears again much farther along in the narrative, this time in the upper panel above William leading his men into battle (figure 18)*. There it brackets the charging cavalry with the scenes of pursuit in the lower panel, examined above. It is not represented in this first instance by just a single pictograph, by one scene, but is given a large amount of space. In fact, nearly the entire fable is illustrated: first we see the wolf and goat face to face; then the goat sings with head held high-no doubt for maximum volume - while one of the club-wielding, wolf-chasing men turns his head to listen. He and another man, this one seemingly intent on capturing the wolf, follow a pack of dogs, which chases the fleeing wolf. This long pictorial narration is separated from the preceding fable of 'The Mouse and the Frog' by two stylized tree, visual markers which also partition it off from the succeeding fable of 'The Lion Hunting with His Companions.' Such an arrangement is somewhat unusual for the Tapestry's border panels, since most internal sections are separated by the diagonal bars. As usual, though, the odd disposition catches the eye, slows the narrative and forces the reader to consider the theme that links the fables: the topos of pursuit, hunt, capture, and death.

By virtue of conquest, Guy was William's vassal at this point-or at least his grudging underling: 'Ponthieu had recently been brought under Norman over lordship, and the duke was able to obtain the surrender of Harold' (Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon,* p. 577). Perhaps their relationship was still just hostile enough -and his allegiance to his conqueror just tenuous enough-for Guy to expect some sort of ransom for this English captive. If he were fully subservient to William, he would have escorted Harold to the duke immediately upon his arrival. Instead, it took 'duke William's powerful intervention' to set the earl free, after which his 'visit ... included an expedition into Britanny on which the duke took his distinguished guest with him' (Brown [1968], p. 128). This is illustrated on the Tapestry, where we find further evidence of the differences in treatment accorded to Harold, this time in the inscriptions: he is APPREHENDIT (figure 6)* and TENUIT (figure 7)* by Guy but is armed by William, DEDIT HAROLDO ARMA, to whom he swears his allegiance in the famous oath-taking scene.

All of this is by way of arguing that the wolf is William *and* Guy - his legal representative - and that the goat is Harold.[49] This tale is another which takes advantage of the broken-oath theme, only in this first illustration the potential victim is the clever party and the one who benefits from deceit. That is, Harold is taken by Guy, and William hears the news of his imprisonment from a messenger, HIC VENIT NUNTIUS AD WILGELMUM DUCEM. The Duke was Harold released from custody, after hearing the 'song' of his imprisonment. Harold-the-goat repays William-the-wolfs 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.

In its later appearance, the fable is given in the sort of mnemonic, pictorial shorthand more characteristic of the Tapestry (figure 18)*. There only the wolf and the goat face each other, framed together in the same trapezoidal enclosure. As in these other instances, it seems the designer felt such an abbreviated image would be enough to call the fable to the viewer's mind. Indeed, this works rather well: all the viewer needs here is a reminder of the fable to see that the tables have been turned by Harold's treachery, that all along he was truly the 'wolf.' Enhanced, by the lower panel images of fervent pursuit, the main panel shows William and his men going after what is rightfully his, that which Edward granted him in 1051 -the English throne.

III.VIII. 'THE COW, THE SHE-GOAT, THE SHEEP AND THE LION'

> To go shares with the mighty is never a safe investment. This little fable bears witness to my statement.
>
> A cow, a she-goat, and a sheep, patient sufferers when wronged, went into partnership with a lion in the forest. When they had captured a stag of mighty bulk the lion made four portions and spoke as follows: 'I take the first portion by virtue of my title, since I am addressed as king; the second portion you will assign to me because I am a partner; then, since I am superior to you in strength, the third portion will come my way; and it will be too bad for anyone who meddles with the fourth.' Thus all the booty was carried off by ruthlessness alone. (Perry, pp. 198-99. P5, pp. 82-85. B67, pp. 449 50)

Precisely identifying the next lower border scene is somewhat problematic. As J. Bard McNulty notes, this is because 'several traditional fables have to do with lions defeating stags' (p. 34). McNulty sees this fable as the eighth of nine, with 'The Lion and the Stag' as the ninth and last (pp. 27, 34), although he also concedes that it is possible that this 'scene shows, not a ninth fable, but the conclusion of the eighth' (p. 91). Helene Chefneux reads 'Le Lion chassant' as the eighth and 'L'Homme semant le Lin et les Oiseaux,' what I refer to as 'Outwitting the Birds,' as the ninth. I read 'The Cow, the She-Goat, the Sheep, and the Lion' together with 'The Lion and the Stag' as number eight. It seems only logical that the latter follows in continuation of the former. The unlikely group of the goat, the sheep, the cow (a bull on the Tapestry) and the lion are shown in hot pursuit of a deer in full flight, with its front legs extended, body stretched out and head back (figures 6 and *7)**. In the next panel scene the lion, who is out in front of the hungry group, has felled the deer and is enjoying the fruits ofhis labors. This all takes place under the main narrative scenes which depict Harold's capture and captivity, beneath the APPREHENDIT and TENUIT discussed above. The illustration is separated on its left from the chase portion of the preceding fable. 'The Wolf and the Lamb,' and on its right from the scene of the lion devouring his deer (figures 6 and 7)*. These separations are effected, not by the more common solid diagonals, but by the stylized trees that I have characterized as markers of visual punctuation. The diagonals are akin to full stops in print narratives. These floral markers, on the other hand, can both separate and connect - and here I suggest that they do both. That is, while physically

dividing the panels, the trees thematically connect them, serving much like the comma does in print, allowing the viewer to pause without necessitating a full stop. Following the scene of the lion feeding on the deer, we return to the standard border decoration, with what appears to be a griffin.[50]

The significance of this fable for the main narrative is clear and continues the morals of the preceding ones, albeit with a violent twist: William the 'lion' and his motley troops 'of bellicose knights … polished and tempered by continual training and application' (Brown [1968], p.49), will hunt down Harold and will exact final and fitting justice. The spoils will go to William, who shall partition them or not as he sees fit. The finality implicit in the kill here is emphasized by the two trees which uncharacteristically frame the action as well as the griffin, who faces the action, its strident posture forcing the viewer to come to a full stop and heed the tale's denouement, in which William will ruthlessly carry off the 'booty' that is rightfully his.

