

TUOLD, WADARD AND VITALIS: WHY ARE THEY ON THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY?*

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On 1 August 1086, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, all the important landholders in England, no matter whose men they were, submitted to William the Conqueror at Salisbury, became his men, and swore oaths that they would be loyal to him against all others.¹ We have no record of who did so, but three *Domesday Book* landholders who had good reason to comply, given that they were tenants of the king's imprisoned half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, were Ralph son of Tuold of Rochester, Wadard, and Vitalis of Canterbury. Wadard and Vitalis are generally considered to be the men of that name who appear in the Bayeux Tapestry² and Ralph is likely to have been the son of the tapestry's Tuold. All the other named figures in the tapestry, with the possible exception of the mysterious Ælfgva, were far more prominent persons: kings, a duke, counts, earls, an archbishop, and a bishop. Partly because of their very obscurity, scholars have long sought to uncover who the three men were, the fullest recent effort being by Hirokazu Tsurushima.³ When it comes to their place in the Bayeux Tapestry, however, most scholars have been interested in what their identities might reveal about its patronage. I am interested instead in *why* they were included. My approach draws on that of T. A. Heslop, who postulated that the tapestry was designed at least partly for two audiences: Odo of Bayeux's secular followers and his learned clerical colleagues.⁴ Heslop was mainly concerned with the latter audience; my focus is on the former. As the Salisbury oath indicates, men like Tuold, Wadard and Vitalis mattered under the new Norman regime, and both king and magnates needed their support. I will argue, therefore, that Odo had the tapestry designed partly to celebrate the accomplishments of his followers and thereby show that he was a good lord who valued his military supporters and knights more generally. I will also argue that the tapestry uses the figure of Harold as a foil: a potential hero who could have joined the nexus of loyalties that tied both Odo and his men to William the Conqueror, but instead betrayed William and his followers

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¹ ASC E 1085 [1086].

² As is well known, the 'tapestry' is really an embroidery. The tapestry is available for viewing online at a number of sites as well as being reproduced in many books. Readers are urged to use one of these resources to follow the argument here.

³ Thomas Amyot, 'A Defense of the Early Antiquity of the Bayeux Tapestry', *Archaeologia* 19, 1821, 192–208; Charles Prentout, 'An Attempt to Identify Some Unknown Characters in the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson, Woodbridge 1997, 21–30; Hirokazu Tsurushima, 'Hic est miles: Some Images of Three Knights: Tuold, Wadard, and Vital', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, ed. Michael J. Lewis, Gale R. Owen-Crocker, and Dan Terkla, Oxford 2011, 81–91.

⁴ T. A. Heslop, 'Regarding the Spectators of the Bayeux Tapestry: Bishop Odo and his Circle', *Art History* 32, 2009, 223–49.

alike. Lordship and loyalty, in short, were fundamentally important issues to the patron and designer. The Bayeux Tapestry is a complex artwork, and the arguments advanced here are not intended as an all-encompassing explanation of its message or nature, but my narrower focus will allow me to advance a new interpretation of some of this work's intended purposes.

My argument rests on three important premises. The first is that the traditional identification of Odo of Bayeux as the patron is correct.⁵ In the last decade or so, various scholars have begun proposing alternatives.⁶ Space, unfortunately, does not allow a full discussion of the issue, but all the proposed alternatives have their virtues and Odo's patronage can no longer be taken as proven. That said, given the survival of the tapestry at Bayeux cathedral, its probable placement of Harold's oath at Bayeux (in contrast to other sources), the relative importance of Odo in the design, and the bishop's likely connections to Turol, Wadard and Vitalis, Odo still seems the most likely candidate for patron. A corollary is that the argument depends on Odo having an important say in the content and message of the work, even if a designer (probably someone connected to a Canterbury religious house, according to the current consensus) took care of the details.

The second premise is that the Turol, Wadard and Vitalis of the tapestry were in fact Odo's tenants in *Domesday Book*. This too, remains unproven.⁷ All three names were unusual, but there were other men named Vitalis and Turol in the period. Wadard's name, however, is so unusual that it is hard not to make the connection, and as far as I know no one has seriously challenged the identification in his case or that of Vitalis. Scholars have been more hesitant about Turol because it is unclear whether the appellation refers to the man to the left of the embroidered name or the dwarfish figure below it holding the reins of the horse, and because of doubts about whether a dwarf could be an important figure in a militaristic society (see Plate 1). I find Rita Lejeune's arguments identifying Turol as the figure to the left of the name, one of William's envoys to Count Guy of Ponthieu, to be convincing, but regardless of which figure is meant, my argument is based on the belief that the Turol of the tapestry was in fact Odo's follower, Turol of Rochester.⁸ After all, if one accepts the premise that Odo was the patron and if Wadard and Vitalis were his *Domesday Book* tenants, it would be quite surprising if Turol were not his tenant as well. My third, closely related premise is that all three appear in the tapestry because they were Odo's followers and not, as Stephen White has recently argued in the cases of Wadard and Vitalis, because of ties to St Augustine's, a likely site of the tapestry's

⁵ The best account of Odo's career remains David Bates, 'The Character and Career of Odo Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50–1097)', *Speculum* 50, 1975, 1–20.

⁶ Andrew Bridgeford, 'Was Count Eustace II of Boulogne the Patron of the Bayeux Tapestry?', *JMH* 25, 1999, 155–85; Andrew Bridgeford, *1066: The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry*, New York 2005, 162–5, 194–9, 223, 293, 304–5; George Beech, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?: The Case for Saint-Florent of Saumur*, New York 2005, 99–102, 107–9; Carola Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Life Story of a Masterpiece*, London 2006, 29–39; Carola Hicks, 'The Patronage of Queen Edith', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, 5–9; K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'Through the Eye of the Needle: Stigand, the Bayeux Tapestry and the Beginnings of the *Historia Anglorum*', in *The English and their Legacy, 900–1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. David Roffe, Woodbridge 2012, 159–74; Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Stephen D. White, *The Bayeux Tapestry and its Contexts: A Reassessment*, Woodbridge 2014.

⁷ In particular, some earlier arguments about their alleged pre-Conquest links with Odo can no longer be accepted; Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 90–1.

⁸ Rita Lejeune, 'Turol dans la tapisserie de Bayeux', in *Mélanges offert à René Crozet*, ed. Pierre Gallais and Yves-Jean Riou, Poitiers 1966, II, 419–25.



