IDENTITY AND STATUS IN THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY: THE ICONOGRAPHIC AND ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

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This paper examines the extent to which the designer of the Bayeux Tapestry used artefacts and attributes to distinguish between the various individuals he depicted, and in particular how they highlight collective identity (English and Norman) and individual status.[1] It discusses artefacts and attributes taken from contemporary art, those which reflect contemporary practice, and which seem to be created especially for the purpose of the design. Finally, it assesses the general significance of these elements for better understanding the design and production of the Tapestry.

The story recounted in the Bayeux Tapestry – the events leading to the Norman Conquest of England – is a complicated one, in which the identity and status of the many characters shown is crucial. It occupies at least 58 scenes, set on both sides of the Channel, involving 627 individual characters, 33 buildings, 32 ships, 738 animals, birds, and beasts, as well as numerous other examples of material culture, offering a tantalizing glimpse into how life may have been lived in the second half of the eleventh century. The Tapestry is vast, which adds to its complexity; what remains (lacking the end) is constructed of nine conjoined strips of embroidered linen of different lengths, measuring just over 68 metres.[2] The narrative sometimes runs from right to left, as well as the more usual left to right. Nonetheless, the Tapestry manages to flow in an unhindered manner thanks to its Latin inscription and various devices employed by its designer.

Early medieval pictorial narratives are rare survivals; those showing contemporary events exceptionally so. They imposed particular demands upon their creators. Whereas most other surviving eleventh-century works of art recreate well defined biblical or spiritual events whose characters often act within established iconographies and outside human time, thus minimizing the need to innovate, the reverse is true for the Tapestry. If, as is generally accepted, the Tapestry was produced soon after the events it depicts,[3] then it is unlikely that a prototype or exemplar existed,

1 I would like to thank Richard Gameson, Fi Hitchcock, and Emma Lewis, who commented upon earlier drafts. At the Battle Conference Matthew Bennett, John Gillingham, Sally Harvey, Chris Lewis, Gale Owen-Crocker, Ann Williams, and others made useful comments and suggestions. Reference numbers for Sections, Scenes, and individual human figures [the latter here prefaced F] follow the numbered facsimile published in M. J. Lewis, *The Archaeological Authority of the Bayeux Tapestry*, BAR British series 404, 2005, 267–340. Manuscripts are assigned place of origin and date when first cited (x/xi = late tenth/early eleventh century; xi = eleventh century; and (for the eleventh century) xi^{in} = early; xi^{1} = first half; $xi^{1/4}$ = first quarter; $xi^{2/4}$ = second quarter; xi^{med} = middle; xi^{2} = second half; $xi^{3/4}$ = third quarter; $xi^{4/4}$ = last quarter; xi^{ex} = end).

2 I. Bédat and B. Girault-Kurtzeman, 'The Technical Study of the Bayeux Embroidery', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, ed. P. Bouet, B. Levy, and F. Neveux, Caen 2004, 83–109 at 86.

3 D. M. Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, London 1995, 212; R. Gameson, 'The Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. idem, Woodbridge 1997, 157–211 at 161; P. Bouet, 'Is the Bayeux Tapestry Pro-English?', in *BT*, ed. Bouet, 197–215 at 213–14.

though individual elements and aspects of the design were almost certainly copied from earlier sources,[4] and other similar narrative works are known to have existed (though they have not survived), one showing the deeds of Ealdorman Byrhtnoth and another depicting the Norman Conquest, the latter in the possession of Adela, countess of Blois.[5] The challenge that faced the Bayeux Tapestry designer was to produce an illustrated narrative sequence of a recent historical event, without recourse to an earlier visual source around which to structure the design. This was a difficult task. If the narrative was to be understood then it was vital to distinguish visually between the numerous characters depicted.

Marking Identity and Status

Closer examination reveals that there are distinctions between the way the English and Normans are shown in the Bayeux Tapestry. It is generally known that the Tapestry's Englishmen wear moustaches, whereas the Normans have the backs of their heads shaven. Moustaches are commonly used to denote Englishmen in the early part of the Tapestry, but from about Scene 25 Anglo-Saxons are mostly clean-shaven, particularly apparent during the battle of Hastings.[6] More perplexing is the fact that characters such as Harold might not be shown in a consistent manner even in neighbouring scenes: sometimes he is moustached, sometimes clean-shaven.[7] Normans with the backs of their heads shaven are most common in the earlier parts of the Tapestry,[8] but they are rarely shown thus from about Scene 34: even in England few have this distinctive hairstyle.[9] A partial explanation is that in much of the remainder of the Tapestry the Normans wear conical helmets, hiding their hair; but even when shown it is generally not in the Norman style.[10]

Gale Owen-Crocker has suggested that the Tapestry's culottes are reserved for the Normans. She has noted that 'culottes were not part of the English iconographic tradition and their presence in the Tapestry suggests the artist was familiar with … contemporary Norman dress', which may have had Scandinavian origins.[11] Although, certainly, it is mostly the Normans who wear them,[12] at least two Englishman are

4 F. Wormald, 'Style and Design', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehensive Survey*, ed. F. Stenton, London 1957, 25–36 at 32–3. See also N. P. Brooks and H. E. Walker, 'The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 1, 1978 (1979), 1–34 and 191–9 at 13–17; C. Hart, 'The Bayeux Tapestry and Schools of Illumination at Canterbury', *ANS* 22, 1999 (2000), 117–67; Lewis, *Archaeological Authority of BT*.

5 M. Budny, 'The Byrhtnoth Tapestry or Embroidery', in *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg, Oxford 1991, 263–78; W. Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Monument to a Norman Triumph*, Munich 1994, 61.

6 Scenes 48–58. Clean-shaven exceptions before Scene 25 include F125, 180 (both Harold); moustached exceptions afterwards include F430 (Harold), 472, 498 (Gyrth), 523–5, 527, 591 (Harold), and 593 (Harold).

7 F239, 242, 256.

8 e.g. Scenes 12–13.

9 Exceptions include F358–9, 368, 379 (?William), 381, 383, 388–91, and 393–7.

10 e.g. F442, the archers in the lower border of Scenes 55–6, looters in the lower border of Scenes 57–8, and F612.

11 G. R. Owen-Crocker, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: Culottes, Tunics and Garters, and the Making of the Hanging', *Costume* 28, 1994, 1–9 at 2–4. Trousered tunics are rare in contemporary art, apart from the Oseberg Tapestry (s.ix^{in}), but culottes (possibly a tunic) worn by St John in BL Cotton MS Tiberius C.vi, fol. 13r. (xi^{med}, uncertain) have banding on the inside leg, like that worn by F76.

12 Including F76, 82, 86, 93–5, 266–9, 357, 364–5, 367–70, 372, 389–91, 442–4, 545, 551–4, 561–4, and 566.

shown in culottes,[13] and culottes have also been identified as a feature of workmen's dress.[14] Likewise, it has been argued that the Normans display variation in their leg bands (garters), which might distinguish them from the English.[15] While both garter types (horizontal and crossed) are mostly worn by Normans, they are also worn by Anglo-Saxons. Significantly, garters are most common in Section 2 (principally concerned with events in Normandy), where few Englishmen appear.[16]

Weapons are also used to distinguish between Englishmen and Normans. Long-hafted axes (sometimes referred to as broad-axes) are shown rarely and in all but one instance are held by Anglo-Saxons.[17] Round shields, also uncommon, are only associated with the English.[18] Bows are similarly not prominent, and are typically used (in all but one case) by the Normans.[19] Since weapons occur almost exclusively during the battle of Hastings, we can conclude that the designer used them as a way of distinguishing English and Normans in the mêlée of battle.

Several miscellaneous attributes also seem to denote identity. Thirty-five gonfanons (pennant flags) appear in the Tapestry, of which five are masthead pennants;[20] as many as twenty-seven are held by the Norman contingent.[21] Englishmen are twice shown carrying a standard in the form of a wyvern, generally thought to represent the dragon of Wessex. Since they appear beneath the inscription 'here King Harold was slain' they might be intended to show the king's personal standard.[22] Horned

13 F254, 527.

14 J. L. Nevinson, 'The Costumes', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 70–5 at 73; S. Bertrand, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux et la manière de vivre au onzième siècle*, La Pierre-qui-Vire 1966, 292. Worn by labourers (F266–9), stable-hands (F357), and servants (F364–5, 367–72), but also by William's messengers (F93–4) and Turold (F95), though never by high-status characters.