III.IX. 'OUTWITTING THE BIRDS'

> Twas the setting of the Pleiades, the time for sowing wheat. A farmer had cast his seed in the fallow ground and was standing by to guard it; for a countless host of black and noisy daws had come, and starlings, to destroy the seed in the planted fields. A boy followed him carrying an empty sling; but the starlings listened as usual whenever the farmer asked for the sling and would fly away before he could shoot at them. So the farmer changed his method and, calling to the boy, instructed him as follows: 'Boy, we must outwit this clever tribe of birds. So when they come I'll ask for "bread," but you will give me not bread but the sling.' On came the starlings and settled in the field. The farmer called for 'bread' according to the plan, and the starlings did not flee. The boy gave him the sling full of stones, and when the old man let fly, he hit one bird in the head, another in the leg, and another in the shoulder. Then they fled. Some cranes met them and asked what had happened. Said one of the daws: 'Watch out for this wicked tribe of men; they have learned to say one thing to each other and to do something else when it comes to action.'
>
> [A formidable tribe of men are those who act with guile.] (Perry, pp. 46-49. B33)

I see no reason not to include this particular part of the lower border section in the grouping of fables (figures 8 and 9)*, unlike McNulty: 'Efforts to demonstrate that some of these continue the series of Aesop's fables or that they suggest the labors of the months have not been convincing' (p. 34) Wilson would seem to disagree, but offers nothing other than to say that this 'ploughing,' harrowing and bird-scaring scene in the lower border has been identified as Aesop's fable of the swallow and the birds … ' (p. 177). Francis Wormald lumps together these scenes and those following them as 'genre scenes' and says that they are purely decorative (pp.28). I suggest that they illustrate quite well the major themes of the fable as recounted by Babrius:[51] in the lower border, as well as in the Tapestry as a whole, it is the time for sowing -the Pleaides are in the night sky at this time of year -and there is a threat to the crops from hungry birds.[52] This long scene depicts the entire planting process: we first see a pair of men plowing, then a lone man sowing seed, followed by a man harrowing, and a man with a sling and

a rock ridding the field of birds.

This whole section underlies the main narrative scenes in which William's messengers ride from right to left, on their way to suggest to Guy that he free Harold (figures 8 and 9)*. The fable's pictographs are immediately followed by a pair of birds, separated by the standard diagonals, each of which chews on a stylized tree. The beginning of the plowing scene is firmly delineated by two diagonals, and the main panel manifests similar visual punctuation. The large amount of such markers in the main and lower panels, trees and buildings in particular, radically impede the narrative flow, alerting the viewer to the importance of the scenes. Things do not make much sense until one realizes that these scenes are to be read from right to left -as are scenes of Edward's death and burial. Indeed, these episodes are nearly as important, because in them Harold is brought before William. Here his treachery really begins, and the viewer reaches a new juncture in both the border panel and in the main narrative.

The illustrations of the fable are, as usual, anagogically quite straightforward and almost overwhelmed by the complexity of the pictographs: the birds in flight signify Harold, whom William will put to flight. This he must do with all dispatch or the pestiferous Englishman will 'nibble' away at his kingdom and his support like the birds do in the panel, following the sling-shooter and the birds in flight. The length of the illustration - representing work and the hope of growth and rebirth -possibly signifies in general the labor that Edward put into the kingdom to keep rival factions like the Godwins at bay and the hope that he and William expected from the Norman's succession. Harold, of course, dashes all of these hopes by accepting the crown. His meeting with the duke, in which he is 'to confirm the earlier promise of the succession to Duke William' (Brown [1968], p. 127), turns out to be the turning point in his personal history and in that of England. William would have done well to have listened to what the daw says to the crane at the fable's end: 'Watch out for this wicked tribe of men; they have learned to say one thing to each other and to do something else when it comes to action.'

The Norman chevrons and the images illustrating the fables draw out and foreground the Tapestry designer's bias toward Edward's desires and the affiliated Norman cause. They show that Harold perjured himself in his relationships with both men: he betrayed his king's succession plans by accepting the English crown upon Edward's death, and he betrayed both the pledges of homage and of fealty that he swore to William. Although Anglo-Saxon England did not function under the sort of early feudal hierarchy that Normandy did, this does not excuse Harold: 'The gift of arms by William to Harold put the English earl in a position of vassalage to William and although it is likely that such an idea had not yet taken root in England, it would be clear to Harold what was happening' (Wilson, p. 180). One need only consider 'precedent of the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon *comitatus,* the warriors gathered around the chief' (Powicke, p. 4) and the system of *huscarls* instituted by Cnut, to assume that Harold understood what he was getting himself into in Normandy.[53] Ideas of service and loyalty played strong parts in each, and, as William's vassal, Harold would have been subject to the system of homage described by Marc Bloch:

> The ties which bound these war-companions to their chief represented one of those contracts

> of fidelity freely entered into which were compatible with the most respectable social position. The term which designates the royal guard is extremely significant: trust is, that is to say fealty. The new recruit enrolled in this body swore to be faithful; the king in return undertook to 'bear him succour'. (I, p. 156)

Harold's obligation to William is further reinforced by the oath that he swears on the relics of Odo's cathedral at Bayeux. It was in just such ceremonies that, by 'laying his hand on the Gospels or on relics, the new vassal swore to be faithful to his master. This was called fealty, *foi* in French ...' (Bloch, I, p.46). The homage ceremony always came first and took precedence over that of fealty in terms of binding (Bloch, I, p. 147).[54] The Tapestry designer exhibited his understanding of the rites of vassalage by picturing its attendant ceremonies in the correct order, at the same time tying Harold as closely to William as was legally possible. For the moral obligations of this bond and ethical commentary upon its unilateral dissolution, we have to rely upon the fables.

IV. THEORY REDUX

Having examined the Tapestry's Norman chevrons, its nine fables and assorted relevant scenes, it is time to evaluate the applicability of my reading theory. I stated above that to appreciate fully the tale pictured on this Anglo-Saxon embroidery, it is necessary to reweave the border tales into the story told in the central panel. This is not to say that one cannot read the Tapestry by focusing only on this main section, as my summary trek through its median strip shows. It is certainly possible to read the main narrative without reference to the fabulous borders; indeed, this is the way it was engaged for years, with the borders excluded as interesting but irrelevant. What this study's methodology has shown is that when these marginal images are taken into account, the story pictured in the centre panel becomes fuller, less schematic, less puzzling and decidedly less objective.

