ÆLFGYVA AND THE CLERIC OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

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ABSTRACT

The identities of Ælfgyva and the cleric of the Bayeux Tapestry have puzzled historians for nearly three hundred years. This paper takes a fresh look at the iconography of the scene and other relevant texts, and proposes a new solution: that both were members of King Harold's extended family, and that they played momentarily significant roles in English-Norman affairs just before and within a few years of the Conquest.

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The Bayeux Tapestry is the best-known and most studied account of the events that led to the Norman Conquest. Yet the identities of two of the Tapestry's more obscure characters - the woman named Ælfgyva and her clerical companion - remain uncertain, since the Tapestry's captions fail to explain who they are and neither is explicitly mentioned in other accounts. They have therefore been the subject of much debate; and Ælfgyva has been identified as one or other of various queens, princesses, abbesses and noblewomen, or an otherwise unknown embroiderer, prostitute or witch. The cleric is usually thought to be some close associate or an anonymous churchman performing a religious rite. But none of the suggested solutions have met with consensus and so the matter remains open for investigation.

Ælfgyva and the cleric make their only appearance in the first part of the Tapestry, which focuses on events that preceded the death of Edward the Confessor. The Tapestry's first scene shows Edward in conversation with his brother-in-law, Harold, earl of Wessex (Wilson 1-2).[2] The purpose of their meeting is not disclosed. Harold takes leave of the king and travels to Bosham in Sussex from where he and his men set out to sea. Landing in Ponthieu, they are captured by the men of Count Guy, and are subsequently transferred to the custody of William, duke of Normandy (scenes 2-13; W 3-15). Scene 14 (W 16-17) (Figs 1 and 2) depicts William and Harold twice: they are first seen riding together and are then shown deep in conversation inside a large building. The accompanying inscription - *HIC DUX WILGELM CUM hAROLDO VENIT AD PALATIU[M] SUU[M]* ("Here Duke William came to his palace with Harold") - tells us where they are but not what they are talking about. The next scene (15; W 17) (Fig 2) shows a man and woman standing outside the palace beneath the caption *UBI UNUS CLERICUS ET ÆLFGYVA* ("where a cleric and Ælfgyva").[3] Ælfgyva is a partly Latinised version of the Old English name Ælfgifu.[4] She stands inside an ornate frame; the cleric stretches his right arm out towards her and touches her face. His left hand is placed

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2 Scene numbers were added to the Tapestry's linen backing cloth in the eighteenth century: they are shown on the useful fold-out reproduction, *La Tapisserie de Bayeux* (2004). 'Wilson' refers to the plates in David M Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (1985), henceforward 'W'.

3 Or "where a certain cleric and Ælfgyva": *unus* can mean "a" or "a certain".

4 I shall use the Tapestry spelling, *Ælfgyva*, to refer to the figure in the Tapestry and the usual OE spelling, *Ælfgifu*, for other women of that name.

on his hip. The viewer's attention is almost immediately drawn to the figure, in the border below Ælfgyva, of a naked man, with prominent genitals, whose gestures mimic those of the cleric. To the naked man's left is another, apparently shaping a plank of wood with an adze. Neither the caption nor the image make clear what is happening. These scenes are followed by several depicting William's subsequent military campaign in Brittany (scenes 16-22; W 17-24).

There is no contemporaneous record of these events and they have been variously dated, usually to 1063, 1064 or 1065.[5] However, comparison with the two earliest written histories show that all cover much the same ground. William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers, both of whom were writing for King William in the 1070s, also tell of Harold's journey, his capture by Guy and his rescue by William. Both say that Harold was travelling to Normandy on Edward's instruction to confirm an earlier promise to make William, his cousin, his heir. That promise (so said William of Poitiers) had been ratified by Edward's magnates and, as a sign of good faith, Harold's brother and nephew had been sent as hostages to Normandy. William of Poitiers also reported that after William secured Harold's release he escorted him to Rouen (presumably the site of the palace in scene 14), treating him with all due honour, before taking him on campaign to Brittany. Both writers go on to relate that Harold vowed on oath to support William's claim to England; and that when Harold instead became king, William launched an invasion and defeated Harold in battle at Hastings.[6] These later events are also depicted in the Tapestry.