15 Wilson, *BT*, 219; G. R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, revised edn, Woodbridge 2004, 258.

16 Section 1: garters rare, always horizontal (often appearing like striped stockings), and only worn by Normans (F75, 85–6, 91, 103–4, 106, 109, 117–18). Section 2: horizontal garters only worn by Normans (F147, 149–50, 155, 157–8, 163, 168, 177, 179, 186, 188–9), cross-garters mostly by Normans (F123–4, 127–8, 130, 138, 143, 161, 183) but also by Harold (F125, 187). Thereafter few garters are shown and most are worn by Normans. Section 3: an Englishman with horizontal garters (F248). Section 4: only Wadard (F366), horizontal type. Section 5: four Normans, one crossed (F414), the others horizontal (F384, 387, 408). Section 6: four Normans, one crossed (F440), three horizontal (F420–1, 448). Section 7: seven men, of whom one English (F461); two with cross-garters (F505, 509), the others horizontal (F451, 461, 491–2, 499). Section 8: two Normans with cross-garters (F557–8), two horizontal (F555, 582). Section 9: Harold (F593) and two Normans (F606, 610) with horizontal garters.

17 F205, 208, 239 (Harold), 454, 473, 494 (Leofwine), 501, 507–8, 527, 569, 573, 593 (Harold), 598, 601, and 603. The only Norman is Count Guy of Ponthieu (F91). Elsewhere in the Tapestry small hand-axes used as a carpentry tool (e.g. F267–8) or a weapon (e.g. F362, 367, 461) are associated with both English and Normans and not used to highlight identity.

18 F488, 497–8, near 504, 572, 587, 599, 600, and 603. An oval shield held by F573.

19 F441–4, 462 (Englishman), 544–54, 560–7, 575–6, 578–9, and 612.

20 Ships 7, 15, 17, 23, and 24. Ship 22 – believed to be William's ship, the *Mora* – has a banner in the form of a cross, traditionally the papal banner; C. H. Gibbs-Smith, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, London 1973, 13, doubted that the papal banner would be hoisted at a masthead.

21 F140 (cross motif), 162, 173 (Conan), 174–5, 176 (William), 177, 296 (?William), 334, 358–60, 387 (cross motif), 392 (cross motif), 398 (William, cross motif), 404 (?William), 420 (cross motif), 421 (sub-triangular banner depicting a bird), 426, 432–3, 435, 439–40 (three dots), 451 (three dots), 505 (triangular banner, unclear whether dropped by Norman or Englishman), and 543 (Eustace, cross motif). English gonfanons: F180 (Harold, two dots), 454, and 471. D. Renn, 'Burhgeat and Gonfanon: Two Sidelights from the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 16, 1993 (1994), 177–98 at 190, suggested that F180's flag might be the captured Breton arms, but the only gonfanon certainly in Breton hands (F173) does not have this motif; Grape, *BT*, 115, and most other commentators have thought this scene shows a type of investiture, by which Harold becomes William's vassal.

22 F585, 587. Brooks and Walker, 'Authority of BT', 32; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 10, 1987 (1988), 49–65 at 59–60; Renn, 'Burhgeat and Gonfanon', 187.

drinking cups are used only by the English, though only two are depicted.[23] Another feature associated with the English is a gap that appears in the amidships gunwale plank of their ships. All but one of seven English ships in the Tapestry have this feature.[24] Horses, on the other hand, are associated with the Normans: 163 out of the 177 in the main frieze.[25]

Personal status is also shown in the Tapestry. While most of the Tapestry's characters are anonymous, some are named in the inscriptions and for them we can examine the extent to which attributes and artefacts have been used to highlight their status. The regalia worn by the Tapestry's kings (Edward and Harold) are the most obvious attribute. They are seldom depicted and the objects held vary, but include the crown, mace, orb, sceptre, spear, and staff.[26] Size is also used to distinguish certain élite characters – notably Edward, Harold, and William – who are often shown taller than their companions.[27] Some individuals named on the Tapestry, by contrast, are not shown taller than others in the same scenes,[28] and one of them, Turold, is depicted as a dwarf.[29] In Scenes 1 and 25 Edward is taller than Harold, even though the king is seated, but Harold and William never appear much different in size when in each other's company, even during the crucial oath scene.[30] Occasionally height helps to identify a particular individual: in Scene 47 it is presumably William who is brought his steed by a shorter man,[31] and in Scene 5 the anonymous character steering a ship may be Harold.[32] Only a select few of the Tapestry's characters – Edward, Guy, Harold (only when king), Odo, Robert, and William – are shown seated (often enthroned).[33] Apart from Harold, these men are never shown standing in the company of a seated figure.[34] In most instances their seats include zoomorphic elements, such as beasts' heads on furniture arms or animal feet as chair legs, and some are cushioned. Edward's seat is marginally more impressive than most, but only Harold sits on a high-backed throne.[35]

The infrequency of gonfanons in the Tapestry suggested to Derek Renn (and Allen Brown before him) that they were used to mark out 'the leader of an army or … fighting unit'.[36] Their sporadic occurrence undermines this theory, although the motifs upon them, which differ, might have been intended to identify particular individuals. Renn distinguished between gonfanons with a border, and those without,

23 F12, 16. I would like to thank Alban Gautier for bringing this to my attention.
24 Ships 1–5 with gap, Ship 7 without.
25 The following Englishmen ride horses: F4–8, 9 (Harold), 69, 71, 74 (Harold), 116 (Harold), 125 (?Harold), 203 (?Harold), 204, and 430 (Harold).
26 Scene 1, Edward crowned, with sceptre (F3). Scene 25, Edward crowned, with ceremonial staff (F207). Scene 27, Edward crowned (F231). Scene 29, Edward's crown and an axe offered to Harold (F239). Scene 30, Harold enthroned, with crown, mace, and orb (F242). Scene 33, Harold crowned, with spear (F256).
27 e.g. Scene 16, William (F143); Scene 52, Harold's brothers Leofwine (F494) and Gyrth (F498); Scene 57, the fatally wounded Harold (F591).
28 e.g. Scene 41, Wadard (F366); Scene 9, Guy (F85).
29 F95; Wilson, *BT*, 176. C. H. Gibbs-Smith, 'Notes on the Plates', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 162–76 at 165, thought that Turold is not the dwarf but the full-size figure standing immediately to his left (F94).
30 e.g. Scenes 13–14.
31 F404–5.
32 F44.
33 Edward (F3, 207), Guy (F85), Harold (F242, 256) Odo (F264, 384), Robert (F386), and William (F106, 128, 186, 263, 385, 398).
34 Harold stands twice (F2, 207) before Edward, once (F84) before Guy, and twice (F129, 187) before William.
35 Edward (F3), Harold (F242, 256). Other characters sit on less impressive seats: in Scene 44, Odo, William, and Robert share a cushioned bench.
36 Renn, 'Burhgeat and Gonfanon', 187.

but it does not seem that the distinction serves any particular purpose of identification.[37] The cross motif on some of them has been interpreted as marking the papal banner given to William on the authority of Pope Alexander II,[38] but there are no clues why it is associated with some characters and not others. The significance of the sub-triangular banner held by Figure 421, the triangular pennant under the horse of Figure 505, and those with a motif of three circles held by Figures 439, 440, and 451 also remains a mystery. It has been suggested that the bird on the sub-triangular banner identifies it as the *danbrog* (the Viking war-flag depicted on coins of Anlaf Cuaran of Northumbria, 941–4),[39] while the three circles motif has been interpreted as the arms of Boulogne,[40] but is never associated with Eustace of Boulogne himself.

Several aspects of clothing are used to highlight status. Gowns (excluding religious vestments), for example, are worn only by Edward, Guy, Harold, Odo, Robert, and William, mostly by the last.[41] Some of the gowns worn by Harold, Odo, and William seem to be worn over an undergarment (sometimes of a different colour), suggested by a diagonal line;[42] in Scene 44 such lines distinguish the garments worn by Odo and William from Robert's. Likewise, the cloak (worn by fifty-one individuals) is an attribute of high-status characters, sometimes helping to identify them where otherwise they would be anonymous.[43] For example, in Scene 3 a cloaked Harold enters Bosham church, while his companion, who is otherwise similarly dressed, does not. Brooches are mostly worn by cloaked characters and so invariably associated with high-status individuals, while also keeping their everyday function of pinning garments. Two distinct brooch types – round and square (or rectangular) – are illustrated, perhaps significant in determining the status of the wearer. Indeed, only Edward, Guy, Harold, William, and the unnamed cleric associated with Ælfgyva wear square brooches, whereas round brooches are much more common.[44] The relationship between brooch type and particular individuals,

37 Bordered gonfanons appear in three clusters, in Scenes 19–21, 45–8, 51–5; the significance of the clustering is unclear.