How does a reading differ when these border tales are incorporated? To answer this, one only needs to consider what story is told without reference to the fables and how it differs when they are incorporated. The fables of 'The Fox and the Crow' and 'The Wolf and the Crane' illustrate the point. The second pictograph for 'The Fox and the Crow' is placed under the scene representing William, Harold and the troops riding to do battle with Conan II of Brittany. The inscription declares that William and his men arrive at Mont St Michel and cross the River Cousenon, from which Harold pulls a Norman and an Englishman out of the quicksand: WILLEM DUX ET EXERCITUS VENERUNT AD MONTE[M] MICHAELIS ET HIC TRANSIERUNT FLUMEN COSNONIS ET HIC HAROLD DUX TRAHEBAT EOS DE ARENA. This is the beginning of the section depicting Harold's martial exploits in Normandy.

I have gone into some detail above regarding the relation between this fable and the main story. Here I point out just a few things. First, William and Harold ride as equals; that is, there is no hint of Harold's being forced into the duke's combat with Conan. All seems to be going well for him: he has been released from Guy's captivity by the most powerful duke in Normandy, with whom he now rides as an ally. In the next scene he courageously rescues two men, an Englishman and a Norman, from the quicksand. Indeed, these scenes portray Harold in the best light of any on the Tapestry.

So, what, if anything, is wrong? If the fable is drawn into the narrative, it quickly becomes apparent that not all is going as well as it could. As explained above, the fable, 'The Fox and the Crow' (figure 3)*, first appears as Harold sets sail for Normandy and prefigures the struggle for the English crown, the cheese representing the CORONA REGIS. This second representation of the fable shows the cheese firmly gripped by the fox, whom I argue represe nts Harold. This scene shows that Harold intends to have -and will have, however briefly-the cheese firmly in his grasp. Further enhancing this harmony is the generally symmetrical arrangement of the upper and lower border flora and fauna; that is, with the exceptions of the naked men in the lower panel and the curious aquatic scene. But looking closely at this second pictograph, the viewer notices that things are problematized: the fox's tail is trapped beneath the diagonal that frames the fabulous scene. So, even though all seems well for Harold, something is not right. If the viewer then skips ahead to the scene of Harold's return to England, he or she notices that the crow has the cheese securely within its beak, with the story seemingly starting all over again (figures 12 and 13)*. The third illustration is placed just to the left above a submissive-looking Harold approaching the securely enthroned, but noticeably aged, Edward.[55] As argued above, this can only mean that the story of Harold's treachery, of which he was fully cognizant while in Normandy, is about to be put into action. Thus, his posture is deceptive and indicative of his false humility. Perhaps he, too, recognizes Edward's age and hopes that the old king will make him regent when he dies. Even if this serialized fable were read in a different way, there is no denying that it is a reminder of the succession controversy. Nowhere in the main panel does the viewer perceive this historical thread interwoven into its narrative. We are shown Harold's treachery to William, but only the fable of 'The Fox and the Crow' keeps the question of succession before our eyes and moralizes it in our minds.

Much the same thing happens with the fable of 'The Wolf and the Crane' (figures 4 and 12)*. The inscription for this section details Harold's oath-taking at Bayeux and his subsequent return to England: WILLELM VENIT BAGIAS UBI HAROLD SACRAMENTUM FECIT WILLELMO DUCI HIC HAROLD DUX REVERSUS EST AD ANGLICAM TERRAM ET VENIT AD EDWARDU[S] REGEM. I begin with Wilson's 'Commentary' on Harold's oath and return to England. The plate references are to his color reproductions of the Tapestry.

> William takes Harold to Bayeux, and Harold swears an oath in the presence of William who sits in majesty, holding his sword as a sword of state (the sword, however, being sheathed). Harold then returns by ship to England and sets out to meet Edward.
>
> The oath was seen by both the chroniclers and the designer of the Tapestry as one of the high points of the story. William of Poitiers says that the ceremony took place before the Breton expedition and in this disagrees with the Tapestry. Whether the ceremony took place at Bayeux, as the Tapestry implies, or at Boneville-sur-Touques as recorded by William of Poitiers is immaterial; the event became central in Norman eyes.
>
> ... The ship on which Harold returns to England has the broken gunwale line noted below ... , but the sail is treated rather differently from those in pls. 5 and 6, the folds being completely linear and not worked in different coloured strips. The lookout on the English shore stands on an elaborate balcony and curious faces peer out from the windows of the tower behind him.

> It is not known where Harold landed on his return to England.
>
> Two more fables appear, this time in the upper borders. One, above the lookout in pl. 27, has been explained as the gander and the cygnet, but this seems most unlikely; it must be a repeat of the crane removing a bone from the wolfs throat as seen in pi. 5. To the right of pl. 27 is yet another version of the crow, the fox and the cheese. Harold comes to Edward, who sits informally on a stool, crowned, but holding a walking stick to emphasize his age. Harold approaches with bowed head, as though seeking a favour, followed by a man bearing an axe. (pp. 180-82)

Wilson's description is quite informative, covering the chronicles' discrepancies and providing somewhat more substance on the fables. Still, it tells us little more than the inscriptions and the pictures. According to its purpose, it essentially turns the Tapestry's images into words, no small feat and one of no small importance for a late twentieth-century audience so reliant upon the printed word.

Reading these scenes from the perspective of the borders and not from the main panel again provides the viewer with a different picture, one more fully revelatory. When this fable is first represented, Harold and his men confidently sail for Normandy after feasting, with their VELIS VENTO PLENIS – so full in fact that they transgress the upper border line and fill that entire space (figures 4 and 5)*. This implies power, speed and surety of purpose. Such imagery is enhanced by the image of a confident-looking Harold seated in the stern of his ship, tiller in hand. Again, everything looks good for the earl and his forces. Nonetheless, the border here is full of fabulous pictographs, each of which forces the viewer to stop and consider its significance. Things must, then, not be what they seem. Taking just the one fable of 'The Wolfand the Crane,' the viewer is tempted to metaphorize the main story's characters: which one is William, which Harold? This question is easily answered by anyone who remembers that it was William who assisted Harold by freeing him from Guy of Ponthieu. The Norman was guilefully repaid for 'sticking his head down this potential enemy's throat' by Harold, who usurped his rightful place on the English throne and broke his oath, just like the wolf did to the crane.