Plate 1. Turolde: Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry: eleventh century.

design.⁹ One would, of course, like one's premises to be firmly proven rather than hypotheses, and if my premises are wrong, then my argument is wrong. Given just how many uncertainties there are concerning the Bayeux Tapestry, however, one almost inevitably has to depend on a certain amount of conjecture to move beyond description to analysis, and the premises I have advanced have been widely enough accepted to serve as a basis for a theory about the work's purposes.

The three men have a more important role in the tapestry than they are generally given credit for, particularly if one looks not only at the specific scenes in which they appear but also nearby, closely related scenes. If Turolde is the envoy, then he plays a pivotal part in a key scene in which Guy is ordered to free his captive, Harold. The envoys appear not only in that scene, but also riding towards Guy and probably standing before William receiving orders. Wadard appears as an armoured and mounted knight, overseeing the plundering of food to provision the Norman army (see Plate 2). His activities can be clearly linked to the previous scene, showing knights hastening out of Hastings to seize food, and also the following scenes, showing the preparation of a feast and the feast itself, with Bishop Odo at the head of the table blessing the food. Thus Wadard is central to a set of events that were not particularly important to the overarching story of the Norman Conquest, but were meaningful enough to the patron that the designer devoted extensive space to them. Vitalis, like Turolde, comes at a crucial point in the story, informing William that he has spotted the English army (see Plate 3). His scene links backwards to the Normans riding to battle and forward to two Normans (perhaps Vitalis and William again) viewing the English army past some trees, beyond which an English scout sees the Normans and informs Harold. Both visually and in terms of the 'plot', the three men play a far more important role in the tapestry than one would expect from their status.

That said, their status and wealth, at least after the Conquest, was higher than most scholars realize. Wadard held forty estates in Domesday Book, worth £143 6s. 8d. by Tsurushima's reckoning, mostly from Odo.¹⁰ J. J. N. Palmer placed Wadard among the fifty-six wealthiest landholders in Great Domesday Book, and though he was a subtenant, Wadard had baronial wealth: his holding later formed the barony of Coomes.¹¹ Turolde's son Ralph held some thirty estates in Kent and Essex, overwhelmingly from Odo, and Tsurushima valued his overall estate at £106 14s. 6d.¹² Otherwise unidentified Ralphs held six estates worth £25 10s. from Odo in four counties, and it is possible that some of this land belonged to Turolde's son. His descendants also held land of the fee of Plessis-Grimoult in Normandy, which William I

⁹ Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 88–101. Space allows only a brief response to White's arguments, which work best with Vitalis but are hardly conclusive even in his case. White has found a document linking Wadard to the monastery, but it is characteristic of a number of documents linking local Kentish landowners to St Augustine's and does not indicate any unusually close relations with the abbey; BL, Cotton MS Julius D ii, fols 104v, 107v–108r; GDB, 10a. Given that Wadard held 87% of his land by value from Odo and 13% from the abbey, his ties to the bishop of Bayeux were likely to have been the more meaningful. As for the Turolde of the tapestry, White simply sets him aside as a mystery and discounts the possible link with Odo's follower of that name.

¹⁰ GDB, 1a, 6a, 7b, 10b, 12b, 32a, 66a, 77a, 155b–156b, 238b, 342a–343b; Tsurushima, 'Turolde, Wadard, and Vital', 85–7.

¹¹ J. J. N. Palmer, 'The Wealth of the Secular Aristocracy in 1086', *ANS* 22, 2000, 279–91, at 281, 290; I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies: A Study of their Origin and Descent, 1086–1327*, Oxford 1960, 36–7.

¹² Tsurushima, 'Turolde, Wadard, and Vital', 83–4. Ralph's uncle, Helto, held estates worth £56 from Odo; GDB, 6a, 144a–b.