38 Carried by F140, 387, 392, 398, 420, and 543. Gibbs-Smith, *BT*, 13–14; Poitiers, 126–7; Orderic, II, 142–3; C. Morton, 'Pope Alexander II and the Norman Conquest', *Latomus* 34, 1975, 362–82. A 'corrupted' cross might appear on the gonfanon held by F404 (William) (Renn, 'Burhgeat and Gonfanon', 192).

39 Renn, 'Burhgeat and Gonfanon', 191, after G. J. French, 'On the Banners of the Bayeux Tapestry, and the Earliest Heraldic Charges', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 13, 1857, 113–30 at 129; *Encomium*, 96–7; A. Ailes, 'The Knight, Heraldry and Armour: The Role of Recognition and the Origins of Heraldry', in *Medieval Knighthood IV: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference, 1990*, ed. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey, Woodbridge 1992, 1–21 at 8 n. 34; C. E. Blunt, B. H. I. H. Stewart, and C. S. S. Lyon, *Coinage in Tenth-Century England: From Edward the Elder to Edgar's Reform*, Oxford 1989, 221–2.

40 A. Bridgeford, *1066: The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry*, London 2004, 194, after B. Platts, *Origins of Heraldry*, London 1980, 41. Dots in varying designs are also found on gonfanons held by F180, 392, 404, 471, and 543.

41 Edward (F3, 207), Guy (F85), Harold (F242, 256), Odo (F264, 384), Robert (F386), William (F106, 128, 186, 263, 385, 398).

42 F242 (Harold), 263 (William), 384 (Odo), 385 (William).

43 Harold, F2, 9, 11, ?29, ?44, 56, 74, 84, 116, 129, 187, 206, ?229, 239, 242, 256; Guy, F 85, 91, 117; William, F106, 118, 124, 128, 186, 263, 385, ?392, 398; Edward, F207; Odo, F264, 380, 384; others, F1, 4–8, 136 (cleric), 189, 203, 226 (cleric), 237–8, 240–1, 262, 378–9, 387, 399; Nevinson, 'Costumes', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 71. In Scene 13 Harold, Guy, and William (F116–18) wear cloaks, whereas ten other figures do not.

44 Round brooches: F1, 2 (Harold), 4, 6–8, 9 (Harold, central dot), 11 (Harold), 29 (?Harold), 56 (Harold, ?patterned), 74 (Harold), 84 (Harold), 91 (Guy), 116 (Harold, central dot), 118 (William, central dot), 124 (William, central dot), 128 (William, central dot), 129 (Harold, central dot), 186 (William), 187 (Harold, circular central field), 189 (worn at throat), 203, 226 (cleric, central circle), 229 (Harold,

however, is difficult to explain and probably coincidental: for example, in Scene 13 Guy wears a square brooch, whereas Harold and William do not, perhaps contrary to our expectations if the rarer square brooches are considered higher status than round ones. Some brooches are distinguished by a central dot on a circular or square field, but there does not seem to be any obvious relationship between them and particular characters.[45]

Tassels, on the other hand, are associated only with William and may be a mark of comital rank. They embellish various parts of his person, including the back of his head or neck and his knees.[46] As such they help identify his primacy, especially in scenes where he is depicted alongside other high-status characters or where he would otherwise be difficult to recognize, as in Scene 21, where he confers arms upon Harold. Tassels occur only in the earlier parts of the Tapestry (up to Scene 21).

Some of the Tapestry's high-status characters have embroidered garments which further accentuate their status. The most ostentatious is a gown worn by Edward, which has embroidery around the neck, up the torso, and below the knees. Embroidered garments are otherwise worn only by clerics, Guy, and William.[47] From Scene 31 onwards none of the characters wears embroidered clothing.

Arms and armour are also used to denote status. Besides the stylized representation of mail (shown as circles or hatching),[48] the Tapestry shows armour types composed of scaled and triangular plates.[49] Both these variant forms are rare: scaled armour is worn only by Guy (Figure 91), while only William (Figure 143) and Odo (Figure 534) wear triangular armour. Although it is unclear why they are highlighted in this way, it is apparent that their armour helps to distinguish them from other individuals. Broad-axes are also used to highlight the élite, particularly in the earlier part of the Tapestry, but unlike other attributes of status they are often held by those in close proximity to high-status characters, as well as by the élite themselves.[50] From Scene 52, however, they are used to identify the English in the mêlée of

central circle), 237–8, 240–1, 242 (Harold), 243 (Stigand), 256 (Harold, square field), 262, 263 (William, ?circular central field), 264 (Odo), 298 (?William, central dot), 378 (central dot), 380 (Odo), 384 (Odo), 386 (William), 387, 392 (?William), 398 (William), and 399 (central dot). Square brooches: F85 (Guy), 117 (Guy, central dot), 136 (cleric, circular central field), 207 (Edward, cruciform central field with central circle), and 239 (Harold, square central field). Rectangular brooches: F106 (William). The brooches worn by F5, 44 (?Harold), and 206 (Harold) are not clearly visible.

45 Occasionally the brooches of anonymous characters have motifs, while those of named characters with them do not, e.g. in Scenes 43 and 46.

46 F106 (legs), 118 (back of cloak), 128 (legs), 179 (back of helmet and neck).

47 Edward (F3): mostly square fields, alternating in colour, on the knees circles within the square fields and a fleur-de-lis above the left knee. Guy (F85): embroidered bands (motif of circle-square-circle between horizontal bands) below the knees. William (F118): cloak embroidered with a band with three circles. Edward (F207): embroidered band (motif of alternating squares and rectangles between two horizontal bars) above the knees. The vestments of F230 and 234, who attend the dying and dead Edward are embroidered with simple dot motifs. The orphrey of Stigand (F243) is embroidered with double dots between crosses.

48 Bertrand, *Tapisserie de Bayeux*, 303–4; Lewis, *Archaeological Authority of BT*, 50. J. Mann, 'Arms and Armour', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 56–69 at 60, proposed that 'Mail, by nature a highly intricate and complicated structure, is difficult to represent accurately on a small scale. Thus the artist must have recourse to some convention'. Brooks and Walker, 'Authority of BT', 3, argued that the Tapestry embroiderers began by trying to be 'too realistic' and later applied more stylized conventions.

49 The triangular armour has also been interpreted as a padded coat (C. Gravett, *Hastings 1066: The Fall of Saxon England*, London 1992, 19), perhaps worn under or over mail.

50 F91 (Guy), 205 (Harold's companion), 208 (Edward's companion), 238 (offering axe to Harold), 239 (Harold), 494 (Leofwine), 501 (defending Gyrth), 593 (?Harold), 598, 601, and 605 (the last three defending Harold).

battle.[51] Round shields are similarly used to highlight English positions in confused battle, but also mark the death of high-status Englishmen in three particular scenes: the deaths of Leofwine and Gyrth, of those 'who were with Harold' (perhaps a reference to his housecarls), and of Harold himself.[52] The club (five examples)[53] and mace (one)[54] are used to identify William and (once) Odo.

Animals also help identify men of status. Hawks appear only in the early part of the Tapestry, and are specifically associated with Harold, Guy, and William.[55] The hawk and its relationship with these three men is intriguing, as the bird seems to pass from Harold to Guy and then to William, perhaps as a diplomatic gift. It is therefore tempting to think of it as symbolic of Harold's own capture by Guy and subsequent transfer into the duke's custody.[56] Likewise, the eleven dogs in the Tapestry's main frieze seem to be associated with Harold.[57] Horses are mostly associated with the Normans, but a few Englishmen are shown on horseback, six of the fourteen examples probably or certainly representing Harold.[58]

The way in which designators of identity and status are used in the Tapestry is complicated and inconsistent. For clarity of discussion we may distinguish two main aspects. Some artefacts and attributes are exclusive to one particular group but not used by all its members. Other artefacts and attributes are normally used to mark identity or status but are occasionally linked with individuals outside the group in question.

The number of designators employed consistently to identify members of a particular group is relatively high, although it is rarely the case that a given attribute is always used to identify all its members.[59] For example, *only* Englishmen carry the wyvern banner and drink from horned cups, but not *all* Englishmen do so. The same is true for many attributes of status. Only high-status characters are seated, wear cloaks, brooches, or embroidered garments, or are associated with hawks and dogs, but many élite individuals are not highlighted in this way. Likewise, although the kings have regalia, William wears tassels, William and Odo carry a club or a mace, and Guy, Odo, and William wear triangular or scale-plated armour, there are many occasions when they are not so identified. The fact that none of these elements is associated with other individuals or groups, however, confirms the hypothesis that the designer introduced them purposefully, to denote identity or status. It is perhaps to be expected that he did not used them consistently, as the design of the Tapestry would have been impossibly complicated if, for example, all high-status people had to be shown riding accompanied by hawk and dog.