In its second representation, the fable is placed above Harold's return to England and is followed significantly by the third instance of 'The Fox and the Crow' (figure 12). Here again on the main panel all seems well: Harold returns home after distinguishing himself in Normandy in his alliance with William against Conan II. After landing Harold rides with another man to court and assumes a conventionally humble posture before his king. All of the border panel flora and fauna are symmetrically arranged, implying harmony. This imagistic consonance is quickly shaken by the fables' pictographs, though. The crane violates its frame, going beyond its boundaries to help the wolf out of its predicament. This less than subtle reminder of the assistance that William rendered Harold is all the more damning for the English earl by virtue of its placement adjacent to 'The Fox and the Crow's' pictograph. As I indicated above, that image metaphorically portrays Harold about to begin his treacherous tale, his quest for the English CORONA REGIS. The second appearance of The Wolf and the Crane's' pictograph carries the themes of treachery and succession forward to this point in the

Tapestry's narrative and ties all three strands together, those of the main panel and of the two fables. It recalls simultaneously Harold's oaths, while it re-establishes the link between his Norman vassalage and his upcoming treachery to William and Edward's succession wishes. As with 'The Fox and the Crow,' and all of the other fables, this one tells a tale without which the main panel's story is much less potent.

The Bayeux Tapestry tells a much more involving and exciting tale than a simple reading of its main narrative panel allows. While this central section, or even its Latin inscriptions, can be read alone for a skeletal rendition of the events leading up to and culminating in the Norman Conquest of England, this does not leave us with the full sense of the way events were perceived and interpreted by others. Only by integrating the Aesopic pictographs, the Norman chevrons and other seemingly extraneous aspects of its imaginal program with the main narrative panel does one get a fuller inkling of the Conquest's reception -at least that of its political sympathizers. The inclusion of these elements paints a much more varied-while at the same time, synthetic -historical picture, one which demonstrates the medieval penchant for organizing what appears to the modern eye a chaotic, bewildering number of visual signs. When all of these aspects of the Tapestry's design are taken into account, the genius of its designer and embroiders –not to say their sense of humour and aesthetic vitality -comes to the fore and can be more fully appreciated by the modem viewer.

*Figures omitted from this version. Please see published version for full text with images, http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/twim20/current#.VFPKkooiAkI

NOTES

1. My thinking on the Tapestry has been informed and challenged by the following works, which I cite frequently in this study: David J. Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry* (London, 1986); N.P. Brooks and H. E. Walker, 'The Authority and interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *Proceedings if the Battle Conference on Studies,* I (1979), pp. 1-35; R. Allen Brown, The *Nonnans and the Nonnan Conquest* (New York, 1968; Woodbridge, 1985); Marie de France, *Marie de* France: *Fables*, ed. trans. Harriet Spiegel (Toronto, 1987); J. Bard McNulty, *The Narrative Art if the Bayeux Tapestry Master* (New York, 1989); Ben Edwin Perry, ed. trans. *Babrius and Phaedrus* (Cambridge, MA, 1984); Sir Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England,* 3rd edn (Oxford, 1971); *idem,* ed., *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehensive Survey,* 2nd ed. London, 1965); and David Mackenzie Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Complete Tapestry in Color* (New York, 1985). Full citation to other works are given in the notes keyed to their first appearances.

2. W.J. T. Mitchell, I*conology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, 1986), p.98.
3. Otto Pacht, *The Rise if Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 10 13. Not all critics agree on the Tapestry's uniqueness, and some prefer to see it less as historical narrative text than as an example of the embroiderer's art:

> The Bayeux Tapestry is *one if a handful* of surviving monuments of a genre of figurative textile hangings which must have been produced in large numbers throughout the early Middle Ages. Thus, one cannot determine whether the format was common or exceptional. (O.K. Werckmeister. 'The political ideology of the Bayeux Tapestry', *Studi Medievali,* 17 (1976), p. 535; my emphasis)

For a recent description of the Tapestry, a conjectural reconstruction of a venue for its display and a discussion of it *vis-a-vis* other narrative forms, see Richard Brilliant, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: a stripped narrative for their eyes and ears', *Word* & *Image,* 7 (1991), pp.98 126. The Bayeux Tapestry, of course, is not technically a tapestry, but an embroidery worked on a linen background. For more on this, see George Wingfield Digby, 'Technique and production', in Stenton, *Tapestry*, pp. 37-55; and Werckmeister, 'Political ideology', pp. 536-95.

4. J. Bard McNulty and Helene Chefneux, whose pioneering 1934 study of the fables remains crucial, each notes nine fables. They agree on the titles of the first eight and on the order of their appearances, but disagree on the ninth. I understand the Tapestry's eighth fable to be McNulty's and Chefneux's eighth, The Lion Hunting with His Companions,' and McNulty's ninth, 'The Lion and the Stag,' to be a continuation of it. For the ninth fable, I accept what Chefneux called 'L'Homme semant le Lin et les Oiseaux.' However, I read this final tale as Babrius' 'The Farmer and the Cranes.' Following Francis Wormald, McNulty considers this not to be a fable but a 'genre scene' (pp.34-37). Helene Chefneux, 'Les fables dans la Tapisserie de Bayeux' Romania,40 (1934); pp. 1 - 35, 153-94; Sir Francis Wormald, 'Style and design', in Stenton, *Tapestry,* pp. 25 36.
5. Wilson and Bernstein give 72 figures and McNulty 58. The latter's 'figures' arc really black and white line drawings taken from Bruce. Bruce's numbering system for the figures is taken from the numbers found on the back of the Tapestry, which were probably put there in the 1840s (McNulty, p. viii). Although McNulty's illustrations are less useful for detailed readings, they are quite helpful in that they faithfully represent 'the gaps and tears that have since been repaired' (p. viii). Any restoration done is thus easily distinguished from the original embroidery. On this, see John Collingwood Bruce, *The Bayeux Tapestry Elucidated* (London, 1856).
6. I refer the reader to David Mackenzie Wilson's beautiful book, cited fully in note 1, for its excellent photo-reproductions. In addition to the half-size color plates of the entire embroidery, there is an excellent section, 'The commentary' (pp. 174-95), containing a complete black-and-white reproduction, with which run a summation of and commentary on its narrative. Woven into this are many helpful historical notes on medieval warefare, armor, politics, and social customs. My summary owes much to Wilson's edition; indeed, this article would not have been possible without it.