A rather different reason for Harold's journey was recorded by Eadmer, a monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, in the early 1100s. He reported that the hostages had been given up to Edward in 1052 during negotiations to end the crisis that had seen Harold and his family sent into exile the previous year. Edward had sent the hostages on to William for safe-keeping; and some years later Harold set off for Normandy to negotiate their freedom, against the advice of Edward. He no longer trusted his cousin and suspected that he might try to manipulate the situation to his own advantage. Eadmer named the hostages as Wulfnoth, Harold's brother, and Hakon, son of Harold's late brother Swein. Harold secured Hakon's release but found himself unable to leave Normandy without agreeing, on oath, to assist William in his plans to obtain the English throne. On his return home he was rebuked by Edward, who exclaimed: *"Did not I tell you that I knew William and that your going might bring untold calamity upon this kingdom?"*[7]

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5 1064 is the year most favoured by modern historians: Edward A Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, its Causes and its Results*, 6 vols. (1867-79), iii (2nd edn. 1875), 706-7; Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (1979a), 221. However, Benjamin Hudson, "The Destruction of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn," *Welsh History Review* 15 (1991), 330-50, reprinted in his *Irish Sea Studies 900-1200* (2006), 81-99, shows that Harold was occupied by Welsh affairs in 1064; and 1063 is perhaps to be preferred.

6 Elisabeth M C van Houts, ed. & trans., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducem of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni* (cited hereafter as *GND*), 2 vols. (1992-95), ii, 158-73; R H C Davis & Marjorie Chibnall, eds. & trans., *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers* (cited hereafter as *GG*) (1998), 20-21, 68-79, 100-139.

7 Martin Rule, ed., *Eadmeri Historia novorum in Anglia* (1884), 5-9; Geoffrey Bosanquet, trans., *Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England: Historia Novorum in Anglia* (1964), 5-9; (cited hereafter as *HN*, followed by page numbers in Rule and Bosanquet, with the latter given in brackets).

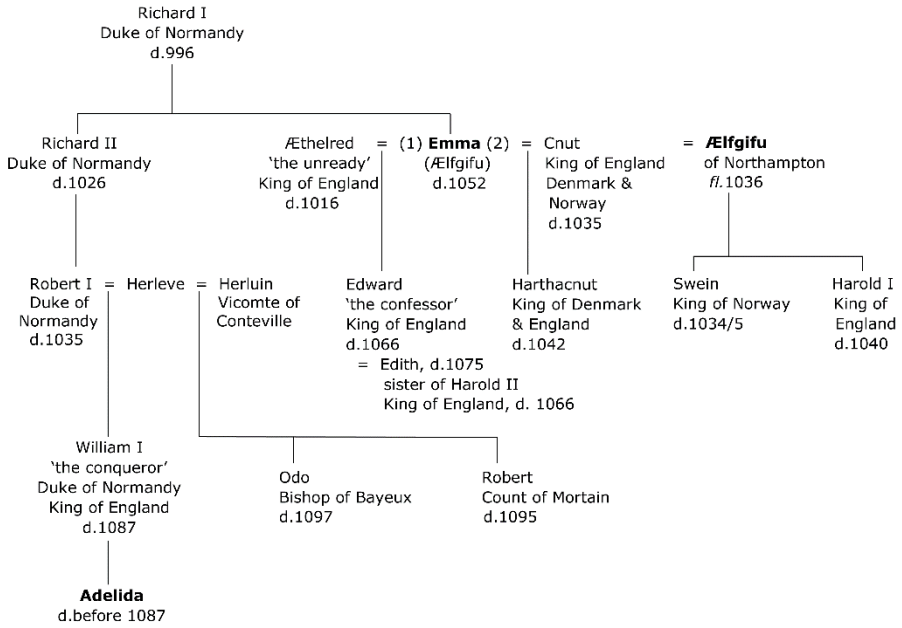
Figs 1-2: Scenes 14 and 15 of the Bayeux Tapestry: Detail of the Tapestry - 11th Century

In accordance with the requirements from the City of Bayeux these illustrations are not included in this file. A low resolution version may be viewed in the online version of this article, or they may be seen in higher quality in the printed edition of the journal.