51 e.g. F454, 473, 507–8, 527, 569, 573.

52 Scenes 52, 56–7.

53 F143 (?William), 424 (?William: not obvious whether 423 or 424 is him; perhaps the designer has shown him twice, as elsewhere: Brooks and Walker, 'Authority of BT', 29–33), 431 (William), 534 (Odo), and 542 (William). The *baculum* held by these characters has been interpreted as 'the eleventh-century equivalent of a field marshal's baton': Wilson, *BT*, 225.

54 F423 (?William). The missile thrown from the Anglo-Saxon shield-wall (Scene 52) and carried by F619–20 and 622, in the form of four rocks or stones tied to a stick or staff, does not seem to be an attribute of status.

55 F9 (Harold), 21 (not Harold, though presumably the bird is to accompany him on his ship), 73 (Guy), 74 (Harold), 116 (Harold), 117 (Guy), and 124 (William).

56 D. J. Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry*, London 1986, 124.

57 Scene 2, five dogs (A540–4) ahead of Harold and his *milites*. Scene 4, two dogs (A455–6) taken aboard one of Harold's ships. Scene 8, two dogs (A533–4) trail the party leading Harold to Beaurain. Scene 14, two dogs (A583–4) run before the figure we presume to be Harold.

58 F4–8, 9 (Harold), 69, 71, 73 (Harold), 116 (Harold), 125 (?Harold), 203–4 (one perhaps Harold), 430 (Harold), and 623.

59 An exception is round shields at the deaths of Gyrth, Leofwine, and Harold.

Sometimes devices and designators used to highlight one group, or men of high status, are associated with the opposing group, or individuals of low status, though such occurrences are rare. Besides a few bearded individuals, the only member of the Norman contingent shown with a moustache is the character generally identified as Eustace of Boulogne.[60] An explanation has been proposed by Andrew Bridgeford, who noted that Eustace is sometimes referred to as 'Eustace the moustached', though the earliest known use of the nickname is in the late twelfth-century *History* of Lambert of Ardres.[61] Similarly, while culottes, garters, and the bow are mostly reserved for the Normans, they are also associated with some Anglo-Saxons.[62] It seems unlikely that culottes and garters indicate identity, and their usual association with Normans is perhaps coincidental. Garters are indeed quite common in contemporary English manuscripts.[63] The fact that one Englishman has a bow is less easy to explain, and may simply be an error.

Some commentators have suggested that the Tapestry's gonfanons denote status, but the hypothesis is weakened by the lack of consistent links between particular designs and particular individuals. Size, on the other hand, clearly is used to emphasize the status of élite characters, particularly Edward, Harold, and William, though the convention is not always followed. There are a few instances, for example, when Harold appears smaller than his companions.[64] In some cases (such as Scene 30) his comparatively small size is unimportant, as his trappings of power (in this case regalia) clearly emphasize his status. Similarly, on several occasions Odo is shown taller than William, though that arguably befits the probable patron of the Tapestry.[65]

Parallels in Contemporary Art

The Bayeux Tapestry was produced at a time when it was customary for artists to borrow and repeat pictorial formulae and reuse them in new contexts.[66] It is consequently unsurprising that several of the devices found in the Tapestry are used elsewhere in contemporary art.

The depiction of all but one of the English ships with a gap in the gunwale amidships may be intended to represent the cargo hold,[67] but it is intriguing that

60 F543; Wilson, *BT*, 194.

61 M. A. Benoît's published 1729 engraving of the Tapestry depicts Eustace clean-shaven (D. Hill, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: The Establishment of a Text', in *BT*, ed. Bouet, 383–99 at 398), but an unpublished drawing, dating to about 1730, shows him moustached, proving that the moustache was not added by nineteenth-century restorers (as suggested by Bridgeford, *1066*, 192).

62 Culottes: F254, 527. Garters: F248, 461, 593.

63 Bodl. MS Tanner 10, fol. 115v. (x^{1}, uncertain); BL Cotton MS Vespasian A.viii, fol. 2v. ($x^{3/4}$, Winchester, New Minster); Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale MS M 11, fol. 12 (x^{ex}, English artist at Saint-Bertin); BL Add. MS 24199, fol. 17 (x^{ex}, uncertain); Bodl. MS Junius 11, pp. 58, 74, 84, 87 (x^{ex}, ?Canterbury, Christ Church); Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale MS Y.6 (274), fol. 36v. ($xi^{1/4}$, uncertain); BL Cotton MS Julius A.vi, fols 4v.–5 (xi^{in} and xi^{med}, ?Canterbury, Christ Church); BL Stowe MS 944, fols 6–7 ($xi^{2/4}$, Winchester, New Minster); BL Cotton MS Tiberius, C.vi, fols 8v.–9, 13 (xi^{med}, uncertain).

64 e.g. Scenes 9, 29.

65 e.g. Scenes 35, 43; in the latter Odo (F380) is larger than the character often presumed to be William (F379).

66 M. O. H. Carver, 'Contemporary Artefacts Illustrated in Late Saxon Manuscripts', *Archaeologia* 108, 1986, 117–45 at 118; J. J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work*, London 1992, 52, 77.

67 Wilson, *BT*, 226. Although archaeologists have compared the Tapestry ships with medium-sized warships (such as Skuldelev 5) these would have had little room for cargo (Grape, *BT*, 38; *The Skuldelev*

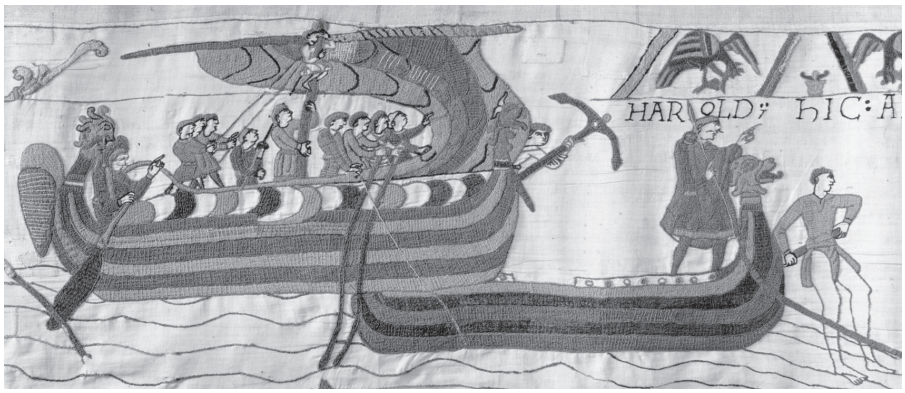

Figure 1a Gaps amidships in the Bayeux Tapestry: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – eleventh century. By special permission of the City of Bayeux.

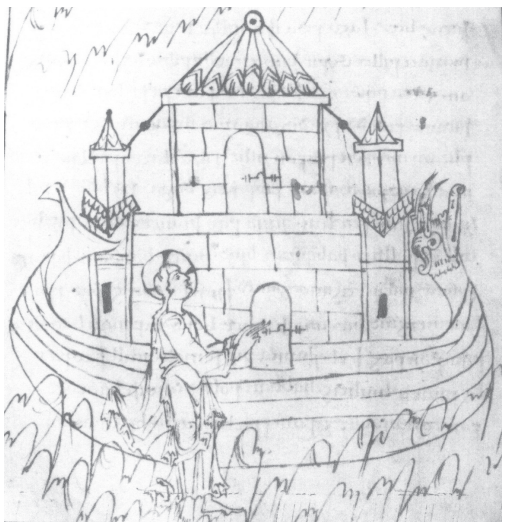

Figure 1b Gaps amidships in Junius 11, page 68: © The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Figure 1c Gaps amidships in Old English Hexateuch (Cotton Claudius B.iv), folio 14: © The British Library. All Rights Reserved.

ships shown with horses aboard (by implication cargo vessels) are never shown in this way. There is no conclusive archaeological or documentary evidence that the feature is diagnostically English, though the tenth-century Graveney boat may have had a similar break in the gunwale.[68] Vessels with gaps amidships are nonetheless depicted in English art, both Junius 11 and the Old English Hexateuch illustrating the Ark with a doorway cut through its upper strakes (Fig. 1).[69] Perhaps the Tapestry designer borrowed this feature from art to help distinguish between English and Norman ships. The only English ship shown without it appears in Scene 33, after the join between Sections 2 and 3 of the Tapestry. It may therefore be that the gap in the gunwale has more to do with the design and production of the Tapestry than with a purposeful attempt to highlight English identity.