7. Wilson prefers spring 1064 as the *tenninus ah quo,* primarily because 'traveling was not a winter activity' (p. 229, n. 42).
8. There are those who argue that Odo was the patron of the Tapestry, hence his Turpin-like representation as warrior bishop and close confidant of William the Conqueror. For more on Odo's role see note 11.
9. For discussions of this conference, see Bernstein, *Mystery,* pp. 114-17; McNulty, *Narrative Art,* pp. 66-68; and Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and interpretation', pp.4-5, 10—13.
10. Perhaps even more than the Tapestry's opening conference scene between Edward and Harold, this episode's significance has eluded generations of scholars. For some of widely varying hypotheses, see Allen Brown, *The Nonnans,* p.67; McNulty, pp.38-39, 56; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon,* p. 10; and Brunsdon Yapp, 'Animals in medieval art: the Bayeux Tapestry as an example, *Journal if Medieval History,* 13 (1987), p. 33.
11. For more on Odo's role in both the Tapestry and English history, see Bernstein, *Mystery,* pp.31-37; Brown, Normans, pp.26-28; McNulty, *Narrative Art,* pp.59-77; Stenton, *Tapestry,* p. 9, *Anglo-Saxon,* 599, 610 16; and Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and interpretation', p. 8.
12. On the English bias of this scene, see Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry,* pp. 182 83; McNulty, *Narrative Art,* pp. 70-71; Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and interpretation', pp. ii, 13; and Bernstein, pp. 117 23.
13. See Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry,* pp. 184- 85, 188-89, for information on the armaments and tools used in these scenes and for a discussion of the preparation for the Norman feast at Hastings.
14. Francis Herbert of the Royal Geographical Society in London has sent me a copy of an article from *The Observer,* 30 September 1990, by Peter Beaumont and Paul Levy, which reports on Robert Chenciner's theory that the Tapestry is actually an eighteenth-century embroidery. He bases this rather bizarre argument on the fact that the kebabs which the Normans are cooking were unknown in the eleventh century:

    > The existence of the kebabs was the puzzle. The suggestion of pre-Norman Moorish influence on cooking in France is reasonable, but perhaps a more likely date for their introduction was 1722, following an exchange of cultural embassies. (n.p.)

    Herbert has also kindly sent me a copy of an article from *The Times* (London) of 2 October 1990 in which Nicholas Brooks of Birmingham University and David Wilson convincingly rebut Chenciner's theory.
15. There are a number of compelling episodes depicted in this last long section (given in Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry).* Here the Tapestry designer gave full reign to his expressionistic powers: the massed Norman archers (pl. 60), the English shield wall (pls 61 and 62), close-quarter combat (pl. 65), the carnage of a battle so fierce and overwhelming that the bodies of men and horses spill into the lower border panel (pls 66 and 67) and the English fleeing the battlefield (pl. 73). In another scene we watch as Odo -again recalling to mind the warrior Bishop Turpin in the *Chanson de Roland* rallies the Norman soldiers in a moment of panic (pl. 67). In the next figure William turns, raises his nasal and faces his men--thereby quashing the false rumours of

his death (pl. 68).

Perhaps the most controversial scene in the Tapestry is the one in which Harold is mortally wounded. We see what dearly looks like the earl pulling a Norman arrow out of his eye and in the next scene being hacked by a Norman knight. All of this occurs under the rubric HIC HAROLD REX INTERFECTUS EST, and the king's embroidered name is separated into HAROALD by the peak of his helmet (pl. 71). There has been much ink spilled over whether the arrow-in-the-eye is a restorer's embellishment, based upon the literature that succeeded the Tapestry, or whether it is part of the original design. The same is true for the 'second' death of Harold.

Some of the most influential studies on this have been: Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and interpretation', pp. 23- 27; Bernstein, *Mystery,* pp.24, 144-61, 171-74; Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry,* pp. 194, 199 -200; and C. H. Gibbs-Smith, 'The death of Harold at the Battle of Hastings', *History Today*, 10 (1960), pp. 188-91. It is mentioned in Baudri de Bourgueil, ed. Phyllis Abrahams, in Les *Oeuvres Poetiques* (Paris, 1926), pp. 195, *463 -66;* it is found in William of Malmesbury, in trans. J. A.

Giles, *William if Malmesbury's Chronicle if the Kings of England* (London, *1*847), p. 277; and in Wace, in ed. A. J. Holden, Le *Roman de Rou*, 2 vols (Paris, 1970), pp. 8805 13. See also Abrahams' notes in her critical edition of Baudri's poems for the relation between these various 'fictional' texts and the Bayeux Tapestry (p. 241, n.52, pp. 243-47, n. 61).

Despite arguments to the contrary, I accept what the Tapestry itself depicts and Brooks' and Walker's assertion:

> Detailed examination of the Tapestry's depiction of the death of Harold therefore confirms that the old interpretation is correct. The story of Harold's death commencing with the arrow-wound in the eye is one of the best-known traditions of English history, and it is not one that needs to be jettisoned. (p. 33)

It is Harold, King of England, who dies. His death is initiated by the wound received from a Norman arrow and finalized in the second scene by the hacking he receives from a Norman knight.

16. There is no doubt that the story pictured on the Bayeux Tapestry constitutes a narrative, a connected series of plot events which progresses through time. The Tapestry's form lends itself perfectly- by virtue of its shape and 224-foot length to the portrayal of an extended series of interrelated visual scenes that are temporally processional. By virtue of its spatio-temporal characteristics, its imaginal aesthetic, the Tapestry manifests something of an expressive hybrid, effecting as it does an embroidered representation of Mitchell's description of the historical conflict between the verbal and the visual: 'Poetry is an art of time, motion, and action; painting an art of space, stasis, and arrested action.' W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, 1986), p. 48. The Tapestry's scenes, while individually static instances of 'arrested action,' are arranged in such a way that their spatial relationships produce a plot that is moved whenever the viewer engages it. This engagement occurs both in past

historical time and present viewing time. Hence, the viewer supplies the movement and the connective cognitive element that link the static scenes into a coherent, advancing narrative. This interpretive process, precisely because it is a process, cannot take place extratemporally.