These contrasting accounts have been debated since the 1120s. Whatever the truth of the matter - and given the political circumstances of the 1050s and 60s Eadmer's version is very much the more plausible[8] - none mention a woman named Ælfgyva and nor do any other works from the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Consequently, the imprecise caption, the cleric's rather awkward gestures and the naked man have led to much speculation about their identities and their relevance, if any, to the discussions in Rouen. The scene is most often thought to depict a betrothal, a sex scandal or a woman connected with the production of the Tapestry; and the publication of several influential studies between 1979 and 1999 has focused attention on six women, most of whom were related by blood or marriage (Fig 3).[9]

Fig 3. The Kings of England and Dukes of Normandy

Women identified as Ælfgyva shown in bold



[8] Any promise of the throne made to William was almost certainly considered to be null and void by the mid-1050s, when the English court made strenuous and ultimately successful efforts to bring Edward's nephew, Edward the Exile, from Hungary to England; and, after his early death, his son Edgar was most probably regarded as Edward's heir. By the 1060s Harold and his family were sufficiently powerful to resist any attempt by Edward to revert to William, had that ever been his intention. For a recent assessment and a detailed historiography of the matter see Stephen Baxter, "Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question," in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (2009), 77-118.

[9] Not all the suggested candidates were new, and much useful work had been done by earlier scholars: see especially J R Planché, "On the Bayeux Tapestry," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 23 (1867): 134-56, at 142-5; Freeman, *op. cit.* iii (2nd edn. 1875), 708-11; and Frank Rede Fowke, *The Bayeux Tapestry: A History and Description* (1898), 49-57. For more recent summaries and analyses see Martin K Foys, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Digital Edition* (2003), commentary to panel 39; and Carola Hicks, *The Bayeux Tapestry: The Life Story of a Masterpiece* (2006), 289-92.

The betrothal theories are founded on reports of a marriage alliance made between William and Harold in Normandy. Norman sources state that Harold agreed, again on oath, to marry William's daughter; and Eadmer added that Harold's sister was to marry one of William's nobles.[10] Harold broke off his betrothal in 1066 and neither marriage took place. A lone reference in the Domesday Book to Ælfgifu, sister of Earl Harold, led Richard Wissolik to propose that she was Ælfgyva, and scene 15 a reference to her intended betrothal.[11] However, the Domesday identification is now thought to result from scribal error: if so, there is no good evidence that Harold had a sister of that name.[12]

In separate studies Wolfgang Grape and David Hill argued instead that Ælfgyva was William's daughter and that it is her betrothal depicted, with the cleric playing a ceremonial role.[13] However, the girl was named Adelida; and there is no evidence to support the suggestion that she adopted an English name.[14] The naked man is not explained and since Adelida was deeply religious and aged no more than fourteen, he seems an especially inappropriate motif.[15]

The naked man plays a larger part in the scandal hypotheses. Two of these concern Ælfgifu of Northampton, mother of King Cnut's eldest sons, and Emma of Normandy, his wife and mother to his younger children. Ælfgifu first came to political prominence as regent in Norway for her eldest son Swein (d.1034/5). After Cnut's death in 1035 she supported her younger son Harold's claim to the English throne, in opposition to Emma and her son Harthacnut. In the course of that dispute rumours circulated that neither Cnut nor Ælfgifu were the parents of their boys and that Ælfgifu had passed off the sons of a priest and a shoemaker as her own. J Bard McNulty thought that these stories were represented in the Tapestry by the insertion of Ælfgyva, the cleric and the naked men. He contended that she was relevant to William and Harold because it was through Swein that Harold Hardrada, king of Norway from 1047, was to draw impetus for his invasion of England in 1066. Her appearance therefore served to damage Norwegian claims to the throne.[16] In response, M W Campbell observed that Hardrada's claim was based solely on a treaty that his predecessor, Magnus, made with Emma's son

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10 *GG*, 156-7; *GND*, 160-61; *HN*, 7 (7).