High-status figures are not infrequently distinguished by their size in contemporary illuminations. For example, King Edgar is shown taller than his companions in the New Minster Charter,[70] as is Abraham in the Old English Hexateuch.[71] In both the Tapestry and contemporary art the élite are often seated when those of lesser importance are not. For instance, Cain sits enthroned before his people in Junius 11,[72] as does St Benedict before his monks in the Arundel 155 Psalter.[73] In this case it seems that the Tapestry designer follows an accepted artistic convention for signifying status.

Loose-fitting gowns, commonly worn by royalty, the Divine, and some religious figures in early medieval manuscripts,[74] are less frequent in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Instead, gowns in eleventh-century art, including the Bayeux Tapestry, have long sleeves and are tighter fitting, though they still denote rank. Gale Owen-Crocker has observed that in manuscript illuminations the long gown is worn by kings and courtiers alike but in the Tapestry more exclusively by kings.[75] The embellishment of such gowns with gems, jewels, or embroidery is reflected in both the Tapestry and contemporary art. In particular, the geometric embroidered bands with quatrefoil motifs on Edward's gown at the start of the Tapestry have manuscript parallels.[76]

Ships' I: Topography, Archaeology, History, Conservation and Display, ed. O. Crumlin-Pedersen, Roskilde 2002, 189–91). A reconstruction of the Ladby boat was put to sea with four horses (K. Thorvildsen, *The Viking Ship of Ladby*, Copenhagen 1975, 26), but such a vessel could not have accommodated the larger numbers of animals shown aboard the Tapestry's ships: C. M. Gillmor, 'Naval Logistics of the Cross-Channel Operation, 1066', *ANS* 7, 1984 (1985), 105–31 at 110, convincingly argued that the Ladby ship was 'too narrow and too shallow draughted' to transport horses across the Channel.

68 *The Graveney Boat: A Tenth-Century Find from Kent*, ed. V. Fenwick, BAR British series 53, 1978, 251); R. L. S. Bruce Mitford and others, *The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial*, 3 vols in 4, London 1975–83, I, 352, noted that 'the absence of gunwale spikes or tholes in the midships area' of Sutton Hoo 1 might suggest that the vessel had a central gap in the rowing positions; both Skuldelev 1 and 3 had a cargo space amidships but no physical break in the gunwale plank (*Skuldelev Ships*, ed. Crumlin-Pedersen, 97–140, 195–243).

69 Bodl. MS Junius 11, p. 68; BL Cotton MS Claudius B.iv, fol. 14r. (xi$^{2/4}$, Canterbury, St Augustine's).

70 BL Cotton MS Vespasian A.viii, fol. 2v.

71 BL Cotton MS Claudius B.iv.

72 Bodl. MS Junius 11, p. 57.

73 BL Arundel MS 155, fol. 133r. (xi$^{1/4}$, Canterbury, Christ Church).

74 e.g. King David in CUL MS Ff.I.23, fol. 4v. (xi$^{2/4}$, ?Winchcombe), Christ in Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.10.4, fol. 16v. (xi$^{1/4}$, ?Canterbury, Christ Church); St John the Evangelist in New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.869, fol. 126v. (x$^{4/4}$ to xi^{in}, Canterbury, Christ Church); St Dunstan in Bodl. MS Auct. F.4.32, fol. 1 (x^{med}, Glastonbury).

75 Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, 241.

76 St John in BL Arundel MS 60, fol. 12v.: the case for a post-Conquest date has been argued by P. Kidd, 'A Re-examination of the Date of an Eleventh-Century Psalter from Winchester (British Library MS Arundel 60)', in *Studies in the Illustration of the Psalter*, ed. B. Cassidy and R. M. Wright, Stamford 2000, 42–54. Similar motifs are also found on gowns in Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale MS 11, fol.

Figure 2a Gowns with diagonal line in the Bayeux Tapestry: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry - eleventh century. By special permission of the City of Bayeux.

Figure 2b Gowns with diagonal line in British Library, Cotton Titus D.xxvi, folio 75v: illustration by M. Lewis.

Further, the diagonal line found on some of the Tapestry's gowns is a common feature in contemporary illuminations (Fig. 2).[77]

Tassels like those associated in the Tapestry with William are uncommon in late Anglo-Saxon art, but when they do occur they are clearly used to identify high-status individuals: King Cnut in the New Minster *Liber Vitae* is a good example.[78] Their use to denote status seems to be a relatively new convention; in some Carolingian and Ottonian illuminations tassels are worn by the lower echelons as well as the élite.[79]

Square and rectangular brooches are extremely scarce in the archaeological record.[80] Their rare survival suggests that few Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Norman artists would have observed them first-hand, so their illustration in the Tapestry is intriguing. A possible explanation is that they have their roots in square patches adorning vestments occasionally depicted in art (Fig. 3).[81] All such representations

56; BL Arundel MS 155, fol. 133 (xi$^{1/4}$, Canterbury, Christ Church); Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa MS I.3311, fol. 15 (x/xi and xi$^{2/4}$, uncertain).

77 High-status individuals in BL Cotton MS Titus D.xxvi, fol. 75v. (xi^{1}, Winchester, New Minster); Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.34, fol. 1 (xi^{1}, Canterbury, Christ Church); New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.709, fol. 1v. (xi$^{2/4}$, English artist at ?household of Judith of Flanders). Accompanying figures in BL Cotton MS Galba A.xviii, fol. 2v. (x$^{2/4}$, Winchester, Old Minster); BL Cotton MS Tiberius C.iv, fol. 18v. (xi^{med}, uncertain).

78 BL Stowe MS 944, fol. 6.

79 e.g. BN MS lat. 266, fol. 1v. (ix^{med}, Tours); Trier, Stadtbibliothek MS 24, fol. 22 (x$^{4/4}$, Reichenau); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek MS Clm. 4454, fol. 199 (xi^{in}, Reichenau).

80 E. Wamers, 'Karolingerzeit, Fibel und Fibeltracht', in *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde* 8.5/6, 1995, 586–602 at 587; E. Wamers, *Die frühmittelalterlichen Lesefunde aus der Löhrstrasse (Baustelle Hilton II) in Mainz*, Mainz 1994, 128–34.

81 e.g. the Flemish gilt cover of New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.709. These also seem to be relatively common in Romanesque manuscripts.

Figure 3a A square brooch worn by Harold in the Bayeux Tapestry: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – eleventh century. By special permssion of the City of Bayeux.

Figure 3b Square patch worn by Christ on the gilt cover of Pierpont Morgan Library, M.709. Illustration by M. Lewis.

in Anglo-Saxon art, especially manuscripts, appear on the robes of religious figures, and it is surely no coincidence that all the rectangular brooches represented in the Tapestry (bar that on Figure 117) are shown joining a cloak either at the neck or at chest height, mimicking their position on ecclesiastical gowns. It is therefore possible that the Tapestry designer understood these patches to be brooches and depicted them as such. Of the brooch motifs depicted in the Tapestry only the elaborate cruciform found on a brooch of Edward (Figure 207) seems to denote status. An example with similar elements, though stylistically different, is worn by St Benedict in the Arundel 155 Psalter.[82]

Reflections of Contemporary Practice

Many of the artefacts and attributes used in the Tapestry to denote identity or status seem to reflect contemporary practice. It is not known for certain whether it was typically English to wear a moustache or if only Normans shaved the backs of their heads, though it would seem nonsensical to the contemporary viewer if such differences had no basis in reality. Such distinctions, however, must surely have been generalized for the purposes of the Tapestry. The only hint that moustaches were typical of the English upper classes is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's comment that Harold's chaplain Leofgar wore them until he became a bishop.[83] An Old English description preserved in Bodleian Library Hatton MS 115, sometimes cited to substantiate the belief that Normans had their hair shaven in the manner shown in the Tapestry, refers in fact to the shaven necks of Danes.[84] The long hair of the English, well attested in documentary sources, is not shown as such on the Tapestry.[85]

The fact that certain weapons are used to highlight identity is easier to explain. The Tapestry's broad-axes are similar to types that were commonly used in England and Scandinavia from about the tenth century. In the Tapestry's battle scenes they are nearly always associated with the English, which is consistent with our understanding of warfare in the late Anglo-Saxon period.[86] There is also good archaeological evidence to support the English use of round shields.[87] They are commonly illustrated in art,[88] and are frequently used by the English in contemporary accounts

82 BL Arundel MS 155, fol. 133. In Romanesque illuminations a cross-shaped brooch with central circle is illustrated in CUL MS Ii.3.12, fol. 61v. (xii$^{2/4}$, Canterbury, Christ Church). A similar cross-shaped brooch, but with foliate arms, is depicted in Cambridge, St John's College MS H.6, fol. iiv. (xii$^{3/4}$, ?Ramsey). Quatrefoil brooches are found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 2, fol. 94 (xii$^{2/4}$, Bury St Edmunds); ibid. MS 4, fol. 84v. (xii^{med}, Canterbury, Christ Church); Copenhagen, Royal Library MS Thott 143 2^{o}, fol. 69v. (xii$^{3/4}$, Northern England or France); Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 14, fol. 13v. (xii$^{1/4}$, Cîteaux); The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek MS 76 F 13, fol. 5v. (xii$^{4/4}$, ?Fécamp or Ham).