17. Joseph A. Dane, 'The pictorial syntax of the Millstatt Genesis', Studies in Iconography, *4 (1978), pp. 23-36.*

18. Following the *Oxford English Dictionary,* I intend 'gloss' here in the sense of '[an image] inserted between the lines or in the margin as an explanatory equivalent of a ... difficult [image] in the text ... . ' This is obviously a departure from the standard definition of 'gloss,' which gives 'word' where I have bracketed 'image.' I make this change, because the Tapestry is first and foremost a pictorial text, but is one on which images gloss images.

    Obviously, there are verbal inscriptions on the Tapestry; however, the information that they provide is not interpretive, as manuscript glosses often are. For example, the inscription over the wounded Harold reads HIC HAROLD REX INTERFECTUS EST. This statement is quite clear and leaves virtually no room for interpretation. What is odd about this arrangement of word and image on the Tapestry is that the images-which constitute the primary text - sometimes problematize the inscriptions: just what does the picture show? Is it Harold who is struck by the arrow? Is he also the one in the next scene whose leg is being hacked by an English soldier? Instances like this differ from manuscripts, where the gloss is often a subjective interpretation of the main written text. Here, although the main pictorial text is open to interpretation as with a manuscript, the gloss is objective and declaratively stated.

19. These scrolling shapes differ in design throughout the Tapestry, particularly in its latter sections. Some are more reminiscent of candelabra than others, which are more abstract, more involved and less foliate. This could indicate different workshops. Or, perhaps it prefigures what Ruskin called Gothic art's 'perpetual novelty.' John Ruskin, 'The Nature of Gothic', in ed., intro., notes Clive Wilmer, *Unto this Last and Other Writings by John Ruskin* (London, 1985), p.95.

20. This also occurs in Dante's *Commedia,* where the poet constructed an elaborate system of some 50 circular boundaries, only to have them crossed by his Pilgrim on his journey to the *visio Dei.*

21. For a thorough discussion of the historical background, see Stenton's excellent *Anglo-Saxon;* Brown's insightful, if biased, *The* Frank Barlow, *Edward* the *Confessor* (Berkeley, 1970); and David Douglas and George W. Greenaway, eds, *English Historical Documents* II 1042-1189, 2nd ed. (London, 1981).

    There are a number of chroniclers who treat the story, most of whom are sympathetic to the Norman cause: Guillaume de Jumieges in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum,* c. 1070; Guillaume de Poitiers in the *Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum el Regis Anglorum,* c. 1073; and the anonymously written *Vita AEdwardi Regis,* which might be contemporary or nearly so. The exception is Eadmer of Canterbury, whose *Historia Novorum in Anglia, c.*1122, was written with an English bias. See also the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* annal 1066.

    There are poetical works as well which are related to the Tapestry's events: Wace's *Roman de*

Rou, c.1175; the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio, c.1070,* until recently attributed to Guy, Bishop of Amiens; *Us Oeuvres Poetiques de Baudri de Bourgueil,* c.1100; and *King Harold's*, c.1200.

22. Bernstein, *Mystery,* pp. 134-35, *passim*. On the Tapestry's alleged English bias, and on its 'Englishness,' see Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and interpretation', pp. 10-12. As much as I would like to, I cannot accept subversive readings of the narrative like Bernstein's that argue for Anglo-Saxon 'deconstruction,' as it were. Indeed, this study originally was meant to demonstrate much the same thing; the images just do not support such contentions.

23. The Latin text reads:

> ... se in curia domini sui Ewardi regis, quamdiu superesset, ducis Guillelmi vicarium fore; ensisurum quanto consilo valeret, aut opibus, ut Anglica monarchia post Edwardi descessum in ejus manu confirmaretur; traditurum interim ipsius militum custodiae castrum Doveram, studio atque sumptu suo communitum; item per diversa loca illius terrae alia castra, ubi voluntas ducis ea firmari juberet, abunde quoque alimonias daturum custodibus. (Brown, *The Normans,* p. 129, n. 108)

24. For a complete, detailed genealogical chart, see James Chamber, *The Norman Kings* (London, 1981), pp. 216-17; or 'Select Chart Pedigrees', in David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England* (Berkeley, 1964), pp. 418-19, tables 1 and *3*.

25. The system in France was different and was more like our modern notion of primogeniture:

> While detailed evidence from the tenth century is sparse, the important fact is clear that an heriditary right to rule-coloured but not qualified by the Scandinavian toleration of bastards, or rather, long indifference to Christian marriage - was established in the ducal house by the usual device of having the heir recognized and accepted in his father's lifetime. (Brown, Normans, *p*. 45)

26. See Brown, *The Normans,* chs 1 and 2, for a full recounting of William's exploits in his duchy. For a less biased account, sec Stenton, Anglo-Saxon, *ch. 16.*

27. Brown *(The Normans*, p. 106) proposes a date for the first of these seminal events: ' ...the only time when the new archbishop, appointed in mid-Lent 1051, could have visited the duke for this purpose is during his journey to and from Rome for his *pallium* between mid-Lent and late June, 1051.'

28. For a discussion ofHarold's power and place in England, see Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon,* pp.576-77.

29. Checking the *Chronicle* for the year 1051, we find that William himself is said to have come to England:

> Then forthwith Count William came from overseas with a great force of Frenchmen, and the king received him and as many of his companions as suited him, and let him go again. This same year William the [Norman] priest was given the bishopric of London which had been given to Sparrowhawk ('D', pp. 120 21).

Although 'D' differs from both 'C' and 'E,' this entry is intriguing. If William did visit England this summer, was it to accept the crown and succession upon Edward's death? Was it to help put down the unrest of Godwin's rebellion? Perhaps it was both. If William came in response to a summon by Edward for help, he could have easily been offered the rights of succession.

30. For a thorough discussion of heraldry, see Gerald Brault, *Early Blazon: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to Arthurian Literature* (Oxford, 1972). Even though he notes that 'the evolution of true heraldry' has been followed back only 'to the second quarter of the twelfth century through the study of armorial seals' (p.3), there are a number of pictographs in the Tapestry that look decidedly heraldic. Consider, for example, the omnipresent lions *couchant, rampant* and *passant;* the Norman shields emblazoned with dragons and chevrons, the firedrakes associated so often with William; and, of course, the chevron-embossed panel diagonals, which play a crucial role as Norman signifiers. This last motif is found also on a shield attributed lalsely to William, King of England (Brault, *Early Blazor,* p. 77, figure 24).