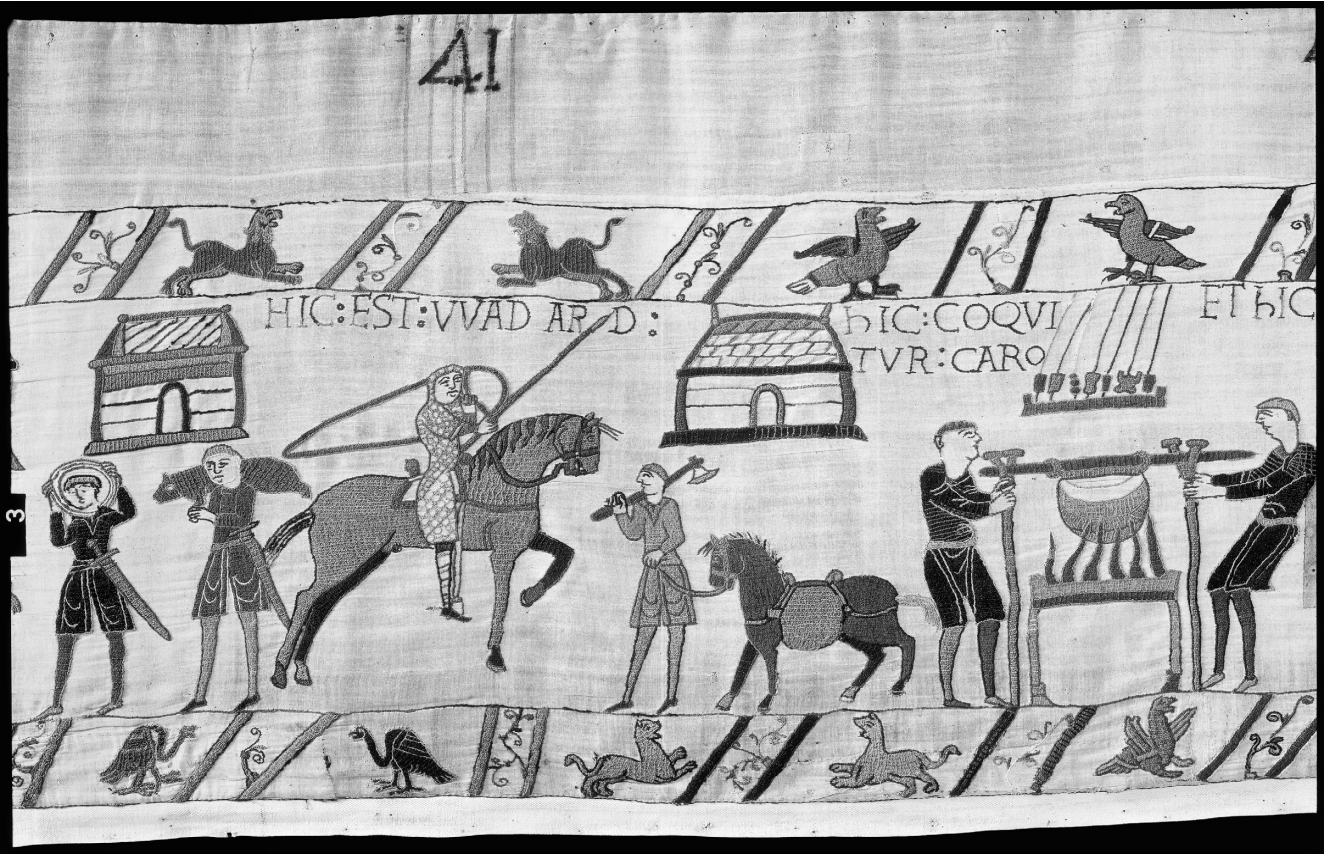


Plate 2. Wadard: Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry: eleventh century.



Plate 3. Vitalis: Detail from the Bayeux Tapestry: eleventh century.

granted to Odo in 1074.¹³ Ralph too, was arguably of baronial standing in terms of wealth. Vitalis was not in the same league: Tsurushima calculated the yearly value of his lands at £38 6s. 6d., of which £10 was in estates held from Odo.¹⁴ Nonetheless, this made him a very wealthy knight by the standards of the time.¹⁵

Wadard and Turolde's son Ralph were among Odo's leading tenants in *Domesday Book*. It is hard to rank Odo's tenants precisely by wealth because some, like Ralph, had common names, and, outside of Kent, Odo's tenants were often identified only by forename. Odo's foremost tenant was Hugh de Port, who was also a wealthy tenant-in-chief. Depending on how one assigns various unidentified Ralphs and Adams, Wadard was probably second in the list of men who held the most land from Odo, but might have held joint third place. Ralph fell anywhere from second to fifth in the list.¹⁶ Vitalis, by contrast, was clearly a relatively minor tenant. Independent sources reveal that Turolde of Rochester was an important follower of Odo. He appears as such in the account of the trial of Penenden heath, and a royal writ about his seizure of land from Westminster abbey identified him as Odo's steward, and thus the bishop's most important lay official.¹⁷ Ralph and his uncle Helto, another important tenant of Odo, lost their lands in England not long after 1086, almost certainly for supporting Odo in his rebellion against William II, since they remained active in Normandy long thereafter, keeping 'de Rochester' as their surname.¹⁸ No similar references independent from *Domesday Book* link Wadard to Odo, but his holding also passed into other hands, leading Tsurushima to suggest that he too supported Odo against William II.¹⁹ In contrast, Vitalis's family remained in place, probably because, as Tsurushima argued, Vitalis switched over to the royalist side, as did others of Odo's tenants.²⁰

Assuming that Odo was the patron and included the three men as his followers, what motivated him to do so? There is a lesser and a greater part of this question. The lesser part is why these three among his many followers? The greater part is what was he trying to accomplish? I will start with the lesser question. Heslop, drawing on *Domesday Book*, argues that they were particularly successful administrators and that Odo wished to celebrate the peaceful as well as warlike abilities of his followers.²¹ My own view is that these three followers were included partly because of the prominence of Wadard and Turolde in Odo's following but mainly because they happened to play modestly important roles at pivotal moments in the story.²² The latter case is hardest to argue for Wadard, but gathering supplies in

¹³ Tsurushima, 'Turolde, Wadard, and Vital', 85.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 87–9.

¹⁵ Compare Sally Harvey, 'The Knight and the Knight's Fee in England', *P&P* 49, 1970, 3–43.

¹⁶ Wadard held £124 from Odo and Ralph held between £106 and £132. By my calculations, Hugh de Port held a little over £150 from Odo. Adam son of Hubert held between £54 and £124, and Ralph de Corbepine between £85 and £111.

¹⁷ *English Lawsuits*, I, 8–11; *Westminster Abbey Charters, 1066–c. 1214*, ed. Emma Mason, Publications of the London Record Society, 25, London 1988, 40–1. For other land seizures by Turolde, see LDB 17b, 25a–b.

¹⁸ Tsurushima, 'Turolde, Wadard, and Vital', 85.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 88–9.

²¹ Heslop, 'Spectators', 229–32. For two other explanations, see Otto K. Werckmeister, 'The Political Ideology of the Bayeux Tapestry', *Studi medievali* 17, 1976, 535–95 at 586–7; Shirley Ann Brown, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: Why Eustace, Odo and William', *ANS* 12, 1990, 7–28, at 26–7.

²² See also Bernard S. Bachrach, 'Some Observations on the Bayeux Tapestry', *Cithara* 27, 1987, 5–28, at 16.

the early days of the invasion was important. As for Tuold and Vitalis, they were clearly present at noteworthy moments that could be highlighted in the tapestry. This would explain why Vitalis, a relatively minor tenant and one with divided loyalties, warranted inclusion when more important followers did not.

Whatever the reasons for choosing these three, they were probably less important in their own right than as representatives of Odo's followers and of lesser lords and knights more generally. One striking but little noticed aspect of the tapestry is its focus on anonymous knights in the Battle of Hastings (and the Breton campaign), particularly in comparison to some other sources. Guy of Amiens and William of Poitiers both devoted much of their description of the Battle of Hastings to William the Conqueror's personal deeds. Both also devoted some space to a small number of prominent nobles.²³ In contrast, Wace's later account stressed the contributions of a large number of specific individuals. The duke and some great nobles were among them, but many were minor figures.²⁴ The Bayeux Tapestry arguably also stressed the contributions of less important, albeit unnamed individuals. Only three figures on the Norman side are named during the battle; Odo, William, and Eustace of Boulogne. William appears only once in the battle, though admittedly at a crucial moment in the narrative, raising his helmet to reassure his men that he is alive. Eustace's main function in the tapestry is to point to William, underscoring the drama of the moment. Most of the Bayeux Tapestry's long battle sequence is devoted to showing unnamed knights fighting the English. If one imagines Odo's followers as an important audience for the tapestry, Tuold, Wadard and Vitalis could have stood in for their participation in the overall campaign, but any who had fought at Hastings could have mentally inserted themselves into one or more of the battle scenes.