83 ASC 1056 CD.

84 Wilson, *BT*, 208.

85 *Carmen*, lines 325–6; Poitiers, 178–81; R. Bartlett, 'Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages', *TRHS* 6th series 4, 1994, 43–60 at 45.

86 S. Pollington, *The English Warrior from Earliest Times to 1066*, Hockwold cum Wilton 1996, 127–9; T. A. Archer, 'The Battle of Hastings', *EHR* 9, 1894, 1–41 at 12–13, 16.

87 T. Dickinson and H. Härke, *Early Anglo-Saxon Shields* (*Archaeologia*, 110, 1992); I. P. Stephenson, *The Anglo-Saxon Shield*, Stroud 2002.

88 e.g. BL Cotton MS Julius A.vi, fol. 4v.; BL Cotton MS Tiberius C.vi, fol. 16; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana MS Reg. Lat. 12, fol. 36r. (xi$^{2/4}$, Canterbury, Christ Church). Whereas archaeological evidence suggests that the boards of round shields were flat, those in the Tapestry and art are shown with a convex board, suggesting that the form in the Tapestry has been borrowed from art.

of warfare, including the battle of Hastings.[89] The current view that the bow was not much used as a weapon of war by the Anglo-Saxons also seems to be reflected in the Tapestry,[90] as it is the Normans (in all but one instance) who are armed in this way. However, the bow's ready availability for hunting is likely to have ensured use by Anglo-Saxons in battle, and there are a few references in pre-Conquest sources.[91] A twelfth-century addition to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (C) suggests the bow was used by the English at Stamford Bridge in 1066.[92] Bows are also found in English illuminations.[93] However, it is the Norman sources, specifically William of Poitiers and the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* of Bishop Guy of Amiens, that refer to its use by the Normans at Hastings.[94] It therefore seems likely that the Tapestry designer associated the bow with the Normans on the basis of his understanding of the role of archery in the battle. It may have been the case that plated armour (both scaled and triangular) was more expensive to produce than the chain-mail shown elsewhere in the Tapestry. If so, this would explain why plated armour is worn only by a few high-status individuals; armour of all types would have been expensive.[95]

There is documentary evidence that the Anglo-Saxons carried a wyvern standard. Henry of Huntington refers to the dragon standard at the battle of Ashingdon (1016),[96] while Widukind of Corvey describes how the Continental Saxons also carried a dragon standard in battle.[97] Likewise, William of Poitiers implies that drinking from horned vessels was particular to the English.[98]

The Tapestry's association of the horse with the Normans complements the accounts in written sources: both Norman and English writers demonstrate a conviction that the Normans were accustomed to fighting on horseback, while the English were not. It is well known that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (C) for 1055 records that Earl Ralph (a Frenchman) unsuccessfully led English cavalry against the Welsh. As the chronicler explains, the attack failed because the English were on horses, implying that this was against their custom.[99] While the English probably rode to war, it is generally accepted that they dismounted before battle.[100] This tradition seems to be reflected in *The Battle of Maldon,* where Byrhtnoth 'ordered

89 *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. E. V. Gordon, London 1937, line 20; ASC 937 A; *The Exeter Book*, ed. and trans. I. Gollancz and W. S. Mackie, 2 vols, Early English Text Society original series 104 and 194, 1895–1934, II, 94–7 (Riddle 5); *Carmen*, lines 411–12.

90 J. Bradbury, *The Medieval Archer*, Woodbridge 1985, 17.

91 e.g. *Battle of Maldon*, line 110; *Judith*, ed. M. Griffith, Exeter 1997, XI, lines 220b–223a; Riddle 23 (*Exeter Book*, II, 112–15).

92 ASC 1066 C.

93 BL Cotton MS Cleopatra C.viii, fol. 23 (x^{ex}, Canterbury, Christ Church); BL Harley MS 603, fols 4v., 14v., 15r. (x/xi and $xii^{2/4}$, Canterbury, Christ Church); BL Cotton MS Galba A.xviii, fol. 14v.; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana MS Reg. Lat. 12, fols 24v., 109v.

94 Poitiers, 126–7; *Carmen*, lines 409–10.

95 Scaled armour is known to survive from the Roman period, and it is eminently possible that it was worn in the eleventh century. Triangular plated armour does not appear in contemporary English art but is illustrated in Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 14, fol. 13 and v., and BN MS lat. 17767, fol. 40v. ($xii^{1/4}$, Saint-Pierre, Corbie).

96 Huntingdon, 358–9.

97 Brooks and Walker, 'Authority of BT', 32. A dragon standard is depicted in St Gallen MS 22, p. 140 (x^{in}, St Gallen), though it could not have been known to the Tapestry designer. Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, I, 454–5, says that Harold's banner 'bore the figure of a warrior, richly embroidered with gold and gems', rather than a dragon.

98 Poitiers, 180–1.

99 ASC 1055 C.

100 R. Glover, 'English Warfare in 1066', *EHR* 67, 1952, 1–18 at 7–9. A. Hyland, *The Medieval Warhorse from Byzantium to the Crusades*, Stroud 1994, 72–6, disagrees.

every warrior to dismount, drive off his horse and go forward into battle'.[101] More significant is the fact that William of Poitiers and the *Carmen* say that the English dismounted before battle at Hastings.[102] Horses are illustrated in late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, such as Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 23 and the Old English Hexateuch, often tacked up for war.[103] Such illustrations do nothing to discredit the view that Anglo-Saxons did not use horses in combat. Indeed, small finds recovered by archaeologists and in particular by metal-detector users show that horses played an important role in Anglo-Saxon life.[104] It seems reasonable to conclude that the Tapestry designer associated the horse with Normans on the understanding that horses played a fundamental part in William's success at Hastings.

The most obvious attribute denoting status which was taken from real life is the Tapestry's depiction of Edward and Harold in regalia.[105] It is also entirely credible that contemporary high-status clothing would be embellished with embroidery, as in the Tapestry, while the less well-off may have copied high-status fashion in lesser quality materials; mimicking embroidery and other decorative elements would have obvious cost implications.

There is evidence which shows that the broad-axe symbolized status in the late pre-Conquest period,[106] and this association may have continued after the Conquest. It is interesting that broad-axes are rarely depicted (if at all) in contemporary art, which gives weight to the idea that the Tapestry designer purposefully used them to emphasize status, contrary to the usual artistic convention.

Several of the animals depicted in the Tapestry could have been afforded only by men of status, and so their association with the upper classes reflects reality. For example, hunting hawks (presumably peregrine falcons) could have been maintained only by those who had the means to sustain them; several times Domesday values hawks at the large sum of £10.[107] Harold himself probably owned a hunting text, unfortunately now lost.[108] The rarity of hawks in contemporary art is a clue that the Tapestry designer drew on contemporary practice rather than art historical tradition.[109] Likewise, only the élite could have kept dogs in significant numbers or of

101 *Battle of Maldon*, lines 2–3.

102 Poitiers, 126–9; *Carmen*, line 377.

103 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 23, fol. 2 (x^{ex}, ?Canterbury, Christ Church); BL Cotton MS Claudius B.iv, fols 4r., 6r., 25r. and v., 37r., 51r., 69r., 72r., 84v., 122v., 126r., 141v., 154r. See also BL Add. MS 24199, fol. 17; Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale MS Y.6 (274), fol. 36v.

104 Many examples of late Anglo-Saxon horse harness equipment, including stirrup-strap mounts and stirrup terminals, are recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme's finds database <www.finds.org.uk>.

105 See also B. English, 'The Coronation of Harold in the Bayeux Tapestry', in *BT*, ed. Bouet, 347–81.

106 L. Musset, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux*, Paris 2002, 50, noted that axes were symbolic of rank in Scandinavia. See also Wilson, *BT*, 225.