31. Harold's and Edward's hand gestures show their speech, not their facial expressions. Their movements are not those of oath-makers, like Harold's are when he swears his oath to William. Here the extended index fingers illustrate not only speech but also dialogue, since each man extends his finger to touch the other's. As Ernst Gombrich has written, this sort of conventional gesture 'accompanied any solemn spoken pronouncement and belongs to the repertory of movements recommended by ancient teachers of rhetoric. In medieval narrative art it comes therefore to function simply as a "speaking gesture".' Ernst Gombrich, 'Ritualized gesture and expression in art', in *The Image and the Eye* (Ithaca, 1982), p. 66.

32. Chevrons were used extensively as a decorative theme in Norman and Romanesque art and architecture. They appear, for instance, in the west window and portal arches of the abbey church of St Stephen in Caen, which was founded by William and which is where he is buried, and in the vaulting of England's Ely (1080) and Norwich (1096) Cathedrals and in Selby Abbey (1100). They dominate the exterior of the twelfth-century Norman church of St Mary the Virgin in Iffley, Oxford-shire, decorate the exterior stringcourse on the even earlier Kilpeck village church just outside Hereford, and can be seen all round the interior of Hereford's Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin and St Aethelberht, as well as on the outer frame of its famous *Mappa Mundi*. Additionally, Charles E Keyser, *Norman Tympana and Lintels with Figure or Symbolic Sculpture Still or Recently Existing in the Churches of Great Britain* (London, 1904), *passim*, indicates that they are found at: Great Canlield, Cury, Peakirk, Black Bourton, Tottenhill, Sherborne, Beckford, Egleton, Siston, Rochford, Brize Norton, and Stewkley.

33. The same regal support system supports Archbishop Odo's chair in William's pavilion at Hastings. There is only one Norman diagonal here, however, and not a pair (figure 16). Perhaps this is a reference to the fact that Odo was William's half-brother.

34. The pictograph that McNulty identifies as 'The Lion and the Stag' (figure 7) does not seem to be a discrete fable. See note 4 and the following discussion.

35. All summaries of and references to these beast fables are to Perry, *Babrius and Phaedrus,* unless otherwise noted. I give first the page number on which the tale is found, either 'B' (for Babrius) or 'P' (for Phaedrus) and then its number in Perry's collection. For example, 'The Farmer and the Cranes' appears on pp. 38-39, is part of Babrius' collection and is fable 26: thus

(Perry, pp. 38-39. B26). Often both Babrius and Phaedrus give the same basic fable in their respective collections. When this is the case, I reference the one I cite first and the other second. Thus, 'The Fox and the Crow' appears in both collections and is cited as (Perry, pp.206-9. P13, pp.96-97. B77).

Perry's extensive introduction is excellent. It contains background information on 'Aesopic' fables; biographical information on Aesop (sixth century BCE), Phaedrus (first century CE) and Babrius (second century CE); sections on sources and influence studies; bibliographies of original language texts, manuscripts, papyri, translations into other languages and secondary works (pp. xi-cii).

36. Brown *(The Normans,* p. 68) characterizes Edward:

> A weak king in reality if not in intent, and married to a queen he did not love, Edward was never able to free himself from the dominance first of earl Godwin and then earl Harold, Godwin's son (the queen was Godwin's daughter), and stands as the very antithesis of duke William in Normandy across the Channel, who dominated his new aristocracy by his excelling personality and achievements.

37. Helene Chefneux felt that some fables were repeated because the designer was lacking in inspiration:

> Ces doubles ne nous apprendront plus rien et denotent simple-ment que l'artiste, arrivant it I'ornementation de la fin des listes, s'est trouve legerement a court d'inspiration; il s'est alors contente de reproduire certains motifs du debut, avec ou sans modifications de detail. (p. 21)

38. It is no surprise that this tale begins the section that has baffled critics for so long. Here it seems that events happen in reverse chronological order, with Edward interred in his church before he dies. This clearly cannot be the case. What happens is that the narrative direction shifts and must be read right to left. That is, we are meant to begin with Edward's death and work left to his interment. McNulty has posited an instructive reading strategy for this section which is also applicable to other scenes:

> Time in the Tapestry moves in the direction the figures move, so that while most passages are to be read from left to right, others, like the funeral sequence, are to be read from right to left because the actors move from right to left. As the mourners are moving from right to left, away from the deathbed scene, the King's death is to be understood as anterior to his funeral, as nature and common sense --not to say common decency -demand. (p. 17)

Crucial here is McNulty's distinction between the movements of time and the Tapestry's 'actors.' Time never stops in this embroidered narrative, although the direction of its progression is often reversed. Accordingly, we should not be surprised if the border narrative shifts its temporal flow, especially in this section.

39. That is, up to the figure of Edward in figure 13. At that point the lower panel figures shift into an unusual arrangement, one of some confusion, that perhaps indicates the confusion to follow the king's impending death.

40. Wilson notes that 'rabbits were introduced into England by the Normans' (p. 187). There must be some irony here, since Harold is represented here as the prey and in a later scene, where a

bird pursues a hare.

41. McNully wonders if these are ‘two birds (of prey)?’ and notes that the lamb 'is in the position of the foolsoldiers in the main panel, under cavalry attack from both sides’ (p. 145). This seems plausible, and I would add that the lamb seems to mimic the forward motion of the hard-riding Normans, who rush toward the English footsoldiers. It is obviously in flight and in grave danger.

42. The one in the upper panel docs look somewhat like the fable called ‘Rough Fare’: an ass was eating the prickly leaves of some thorn bushes. Seeing him, a fox crept up and said: ‘You there, how can you, with that soft and flabby tongue of yours, chew up and eat such rough fare as this?’ (Perry, p. 173. B133). However, there is little here to connect it thematically with the Tapestry’s narrative. Leon Herrmann, *Les Fables antiques de la borderie de Bayeux* (Brussels, 1964), pp. 19-23, has identified all of the non-paired beasts in this section as representatives of various fables, not always convincingly. See also Wilson, *Tapestry*, p.229, note 51 on Herrmann.