So why would Odo have wanted explicitly or implicitly to include followers and ordinary knights? The key is the practical and emotional importance of lordship and retinues in eleventh-century Norman (and English) society. One must dismiss any old fashioned textbook picture of a feudal pyramid with loyalties locked in generation after generation through the holding of fiefs. Even if one were to wholeheartedly accept the 'pre-Reynolds' picture of feudalism, which I do not, recruitment for an invasion and the need to create new followings in England must have led to a very fluid situation, with competition to recruit knights, lords seeking new men, men seeking new lords, and the transfer or breaking of old loyalties in the process.²⁵ For instance, Tuold or Vitalis could easily have directly served Duke William during the events described in the tapestry and later have become Odo's followers. Despite the decline of our old paradigm of feudalism, however, anyone familiar with the period knows how ingrained lordship and service were among the elites. Indeed, they were so ingrained that, as Michel Parisse noted, the tapestry always shows powerful men like Harold, William and Guy, surrounded by followers.²⁶ As Robert Bartlett has written, 'The military retinue was one of the basic social organisms of medieval Europe. It consisted of a group of fighting men led by a lord, men who were held together by oaths, camaraderie and self-interest.'²⁷

²³ *Carmen*, 24–37; Poitiers, 128–43.

²⁴ Wace, *The Roman de Rou*, ed. A. J. Holden, Glyn S. Burgess, and Elisabeth van Houts, St Helier 2002, 270–87.

²⁵ Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted*, Oxford 1994.

²⁶ Michel Parisse, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, Paris 1983, 109.

²⁷ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350*, Princeton 1993, 45.

Though Norman and Anglo-Norman historical works focus mostly on rulers and magnates, nonetheless the retainers and followers of magnates make frequent appearances. Sometimes the sources show them supporting their lords in rebellion against the duke or king.²⁸ At other times they depict them aiding their lords in internecine warfare and raiding among magnates.²⁹ As David Bates has written, 'It must be remembered that the feuds and the dispossession of the Church were the actions of bands of men, all, within their own social horizons, pursuing fortune.'³⁰ Historians often stress the benefits followers received from lords, such as the estates Turold, Wadard and Vitalis gained from Odo, but lords like Odo depended in turn on their followers for military service and the management of their lands.³¹ Lords, however, could not rely on the automatic fidelity of their followers, but had to work to earn and retain their loyalty.

A handful of accounts from the period are particularly useful for illustrating the emotional weight placed on loyalty between magnates and their followers, the potential fragility of such bonds, and the importance of reciprocity. In 1071, the great Anglo-Saxon magnate Earl Eadwine was on the run from William the Conqueror when some of his followers killed him, *ahrlice* (treacherously or basely), as the E version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle put it, to win the favour of the new king.³² According to Orderic Vitalis's account, drawn from a lost portion of William of Poitiers's work, three brothers who were among Eadwine's chief followers were responsible, but twenty of his *equites* died trying to save him. Upon hearing the news, William was not pleased but rather moved to tears, and when the traitors (*proditores*) brought Eadwine's head to William seeking his favour, he angrily exiled them from the country. Clearly, betraying one's lord, even when he was in revolt against the king, could be considered reprehensible.³³

Gilbert Crispin's *vita* of Herluin, the founder of Bec, depicted his subject as a model knight and follower before becoming a monk. He celebrated the close bonds between Herluin and his lord, Count Gilbert de Brionne, and described how, even after an unspecified injury at the hands of the count, Herluin brought twenty men to aid him in a conflict without asking for any benefit in return. However, the potential strains of the bond of lordship are clear throughout Crispin's narrative, and at one point he even referred disapprovingly to men who murdered their lords out of greed. Herluin's forbearance and willingness to help the lord who had injured him foreshadowed his future sanctity, but the implicit lesson one could draw from this text was that normally lords needed to treat their men well if they wanted loyal service.³⁴ Orderic Vitalis's story of a less forgiving follower, William Pantulf, brings the lesson home. William had been accused of complicity in the murder of Robert of Bellême's mother but had cleared his name by ordeal. Not surprisingly, Robert disinherited William despite the ordeal, and drove him from his side, even though William offered service in a time of great necessity. Spurned, William joined Henry

²⁸ For instance, GND, II, 8–11, 44–45, 52–53, 96–97; Orderic, VI, 20–23, 30–37, 210–13, 218–19.

²⁹ For instance, GND, II, 96–97, 108–11; Orderic, II, 24–5; IV, 200–3, 212–13, 216–17; VI, 40–1.

³⁰ David Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, London 1982, 105.

³¹ For such lords and their followers in Normandy, see Lucien Musset, 'L'aristocratie Normande au XIe siècle', in *La noblesse au Moyen Age, XIe–XVe siècles: essais à mémoire de Robert Boutrouche*, ed. Philippe Contamine, Paris 1976, 71–96 at 89–96.

³² ASC E 1071.

³³ Orderic, II, 258–9.

³⁴ Gilbert Crispin, 'Vita Herluini', in *The Works of Gilbert Crispin*, ed. Anna Sapir Abulafia and G. R. Evans, *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* 8, London, 1986, 183–212 at 186–8.

I when the latter moved against Robert in 1102. According to Orderic, William did more harm to his former lord than anyone else.³⁵ Loyalty was expected of followers in this society, but loyalty had its limits, and a lord who mistreated a follower, even for what many might have considered good reason, could live to regret it.

So far I have relied on Norman and Anglo-Norman sources, but because Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward lordship were similar to Norman ones and because the Bayeux Tapestry was partially an English product, it is worth turning to one of the greatest ideological statements about lordship from the Middle Ages, the Anglo-Saxon poem, *The Battle of Maldon*. The poem briefly celebrated the relationship between Ealdorman Byrhtnoth and King Æthelræd, when Byrhtnoth proclaimed to the Vikings that he would defend his king's land, but most of it concerned the relationship between the ealdorman and the warriors under his command. Until his death, Byrhtnoth fought beside his men, encouraging them individually and collectively, but the crucial part of the poem came after his death. Some of his closest followers turned out to be unworthy, in one case fleeing on Byrhtnoth's horse and thereby causing others to flee in panic. The poem, however, focused on the loyal followers who, one by one, expressed their loyalty and love for the lord, and fought to the death to avenge him. No greater celebration of the ties of lordship can be imagined, but, other than Byrhtnoth himself, the heroes were not great magnates but instead, like Tuold, Wadard and Vitalis, the followers of a magnate.³⁶