107 S. Harvey, 'Domesday England', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, 2, 1042–1350*, ed. H. E. Hallam, Cambridge 1988, 45–136 at 57, 130. Cf. GDB 56b1 (Berks. B/10); *Battle of Maldon*, lines, 7–8; J. Clutton-Brock, 'The Animal Resources', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. D. M. Wilson, London 1976, 373–92 at 388.

108 C. H. Haskins, 'King Harold's Books', *EHR* 37, 1922, 398–400 at 399. See also G. R. Owen-Crocker, 'Hawks and Horse-Trappings: The Insignia of Rank', in *Battle of Maldon*, ed. Scragg, 220–37 at 220–9; S. L. Keefer, 'Body Language: A Graphic Commentary by the Horses of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. G. R. Owen-Crocker, Woodbridge 2005, 93–108 at 96; F. Barlow, *The Godwins: The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty*, London 2002, 54.

109 Hunting hawks depicted in BL Cotton MS Julius A.vi, fol. 7v.; BL Add. MS 47967, flyleaf (iii) ($x^{2/4}$ & x^{2}, Winchester); BL Cotton MS Claudius B.iv, fol. 15r.

superior breeds. Dogs are relatively uncommon in eleventh-century art,[110] and do not seem to signify status; horses are more common but also lack obvious high-status links.[111]

Symbols of Status

While some of the artefacts and attributes used to denote identity and status in the Bayeux Tapestry reflect contemporary practice, others are manifestly symbolic. It is unlikely, for example, that cloaks were worn only by the élite. Aristocratic garments would have been made of better materials, but 'quality' would have been difficult to show in two-dimensional art; cheaper garments might not look much different from expensive ones. So it seems likely that the Tapestry designer confined cloaks to high-status individuals regardless of actual practice. Cloaks do not seem to signify status in contemporary art,[112] and their symbolic use in the Tapestry seems to be a new artistic departure. It seems equally improbable that only high-status individuals wore brooches. As we have seen, brooches are always worn by cloaked individuals in the Tapestry, so that the association might just be coincidental. Indeed, in the eleventh century gold and silver jewellery (worn by men and women of status) was imitated in lesser quality materials, silver gilt and copper alloy standing in for gold, and lead for silver.

The Tapestry's association of the round shield with the deaths of high-status Englishmen is perplexing, given the likelihood that such shields were a common part of Anglo-Saxon military equipment. Round shields are never used in this way elsewhere in contemporary art, and in the Tapestry they are clearly symbolic of status, contrary to artistic convention.

We have already seen that the hawk was a symbol of status reflecting contemporary practice, and that the Tapestry's hawks may be symbolic of Harold's capture. Hunting dogs, kept by the élite (and hence reflecting contemporary practice), may be associated with Harold in particular for symbolic reasons. David Bernstein has suggested that dogs and hawks are symbolic of Harold's capture in France: 'by first showing Harold setting forth from England equipped for hunting and then immediately on his arrival in France depicting the "hunter" himself captured, the artist has used animal imagery as a metaphor for Harold's plight'.[113] Similarly, Sarah Larratt Keefer has recently argued that 'Norman and English figures of importance to the [Tapestry] narrative start out riding one gender of horse, but then a gender shift occurs underneath them', which she took as indicating hierarchical relationships between the Tapestry's élite characters; for example Guy rides a stallion when he captures Harold, but a mare after surrendering his captive to William. Furthermore Keefer believed that Guy's mount is 'inferior' to William's by both breed and gender.[114] These examples may be more subjective than others discussed, but still merit consideration.

[110] An example is BL Cotton MS Tiberius B.v, fol. v (xi$^{2/4}$, ?Winchester). Romanesque examples include BL Add. MS 11283, fol. 10v. (xii$^{3/4}$, uncertain); Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.2.34, fol. 137v. (xii^{1}, Canterbury, Christ Church).

[111] e.g. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 23, fol. 2; BL Cotton MS Claudius, B.iv, fols 4r., 6r., 25r., 35v., 37r., 51r., 69r., 72r., 84v., 122v., 126r., 141v., 154r.; see R. H. C. Davis, 'The Warhorses of the Normans', *ANS* 10, 1987 (1988), 67–82 at 80–1.

[112] Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, 234–40.

[113] Bernstein, *Mystery of BT*, 124–5.

[114] Keefer, 'Body Language', 95–7; F63, 60, 117, 116.

The Design and Production of the Tapestry

We have seen that the visual components used to highlight identity and status in the Bayeux Tapestry derive from a number of sources, including art, real life, and to a lesser extent the designer's imagination. The process of collating these elements and integrating them within the design clearly has the potential to shed new light on how the Tapestry was designed and produced.

Recent research confirms the view that the Tapestry was composed from a variety of sources, but that art – particularly manuscript illumination – had the most profound impact. We can be confident that the designer sketched from manuscript exemplars, and (most probably) other art forms. The Tapestry's designer was a trained illustrator, and – unless we presume that he specialized exclusively in textile design (which seems unlikely) – he probably contributed to the decoration of manuscripts, though no specific examples have yet been identified.[115] It is not known whether he was a cleric or a layman; although 'evidence for the involvement of professional scribes in the production of manuscript books at or for ecclesiastical centres in England during the late Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque periods is scarce', it does exist.[116]

The Tapestry designer also borrowed complete motifs from extant exemplars, and it seems highly probable that he knew the libraries where they were kept. The form of artefacts depicted in the Tapestry confirms the current belief that the designer primarily consulted material in Canterbury,[117] but it is also possible that he used his own collection of drawings (a model book).[118] While he almost certainly used Canterbury illuminations, this in itself does not prove that the Tapestry was produced there: sketches (and memories) were portable, and so wherever the design was done, the embroidery could have been made elsewhere.

Although we do not know the terms of the commission, we can suppose that the designer would have been given a basic, possibly even a detailed, design concept, in writing or verbally.[119] It is likely he was given some instruction concerning events and elements which should be included or excluded:[120] since Odo, bishop of Bayeux (generally believed to be the Tapestry's patron), has a prominent role in the narrative, this is eminently plausible. Perhaps the Tapestry's account was composed especially for this commission, though it is likely that the designer had 'a fair degree of freedom to select and mould the material according to the canons of his own style and art'.[121] While he was clearly influenced by contemporary art, he showed

115 J. Messent, *The Bayeux Tapestry Embroiderers' Story*, Thirsk 1999, 23 – based on knowledge of embroidery work – believed that the designer had no previous experience of wool embroidery or translating line drawings to fabric.

116 M. Gullick, 'Professional Scribes in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century England', *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 7, 1998, 1–24 at 1.

117 Lewis, *Archaeological Authority of BT*, 130–1.

118 Cf. R. W. H. P. Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900–ca. 1470)*, Amsterdam 1995, 1–53, 62–88.

119 Some scholars, such as B. S. Bachrach, 'Some Observations on the Bayeux Tapestry', *Cithara* 27, 1987, 1–28, have suggested that the Tapestry follows a lost *Gesta* or *chanson de geste*. However, Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message of BT', 193–4, found this 'altogether too simplistic a model' and instead suggested that since 'the narrative flows so well … we should credit him with a pro-active and not merely a passive role in the formation of this particular version of the story'. Also see R. Brilliant, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: A Stripped Narrative for their Eyes and Ears', in *Study of BT*, ed. Gameson, 111–37 at 119–34.

120 Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, 52–71, on the interaction between designer and patron in manuscript illuminations.

121 Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message of BT', 194.

ingenuity in accomplishing his pictorial narrative, and there seems to be an underlying logic to explain why and when he innovated or invented.

Where there was an existing convention for highlighting a particular group or individual then the designer adopted it; so, for example, the Tapestry shows higher-status individuals taller than their companions, seated while others stand, wearing gowns or garments embellished with embroidery, and with tassels on their clothes, following conventions found in art. However, when the designer was unable to rely on artistic convention, he improvised and (as a last resort) invented. In the first place he mostly used artefacts and attributes that reflected contemporary practice, such as the facial features that help distinguish Englishmen from Normans, and weapons that were used by the opposing sides at Hastings. Likewise animals which would have been maintained by men of rank, such as hawks, dogs, and horses, are used in a manner that mirrors contemporary practice, though uncommon in art. When an individual or group needed highlighting but there was no obvious device in either art or contemporary practice, then it seems the designer invented; examples include the cloak, plated armour, and round shields.

In very general terms it is apparent that the designer more readily borrowed from art when identifying status, and was more innovative when highlighting individual or group identity. The explanation is simple. As we have seen, many of the artefacts and attributes used to highlight individual status, such as size, gowns, and tassels, are used elsewhere in art, and it made sense for him to follow such conventions. However, there are no similar or obvious exemplars in art for highlighting collective identity, so the designer generally looked to attributes in contemporary practice.