43. The theme of flight and attempted escape also appears in the Tapestry’s final scene, as the English flee in fear for their lives. This is a bit far from the figures under discussion here to be of any but general relevance, however. Curiously enough, the designer did not depict the Normans' feigned flight down from Battle Ridge, which was engineered to draw the English down from their superior defensive position, to break up the English shield wall and to open them up to Norman attacks on their flanks.

> At length, however, seeing that the enemy, so massed and so determined, could not to be overcome without with very heavy losses, the Normans and their associates decided upon the strategem of the feigned flight, remembering with what success the pursuing English had been, in the event, cut down earlier in the battle. It was a cavalry manoeuvre, twice conducted; each time the English were tempted to break ranks in pursuit, and the knights, wheeling their horses about, surrounded them and slew them to a man. But still the main position held, no decision had been achieved, and evening, by all accounts, was now approaching. (Brown [1968], pp. 171-72)

According to Brown, this manoeuvre ‘is very well attested by all the principal sources for the battle, except the Tapestry’ ([1968], pp. 171, n. 147). Even though it reportedly had worked before, perhaps it was a bit too ‘fox-like,’ too deceptive a maneuver to represent on the Tapestry. Or, perhaps the fact that it did not work kept it out of the design.

44. My only quibble with this assessment is McNulty’s characterization of ‘inversion’ as ‘wrong.’ I would modify this is to say that the *monde* renvene top os is not always a negative signifier, although here things do go wrong for Harold. It is often perhaps more often - used in medieval romances, for example in those of Chretien de Troyes, to show moments of mental confusion or of *psychomachia*. These scenes are most often ones in which one lover (male or female) agonizes over another. In these cases, paradoxically, it is only when things go ‘wrong,’ when the lover’s world seems inverted, that things are going right.

45. All of this is to say nothing of the legendary connotations that wolves and foxes have had. For a lengthy ‘analysis’ of and commentary on the wolf, see T. H. White, The *Book of Beasts* (New

York, 1954), pp.56-61. He writes that wolves 'massacre anybody who passes by with a fury of greediness'; that '[w]olves are known for their rapacity ... '; and that 'a wolf is a rapacious beast, and hankering for gore' (p. 56). *The Physiologus* characterizes the fox no less negatively: '[a] fox is an entirely deceitful animal who plays tricks [and] ... is figure of the devil.' Michael J. Curley, trans., *Physiologus* (Austin, 1979), p. 27.

46. Strangely enough, this is an anthropomorphized monkey, as Wilson indicates: 'note the monkey represented as a naked human' (p. 175). Not only is the simian humanized, but also he seems to have an English moustache! This ties its significance to the historical events a bit more: perhaps Harold is being 'aped.'

47. Harold seems to be sailing alone. It must be Harold who points toward land as he stands in the bow of the ship. His name is embroidered right over his head, just as it is when he is killed. (In fact, his lance tip separates the letters: HAR A OLD.) Such isolation and labeling signify bivalently: they emphasize Harold's importance as director of the mission, singling him out because of the things he is about to do in Normandy.

48. The theme of hospitality, in which the mouse is sorely repaid lor entertaining the frog in such a kind way, supplies a variant reading. Edward's and William's trust and hospitality could be the mouse, since the Norman apparently took such good care of Harold while he was in France. The frog again is Harold, who repaid his lords' trust and hospitality with such treachery. This would leave William himself as the bird, who swoops down to avenge his own betrayal. Regardless of which reading is chosen. Harold is pegged as the frog, just as I have associated him with every other negatively valenced animal in the previous fables. He can be no other: the Tapestry is decidedly biased in Edward's and William's favor.

49. McNulty is uncharacteristically silent on the significance of this fable. Regarding its later manifestation he writes:

> The main panel below this fable is filled with the cavalrymen and bowmen who have come to England with William in response to his call for support in a just cause. They are like those who responded to the call of the brave and intelligent goat in the fable. (p. 30)

50. Notice here also that the griffin is poised as if watching the proceedings, and that it is separated from these fable illustrations, not by a diagonal, but by another tree. This seems to include him in the events as an observer. In addition, his orientation is backwards, if the pattern set in the lower panel up to the point where the fables begin is followed. From the beginning to this point, each pair of animals faced one another but had their backs to the preceding and succeeding animals.

Perhaps the griffin is placed here out of convention. As Beryl Rowland notes, '[w]hile there are many representations of griffins without lions, particularly in connection with Alexander's hubristic flight to heaven, the lion is the animal with which the griffin is most commonly associated from earliest times' (p.48). Here characterization of the beast certainly fits this scene, if we excise its negative valence:

> 'Usually the griffin represents an evil principle, gai ning victory over animals and men whom he

appears to tear to pieces' (p.48). Beryl Rowland, *Blind Beasts* (Kent, 1971).

51. Other possibilities are Phaedrus' 'The Farmer and the Cranes' (Perry, p. 39. P26) and Marie de France's 'The Swallow and the Linseed' (p. 71). However, neither of these fables covers as much of the illustrated material as the one from Babrius' collection.

52. The Pleaides are in the sky from May to November in the northern hemisphere, which, along with planting and harvesting seasons, is sailing season. William landed at Pevensey on September 28 1066 and charged Harold at the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066 (Brown [1968], pp. 160-63). It seems no coincidence that the same time frame is used for these fabulous border scenes.

53. Michael Powicke, *Military Obligation in Medieval England: A Study in Liberty and Duty* (Oxford, 1962). This final section is but a pale reflection of my indebtedne*ss to Marc Bloch, in trans. L. A. Manyon, *Feudal Society,* 2 vols (Chicago, 1961).

54. Bloch, in *Feudal Society,* explains the order and significance of these two components of vassalage:

> There were therefore many acts of fealty without homage: we do not know of any acts of homage without fealty -at least in the feudal period. Furthermore, when the two rites were combined, the pre-eminence of homage was shown by the fact that it was always given first place in the ceremony. It was this alone that brought the two men together in a close union; the fealty of the vassal was a unilateral undertaking to which there was seldom a corresponding oath on the part of the lord. In a word, it was the act of homage that really established the relation of vassalage under its dual aspect of dependence and protection. (1, p. 147)

55. David Wilson notes Edward's 'walking stick to emphasize his age' (p. 182).