The Norman Conquest and the maintenance of Norman power required not just Duke William and his greatest nobles, but thousands of ordinary knights (and foot soldiers), a fact that is so glaringly obvious that it is paradoxically easy to overlook. Among these knights were the ones Odo recruited to follow him to England or who subsequently joined his service. Odo may have been a bishop, indeed one who took his episcopal duties seriously, but he was also an important military and political leader during and after the Norman Conquest. According to the list of ships offered by various magnates to William for the Conquest, which in recent decades has been rehabilitated as a potentially useful source, Odo provided one hundred ships, the second highest total after his brother, Count Robert of Mortain, which presumably indicates that he led a large contingent of troops.³⁷ When William returned to Normandy in early 1067, he left Odo and a powerful secular magnate, William fitz Osbern, in charge. During this period Eustace of Boulogne joined with some of the English to try to seize Dover castle while Odo was north of the Thames with the bulk of his knights, but Odo's besieged followers routed the attackers, thus crushing the first major threat to Norman rule after William's coronation.³⁸ In 1075, William faced a conspiracy and revolt of three earls, and sent Odo and Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, against one of the three, Earl Ralph of East Anglia. Their forces put Ralph to flight and, according to John of Worcester, killed or mutilated those of his supporters whom they captured.³⁹ In 1080, after the local nobility murdered Walcher, bishop of Durham, William sent Odo north to devastate the region in retaliation.⁴⁰ Various sources described him as the second most important political

³⁵ Orderic, VI, 24–5.

³⁶ *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991*, ed. D. G. Scragg, Oxford 1991, 18–31.

³⁷ Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 'The Ship List of William the Conqueror', *ANS* 10, 1988, 159–83.

³⁸ GND, II, 176–9; Poitiers, 180–5; ASC D 1066 [1067]; Orderic, II, 204–7.

³⁹ John of Worcester, III, 24–7.

⁴⁰ Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis, ecclesie: Tract on the Origins and Progress of this the Church of Durham*, ed. D. W. Rollason, OMT, Oxford 2000, 218–21.

figure in the realm after William himself.⁴¹ Odo's importance ended abruptly when William imprisoned him in 1082 but revived briefly in William II's reign, when Odo served as a key advisor and then led a rebellion against the new king on behalf of his older brother, Robert Curthose, resulting in the confiscation of Odo's English lands.⁴² Odo's authority in England proved ephemeral, but from 1066 to 1082, and again briefly in 1087–88, it was immense.

Odo's power in England derived primarily from the confidence William I and, briefly, William II placed in him. However, to retain that favour, to carry out the duties assigned to him, and to manage the vast numbers of estates he received, Odo needed a large core of loyal followers to serve as warriors and managers. For Odo, as for other lords after the Conquest, the most important way to attract and maintain loyalty was to hand out a large percentage of the land he received from William to his followers. As Bartlett noted, however, camaraderie was important to military retinues, and encouraging such camaraderie, I would argue, was one of the main purposes of the Bayeux Tapestry.

Any argument about the tapestry's purposes must turn partly on the site or sites for which it was designed, but unfortunately this is another topic about which we can only conjecture. For a long time most scholars believed the tapestry was designed for the 1077 dedication of Bayeux cathedral, where it resided for so long. This argument is less common today, but even if true, Odo's secular followers could have seen it there and thus formed an important part of the intended audience. In 1966, however, Charles Dodwell, arguing that the tapestry was largely secular in nature and noting documentary evidence for textile hangings in secular contexts, made the case that it was originally designed for one of Odo's palaces.⁴³ A number of scholars have agreed and some have built further on the argument, reconstructing how the tapestry might have worked in various kinds of secular buildings and even suggesting specific buildings that might have housed it.⁴⁴ Other scholars have been sceptical of Dodwell's arguments, noting among other points that medieval people did not hold a fixed religious/secular binary that would have made the Bayeux Tapestry, for all its secular subject matter, inappropriate for a church, and that in the late Middle Ages the canons of Bayeux manifestly thought it was suitable for a church, since they hung it there yearly for the feast of relics.⁴⁵ Moreover, it is not

⁴¹ ASC E 1086 [1087]; Malmesbury, *Gesta regum*, I, 506–7; Orderic, II, 264–7.

⁴² ASC E 1087 [1088]; Orderic, IV, 124–9, 134–5; John of Worcester, III, 46–53; Malmesbury, *Gesta regum*, I, 544–9; Huntingdon, 408–9, 412–15.

⁴³ C. R. Dodwell, 'The Bayeux Tapestry and the French Secular Epic', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson, Woodbridge 1997, 47–62 at 47–50.

⁴⁴ David J. Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry*, Chicago 1987, 104–7; Richard Brilliant, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: A Stripped Narrative for their Eyes and Ears', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson, Woodbridge 1997, 111–37 at 111–19; Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals, and the Geometry of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker, Woodbridge 2005, 109–23 at 115–23; Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 'The Bayeux "Tapestry": Invisible Seams and Visible Boundaries', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Collected Papers*, Farnham 2012, 1–20 at 10–15; Shirley Ann Brown, 'Cognate Imagery: the Bear, Harold and the Bayeux Tapestry', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, 149–60 at 150; Hicks, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 54–5; Chris Henige, 'Putting the Bayeux Tapestry in its Place', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, 125–37.

⁴⁵ H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 10, 1988, 49–65 at 64–5; Wolfgang Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Monument to a Norman Triumph*, Munich 1994, 78–9; Richard Gameson, 'The Origin, Art, and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson, Woodbridge 1997, 157–211 at 174–81; Shirley Ann Brown, 'The Bayeux Tapestry: A Critical Analysis of Publications, 1988–1999', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, ed. Pierre Bouet, François Neveux, and Brian Levy, Caen 2004, 27–47 at 31–2; Valerie I. J. Flint, 'The Bayeux Tapestry, the Bishop and the Laity', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the*

clear that the tapestry was designed for a single building. One of the advantages of textiles was their portability, and so the tapestry could have been flexibly designed with more than one building in mind.⁴⁶ Heslop, for instance, argued that as a work designed for both a secular and a religious audience, the Bayeux Tapestry was intended to be shown both in secular centres of power and in the cathedral where it ended up.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, I lean to the view that the tapestry was designed partly or wholly for a secular setting or settings. Granted that one should not draw a sharp binary between the sacred and secular in the Middle Ages, one can surely speak of a spectrum, and the Bayeux Tapestry seems to me too far towards the secular end of the spectrum to have been designed *solely* with a church in mind. Unfortunately, there is no way to know for certain.