The Bayeux Tapestry as it survives was constructed of nine pieces of linen of varying length that were sewn together. The fact that some artefacts, attributes, and motifs are particular to specific sections has given rise to the theory that its individual lengths may have been worked by teams of embroiderers in different workshops.[122] Some attributes are common in the earlier part of the Tapestry but less frequent thereafter. For example, moustaches are prolific in Section 1, becoming less so from Section 2, after which only the occasional character is shown moustached. Likewise, while cross-garters are particularly prominent in Section 2, garters are mostly shown as horizontal bands elsewhere. When the Normans are first shown (from Scene 8) many of them have the backs of their heads shaven, but by Scene 17 (during the Breton campaign) this feature has been discontinued. Ships with a gap in their amidships gunwale appear only in the first two lengths of the Tapestry (between Scenes 4 and 24) and not thereafter. Horned drinking vessels appear only in Section 3; dogs and hawks disappear early in Section 2 (after Scene 14); tassels are found only between Scenes 12 and 21. A few garments are shown as embroidered in the early parts of the Tapestry, but none after Scene 31. Square and rectangular brooches are confined to the first three sections (between Scenes 9 and 33). Brooches are less common in the later parts of the Tapestry (as most individuals are shown in armour rather than civilian dress) and always round.

The fact that some motifs found in the earlier part of the Tapestry are simplified or discontinued later suggests that the Tapestry may have been manufactured in two phases: one (the first two sections) with a high degree of detail and ornament, and another in which fewer motifs were used and the design was simplified. Although the discontinued motifs do not disappear at a single point, a gradual reduction of

122 A. Levé, *La Tapisserie de la reine Mathilde, dite la Tapisserie de Bayeux*, Paris 1919, 148–9. See also G. W. Digby, 'Technique and Production', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 37–55 at 42; Messent, *BT Embroiderers' Story*, 43, 61.

Figure 4a Vegetal ornament in the Bayeux Tapestry's border: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – eleventh century. By special permission of the City of Bayeux.

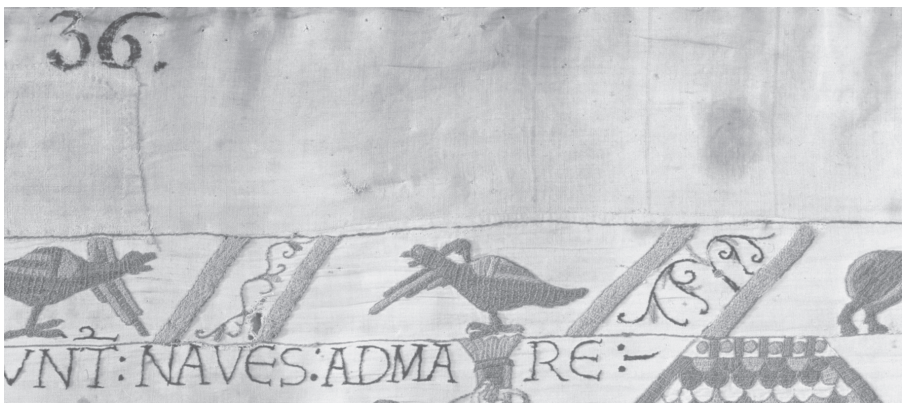

Figure 4b Vegetal ornament in the Bayeux Tapestry's border: detail of the Bayeux Tapestry – eleventh century. By special permission of the City of Bayeux.

detail and ornament is apparent from about Section 3. Further evidence to support this theory is provided by an examination of the Tapestry's decorative elements. From about Scene 35 (Section 3) there is a distinctive change in the Tapestry's form of vegetation: 'cruciform vegetal ornament' gives way to a 'scrolled' variety (Fig. 4). Wormald noted, too, that in the earlier part of the Tapestry the inscriptions are usually in black wool but from Scene 43 (Section 5) tend to be worked in alternating colours.[123] The circle motifs and cross and diagonal hatching used to illustrate chain mail, which are clearly distinguishable at the outset, become much more intertwined as the Tapestry progresses. However it is important to stress that some motifs which would be difficult to standardize across a variety of production centres, such as those used to illustrate armour, are used throughout, supporting the view that one team of embroiderers worked on the whole Tapestry.

123 F. Wormald, 'The Inscriptions with a Translation', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 177–80 at 177.

Simplification of the artistry of the Tapestry suggests a degree of flexibility during the process of creation, especially at the embroidery stage. Production may have been speeded up, perhaps to save time or money. Two phases are also reflected in a change of pace in the narrative. The scene-numbering system that was added to the backing cloth functions as an index to this.[124] Most of the individual scenes (phases of action) occur in the first three sections (Scenes 1–37), accounting for 60 per cent of its scenes in about 40 per cent of its length. The weight of evidence therefore suggests that the rate of production increased as work progressed, and that all the sections were produced by the same team of embroiderers.[125]

The designer would have sketched out his design on linen, probably using one of two methods, pricking or squaring up;[126] given the sheer size of the work, the latter seems more practical. It seems likely that the design was sketched as an outline, with perhaps only the most important scenes drawn in detail.[127] We do not know where the Tapestry was embroidered, but we must assume it was produced in a workshop accustomed to embroidery work.[128] The fact that particular artefacts and attributes found in the earlier parts of the Tapestry do not continue throughout the work may suggest that the designer sketched a full version but allowed the embroiderers an element of independence in the treatment of minor motifs. The embroiderers would presumably have been experienced in transferring a design to linen, and could have copied border motifs from a model book.[129] We might therefore imagine one team of embroiderers working systematically through the whole Tapestry from left to right, though some would have worked on the design from above (upside down).[130] The use of one team would have had time implications: the fact that the design becomes greatly simplified may reflect this.

The Tapestry's inscriptions appear to be squeezed between the pictorial imagery, and some commentators have suggested that they were an afterthought, added at a late stage or even upon completion of the work.[131] Richard Gameson viewed this as 'an erroneous twentieth-century perception, presupposing the modern neat delineation between picture and caption. Its inappropriateness is underlined by the many early medieval book illuminations which include inscriptions within the picture space'.[132]

The events depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry would have been well known to most contemporaries. Indeed, some of the most enigmatic scenes, such as Ælfgyva's encounter with a cleric (Scene 15), may have made perfect sense in the years immediately following the Conquest. For those who could read Latin there was also the inscription, providing a gentle reminder about who did what, where, and when. Even for those well acquainted with current affairs, however, the Tapestry is at times

124 Wilson, *BT*, 13, thought the backing cloth dates from about 1842, when the Tapestry was relined. However, Bédat and Girault-Kurtzeman, 'Technical Study', in *BT*, ed. Bouet, 87, thought the cloth to be 'very old' with the numbers 'put in at a much later date'. See also G. Vial, 'The Bayeux Embroidery and its Backing Strip', ibid. 111–16.

125 See also Bédat and Girault-Kurtzeman, 'Technical Study', 97.

126 For a general discussion of embroidery production see K. Staniland, *Embroiderers*, London 1991, 27–9. The transfer of designs from one illumination to another is discussed by Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators*, 50–1.

127 Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message of BT', 193.

128 Messent, *BT Embroiderers' Story*, 36.

129 There is certainly evidence of this later in the medieval period (Staniland, *Embroiderers*, 31).

130 Messent, *BT Embroiderers' Story*, 48.

131 Digby, 'Technique and Production', in *BT*, ed. Stenton, 42; Grape, *BT*, 59.

132 Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message of BT', 185. See also R. Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, Oxford 1995, 70–104.

elusive, perhaps purposefully so. While it gives an account of Harold's voyage to Normandy, the Breton campaign, and Harold's oath, for example, it offers little interpretation of their significance. Perhaps that was for its audience to decide. It is also surprising that the Tapestry gives little account of events in England preceding the Conquest, such as the battles at Fulford and Stamford Bridge, or even Harold's manoeuvres to protect the south coast from invasion. These events may have been considered superfluous to the Tapestry's message, or too well known to warrant embroidering another length.

Given the complexities and relative sophistication of the story being told, we have seen that it was necessary for the designer to use signals to help the audience 'read' the Tapestry account. Helpfully he used trees, buildings, and (in one instance) ships to divide scenes from one another. He also used border decoration and devices in the main frieze, such as the gestures of the Tapestry's characters, to remind us of the direction in which events are flowing. But most importantly, he employed artefacts and attributes to help highlight the identity and status of his characters. Crucially this gave the designer scope to produce a visually interesting and sophisticated narrative, but one which allows the story being told to flow and be (relatively) easily understood.