Regardless of the tapestry's intended setting, if I am right that one of its most important intended audiences consisted of Odo's followers and potential followers, it could have sent a number of messages to them. First, it underscored Odo's closeness to his brother, now king, showing that this was a man with powerful connections who was worth following. Second, it would remind knightly viewers that Odo, though a cleric, had actively participated, alongside secular nobles and knights, in one of the most successful conquests of the Middle Ages. It also showed that he could celebrate warfare, and that unlike some clerics he was willing to embrace, or at least accept, such standard but morally and religiously problematic military activities as plundering and deliberately devastating the countryside, as with Wadard's activities and the famous scene of men burning down a house from which a woman and boy flee. Guy of Amiens justified the deliberate devastation of the countryside as proper retribution to the English for accepting Harold rather than William as king, and one can easily imagine Odo and his circle doing the same. Third, and most important, the tapestry would have shown that Odo valued the contributions of his followers and others like them. For Turol, Wadard and Vitalis, the message would have been personal. As Heslop states, Turol, in viewing the tapestry 'could have seen himself represented as part of the great enterprise that was the Norman takeover of England'.⁴⁸ Given the tapestry's celebration of the ordinary knight, however, any of Odo's knightly followers or potential recruits who had participated in the Norman Conquest could bask in the tapestry's glow.

Two scenes in particular served to celebrate and thereby promote camaraderie between Odo and his followers. The first was the scene of Odo blessing the food and drink at a feast. This scene, as noted earlier, was part of an extended sequence that also included Wadard's supervision of plundering. It has received much scholarly attention, in part because it drew on manuscript depictions of Christ at the Last Supper, raising fascinating questions about the designer's intent. Conflicting interpretations have been proposed. Perhaps the scene was designed to exalt Odo in particular and the Normans in general, and to underscore their virtue and the rightness of their cause. Perhaps, in contrast, it was meant subtly

Facts of History, 217–33 at 220–5; R. Howard Bloch, *A Needle in the Right Hand of God: The Norman Conquest of 1066 and the Making of the Bayeux Tapestry*, New York 2006, 36–7; Michael J. Lewis, *The Real World of the Bayeux Tapestry*, Stroud 2008, 19; Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 27, 32, 72–81.

⁴⁶ Parisse, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 50; Bernstein, *Mystery*, 107; Grape, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 79–80; Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message', 174; Hicks, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 25; Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 122–3; Lewis, *Real World*, 193.

⁴⁷ Heslop, 'Spectators', 229.

⁴⁸ Heslop, 'Spectators', 232.

to undermine them by depicting the bishop in borderline blasphemy, or to draw a contrast between the boisterous revellers and Christ and his apostles.⁴⁹ Without dismissing the possibility that the scene might have had more than one message or interpretation, I would argue that one of Odo's desires was to create an image of commensality, solidarity and camaraderie. In her article on the scene, Martha Rampton drew on anthropological literature to describe how feasts fostered ties among the feasters, and wrote, 'In short, feasting together was a form of intimacy and a covenant of bonding.' Rampton also stressed how holding a feast revealed one's power and generosity, which may also have been part of Odo's intent.⁵⁰

Such claims, however, raise the question of whose solidarity, power and generosity the tapestry celebrated. The usual interpretation is that the chief men of the army are at the table headed by Odo, with Duke William to his right.⁵¹ However, no one is named and the bishop himself is identified as Odo only because a figure in the scene points to his name in the inscription above the next scene. William and Count Robert of Mortain, Odo's brothers, also appear in the next scene, and perhaps it was understood that they too were at the feast, but in their cases no visual link appears. Moreover, if the feast depicts the Norman leadership, then why is William upstaged both by Odo sitting at the centre of the table and by another figure sprawling in front of him?⁵² Odo may be shown at the head of the table simply because he is blessing the feast but he may appear there because it was his feast, prepared for his retinue, with food gathered by some of his followers, led by Wadard. In this stretch of the tapestry, the designer may have temporarily taken Odo and his retinue out of the greater story of the Conquest, and celebrated both Odo's largesse (with the assistance of Wadard) and the group's solidarity and camaraderie on the eve of battle. One might imagine Odo and his followers at a later date feasting in one of his halls, surrounded by a hanging depicting an earlier feast that would have held deep significance for them. Alternatively, one could imagine them attending mass at Bayeux cathedral and viewing a scene, incorporating eucharistic imagery, that celebrated their participation with the bishop in what Norman apologists claimed was a divinely sanctioned conquest. If the more traditional, though no less conjectural claim that the feast depicted the Norman leadership is correct, then the scene would have to be read differently. Perhaps, the feast celebrates the camaraderie and solidarity of William's army as a whole, with the leaders at the table and less important knights eating from shields atop trestles. Once again, Odo would be showing his concern for the ordinary knight. More important, Odo's follower Wadard would gain an even greater role in supplying a feast for the whole Norman army.

⁴⁹ Bernstein, *Mystery*, 137–41; Martha Rampton, 'The Significance of the Banquet Scene in the Bayeux Tapestry', *Medievalia et Humanistica* n.s. 21, 1994, 33–53; Grape, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 54; Rouben Charles Cholakian, *The Bayeux Tapestry and the Ethos of War*, Delmar 1998, 66–8; Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 120; eadem, 'The Interpretation of Gesture in the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 29, 2007, 145–78 at 150–51; eadem, 'Stylistic Variation', 24–26; eadem, 'Hunger for England: Ambition and Appetite in the Bayeux Tapestry', *English Studies* 93, 2012, 539–48; Lewis, *Real World*, 189; Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Dining with Distinction: Drinking Vessels and Difference in the Bayeux Tapestry Feast Scenes', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, 112–20; Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 126–53.

⁵⁰ Rampton, 'Significance of the Banquet Scene', 33–8.

⁵¹ For instance, Bernstein, *Mystery*, 138; Pierre Bouet and François Neveux, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux. Révélation et mystères d'une broderie du Moyen Âge*, Aix-en-Provence 2013, 162.

⁵² Bernstein, *Mystery*, 138; Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation', 51.

The second crucial scene is the depiction of Odo in the Battle of Hastings itself. This too has received much attention, focused mainly on how it glorifies Odo.⁵³ Though written sources speak only of Odo praying, this scene shows him in the thick of things, perhaps fighting, more likely leading, but in either case an active participant. Most scholars have linked it to the crucial moment in the battle in which William's army briefly panicked at the false news that William had died. Guy of Amiens and William of Poitiers both described William raising his helmet to show that he was alive, as William appears to be doing in the tapestry.⁵⁴ The tapestry, however, also shows Odo playing an auxiliary part in rallying the troops, thus giving him a crucial role in the battle that other sources do not. What is key for my purposes is the inscription, which reads *Odo confortat pueros*, best translated as 'Odo encourages the boys' (or perhaps 'lads').⁵⁵ The word *puer* was not commonly used to describe knightly followers in the Norman sources, but, as Stenton pointed out, it corresponds closely to the English word *cniht*, the word from which knight derives and the term the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* used for Odo's followers during his rebellion against William II.⁵⁶ Here the tapestry directly links Odo to ordinary mounted warriors. The implications of this scene in the tapestry are obvious: Odo is a leader who has shared the dangers of battle and served as a good leader, encouraging the troops, like Byrhtnoth in *The Battle of Maldon*, on behalf of their mutual ruler.

Moreover, the scene tied Odo's network of upward and downward loyalties together, with Odo helping his lord and brother William rally his forces. Scholars disagree on how the tapestry depicted the respective roles of Odo and William in the Conquest and how it might have affected relations between them. Otto Werckmeister and Shirley Ann Brown argued that the tapestry was designed to recover William's favour in face of his brother's break with him and his own imprisonment, and other scholars have argued less specifically that the tapestry highlighted Odo's assistance to William.⁵⁷ On the other hand, several scholars have argued that Odo was upstaging William by exaggerating his own role, and some have suggested that the tapestry would have angered or alienated William.⁵⁸ I agree strongly with the view that Odo desired to emphasize his aid to William rather than upstage him. This message need not have been specifically connected

⁵³ For instance, Bernstein, *Mystery*, 141–3; Brown, 'Why Eustace, Odo and William', 20–2; Grape, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 54; Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message', 178–80; François Neveux, 'The Bayeux Tapestry as Original Source', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, 171–95 at 182–6; Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 109–11; Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 247–48, 252–3.

⁵⁴ *Carmen*, 28–31; Poitiers, 130–1. See, however, Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 252–3.

⁵⁵ For 'encourage' rather than 'comfort', see Ian Short, 'The Language of the Bayeux Tapestry Inscription', *ANS* 23, 2001, 267–80 at 274. The portion *-tat pueros* is a restoration but since it appears in two early eighteenth-century engravings, albeit in different places, it seems likely to have been on the original; Brown, 'Why Eustace, Odo and William', 10–11, 20 n. 49; Gameson, 'Origin, Art, and Message', 177 n. 102.

⁵⁶ ASC E 1087 [1088]; F. M. Stenton, 'The Historical Background', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehensive Survey*, ed. F. M. Stenton, 2nd edn, London 1965, 9–24 at 22.

⁵⁷ Werckmeister, 'Political Ideology', 579–89; Brown, 'Why Eustace, Odo and William', 23–7; Suzanne Lewis, *The Rhetoric of Power in the Bayeux Tapestry*, Cambridge 1999, 116–31; Michael R. Davis, 'Leafwine and Gyrrh: Depicting the Death of the Brothers in the Bayeux Tapestry', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, 92–5 at 94–5.

⁵⁸ N. P. Brooks and H. E. Walker, 'The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 1, 1979, 1–34 at 18; Bernstein, *Mystery*, 138–9, 143; Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation', 53; J. Bard McNulty, *The Narrative Art of the Bayeux Tapestry Master*, New York 1989, 59, 65–6; Bridgeford, *Hidden History*, 121; Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 122.

to Odo's downfall in 1082. Given the frequent strife within the Norman ducal family, it would have behoved Odo to continually foster good relations with his brother, and of course any good courtier worked hard to keep his lord happy. Given that William appears far more often in the tapestry than Odo, it is hard to see him as upstaging the king overall, and in my view the battle scene, the scene of the three brothers taking counsel together, and the shipbuilding scene (assuming the cleric in it is Odo) show Odo aiding and advising the king. I would also argue, with Werckmeister, that Odo was advertising the assistance of his followers to William as much as his own. Indeed, I would go further: the Bayeux Tapestry not only celebrates the links between Odo and his followers, but also between Odo's followers, Odo himself, and William the Conqueror. Odo's ability to command the loyalty of many followers made him useful to William, but it also made him a potential threat, as indeed he proved to be to William II. In such a context, Odo needed to emphasize that the ties of loyalty between him, his men, and William I all functioned together in a harmonious way.

This leads to my final argument, that Odo was using Harold as a foil, as a man who entered the theoretically tightknit fellowship of men owing loyalty directly or indirectly to William, but then betrayed God, William, and William's followers by betraying his oath, bringing their vengeance down on himself and the English. William and Harold formed an obvious pairing as rivals for the English crown, and appear so in the works of Guy of Amiens and William of Poitiers. From a contrasting but equally Norman perspective, however, Odo could also be paired with Harold, both of them William's followers, one loyal, the other faithless.⁵⁹ This pairing is suggested most strongly by the parallel feasts, one headed by Harold, the other by Odo, which, in Gale Owen-Crocker's reconstruction of the tapestry as hung in a square building, could have appeared opposite each other.⁶⁰

The question of why Harold seems to be treated so well in the Bayeux Tapestry, in comparison to his vilification in Norman chronicles, has been one of the driving forces in the study of that work in recent decades. Though the scenes of Harold's oath and the comet highlight his perjury and God's wrath, in general the tapestry seems to show him in a surprisingly positive light. Harold is depicted as the legitimate king, and at times appears heroic. Moreover, the tapestry does not hammer home William's claim to the throne as much as one might expect and some key scenes may even be ambiguous about those claims, though arguments about this ambiguity depend heavily, perhaps problematically so, on silences or absences in the tapestry. In a work that at least partly reflects the Norman view of the Conquest, the depiction of Harold and the apparent ambiguity of the tapestry present a fascinating puzzle. Various solutions have been offered: Harold's perjury was so much the focus that there was no need to discuss claims to the throne or other issues of character;⁶¹ the tapestry undermined Harold subtly, through gestures, postures, or the fables in the margins;⁶² it was an early attempt to promote reconciliation

⁵⁹ Lewis, *Rhetoric of Power*, 116–31; Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 113–14.

⁶⁰ Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 115–17. See also Neuman de Vegvar, 'Dining with Distinction', 118–19; Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 134–5.

⁶¹ Parisse, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 45–8.

⁶² Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation', 49–65; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry: A Critical Introduction', in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Owen-Crocker, 1–9; McNulty, *Narrative Art*, 27–44, 66–72; J. Bard McNulty, *Visual Meaning in the Bayeux Tapestry: Problems and Solutions in Picturing History*, Lewiston 2003, 30–53. See also Lewis, *Rhetoric of Power*.

between English and Normans;⁶³ an English designer inserted a subtle pro-English influence into the design;⁶⁴ or the main message of the tapestry was moral and religious, making political considerations less important.⁶⁵ The answer to the puzzle is likely to be complex, and although all the answers cannot be simultaneously correct, more than one factor may be in play. The partial solution I advance here is that Harold was depicted as a flawed hero who became a villain because of his choice to break his oath and betray William and William's followers. This argument draws on Dodwell's comparison of the Bayeux Tapestry to *chansons de geste* and particularly to *The Song of Roland*, in which Dodwell argued that Harold in the tapestry was like Ganelon, a brave and formidable warrior who kept up religious appearances but turned out to be a traitor.⁶⁶ In such a context, Harold's heroic quality in the tapestry would only underscore the gravity of his treachery.

A reconstruction along these lines of the tapestry's message would go as follows. Harold travelled across the Channel for unknown reasons, although perhaps to reinforce Edward's offer of the throne of England to William. In the process he was captured by Guy of Ponthieu but rescued by William, with the assistance of Turol. Harold then began to enter the network of loyalties under William by joining the duke's Breton campaign, heroically rescuing men from quicksand. It is quite likely that some of Odo's followers and perhaps Odo himself were part of that campaign, and in fact Owen-Crocker makes a good case that one figure shown on that section of the tapestry was meant to be Odo.⁶⁷ If Odo and his men were present, then Harold's integration into the Norman army would also have meant joining with them in loyal service to William. This may have been one reason for depicting that campaign at some length.⁶⁸

After the Breton campaign, William invested Harold with arms, thus drawing him more closely still into his allegiance. The characters then entered Bayeux, almost certainly the place where Harold was next shown swearing his oath to William, thus completing his incorporation into William's following and turning his subsequent acceptance of the English crown into perjury.⁶⁹ Various sources located the oath at different places, perhaps because William had Harold swear it at various places.⁷⁰ It is likely that the tapestry placed this key ceremony at Bayeux

⁶³ Pierre Bouet, 'Is the Bayeux Tapestry Pro-English?', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, 197–215; Bouet and Neveux, *Tapissierie de Bayeux*, 199–205; Werckmeister, 'Political Ideology', 577–9; Cowdrey, 'Towards an Interpretation', 63–4; Grape, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 61; Hicks, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 21; Bloch, *Needle in the Right Hand of God*, 131–6. See also Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200*, Cambridge 2007, 35–47.

⁶⁴ Richard David Wissolik, 'The Saxon Statement: Code in the Bayeux Tapestry', *Annuaire Mediaevale* 19, 1979, 69–97; Brooks and Walker, 'Authority and Interpretation', 10–13; Bernstein, *Mystery*, 114–23, 162–95; Bachrach, 'Some Observations', 5–28; Meredith Clermont-Ferrand, *Anglo-Saxon Propaganda in the Bayeux Tapestry*, Lewiston 2004; Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth, and Subversion*, Woodbridge 2001, 88–105.

⁶⁵ Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*.

⁶⁶ Dodwell, 'The Bayeux Tapestry and the French Secular Epic', 50–7. See also Lejeune, 'Turol', 419–20; Grape, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 58; Brown, 'Cognate Imagery', 152–9.

⁶⁷ Owen-Crocker, 'Brothers, Rivals', 113.

⁶⁸ For alternative explanations for the inclusion of that campaign, see Beech, *Was the Bayeux Tapestry Made in France?*, 83–8; idem, 'The Breton Campaign and the Possibility that the Bayeux Tapestry was Produced in the Loire Valley (St Florent of Saumur)', in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches*, 10–16; Howard B. Clarke, 'The Identity of the Designer of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS* 35, 2013, 119–39; Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 117–21.

⁶⁹ See, however, Pastan and White, *Bayeux Tapestry*, 105–25.

⁷⁰ See, for instance, Bouet and Neveux, *Tapissierie de Bayeux*, 101.

not only to link it to Odo and his cathedral, but also because Odo and many of his followers were witnesses there. In this interpretation, the tapestry was not only reminding viewers of Harold's treachery towards William, but also of his betrayal of William's followers and witnesses. Support for this view comes from a passage in Wace's *Roman de Rou* that Elisabeth van Houts persuasively argues was a piece of oral history collected by Wace. In this passage, set on the battlefield of Hastings itself, William Patrick of La Lande-Patry, a tenant of Odo in Normandy and subsequently in Kent, claimed that he had witnessed William's grant of arms to Harold at Avranches on the way to the Breton campaign. In the story William Patrick made this claim while searching for Harold, ready to charge him with perjury and presumably hoping to kill him in a kind of judicial combat.⁷¹ One may hesitate to accept this later story at face value, but it probably records a tradition, going back to someone in Odo's following, that Harold's perjury was an affront not only to God, the saints, and William, but also to all those directly or indirectly in William's following, including Odo and his knights.

Stories of the Conquest were meant not only to record the past, but to use a version of that past to shape the future. Norman historians used their accounts to try to convince readers of the justice of William's cause. Religious writers used their versions to try to reform sinners by warning that God had punished Harold and overthrown the English for their sins. The Bayeux Tapestry's intended aim is not at all straightforward, but I have argued that among its purposes was to help Odo win and retain the loyalty of men like Turol, Wadard and Vitalis, and to maintain the favour of his brother. By celebrating the solidarity between him and his men, and between all of them and the king, he hoped to foster that solidarity. In the end, however, he failed, and the unity celebrated in the tapestry proved transient. William imprisoned Odo, and after William's death, Odo himself, in choosing between two of his own nephews, betrayed another William. Some of his men, like Ralph son of Turol, remained true to him rather than the king, but others did not, and so his military retinue ruptured, leaving the camaraderie celebrated in the Bayeux Tapestry no more than a memory.

⁷¹ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, 280–3; Elisabeth van Houts, 'Wace as Historian', in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: The Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, Woodbridge 1997, 103–32, at 111, 114, 125.