11 Richard David Wissolik, "The Saxon Statement: Code in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Annuale Mediaevale* 19 (1979): 69-97, at 82-89, 91-2, 95.

12 Ann Williams, "Cautionary Tales: the Daughters of Æthelstan Mannesunu and Earl Godwine of Wessex," *Anglo-Saxon* 2 (2008, forthcoming). Also available on her page at http://www.academia.edu (accessed 7 October 2014). For other objections see M W Campbell, "Aelfgyva: The Mysterious Lady of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Annales de Normandie* 34 (1984): 127-145, at 142-3.

13 Wolfgang Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Monument to a Norman Triumph* (1994), 40; David Hill, "The Bayeux Tapestry and its Commentators: The case of Scene 15," *Medieval Life* 11 (1999): 24-6.

14 She *is* sometimes recorded as Adeliza (a variant of Adelida) and, in one source, as Agatha: Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (1983), 441-5. He demonstrates beyond doubt that William did not have a daughter named Agatha. Neither is there any evidence to show that Ælfgifu and Adelida were homonymous or synonymous names.

15 For her life see Elisabeth van Houts, "The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources: Duchess Matilda, her Daughters and the Enigma of the Golden Child," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, eds. Pierre Bouet, Brian Levy & François Neveux (2004), 135-53, at 141-44.

16 J Bard McNulty, "The Lady Aelfgyva in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Speculum* 55, 4 (1980): 659-68; and *The Narrative Art of the Bayeux Tapestry* (1989), 52-8.

Harthacnut. Ælfgifu and Swein therefore had no bearing on Norwegian claims to England or the events portrayed in the Tapestry.[17]

Emma (d.1052) was the daughter of Richard, duke of Normandy, and was twice queen of England. She was first married to Æthelred the Unready, by whom she was mother to Edward the Confessor; and then to Cnut. She was also great-aunt to William the Conqueror. On coming to England in 1002 she adopted the name Ælfgifu. In 1043-44 she was out of favour with Edward, because, it was said, she had failed to support him both during his long exile in Normandy and after he became king. Later accounts also put the king's displeasure down to her affair with Ælfwine, Bishop of Winchester. Eric Freeman proposed that scene 15 depicted this episode and that Emma and Ælfwine were Ælfgyva and the cleric. He suggested that William (the presumed patron of the Tapestry) had disapproved of his aunt's behaviour; and that she and Ælfwine symbolised the morally lax state of the English kingdom before the Conquest.[18] However, the story of Emma and Ælfwine first appears in a garbled version of events recorded in the late twelfth-century *Annals of Winchester*; and its author seems to have created a romantic tale from similar stories then circulating about a former queen of Germany.[19] In particular, his assertions about Ælfwine can be rejected, for contemporary records show he enjoyed a consistently good relationship with Edward.[20] An alternative view is that Emma is pictured to emphasise William's blood relationship to Edward and his right to be regarded as Edward's heir.[21] But this explanation does not account for the cleric or the naked man.

The third of the scandal theories concerns Eadgifu, abbess of Leominster. In 1046 she had been abducted from her abbey by Swein, Earl Harold's brother, who wished to marry her. A year or so later she returned to Leominster after Swein was forced to give her up. M W Campbell proposed that she was Hakon's mother, had accompanied him to Normandy as a hostage, and that she and Hakon were the subject of Harold's discussion with William. The naked men in the borders were an allusion to the scandal surrounding Hakon's birth. He acknowledged that Eadgifu was not the same name as Ælfgyva and that there was no evidence that Eadgifu was ever in Normandy; in addition, the strongest objection to his thesis is that Eadgifu is not reported to have born Swein a child.[22]

The 'production' theory concerns Ælfgifu, abbess of Wilton (1065-67) and was first developed by John Gosling. He read the cleric's touching of Ælfgyva's face as a reference to the miraculous curing of the abbess's eye complaint. He contended that Ælfgifu had been sent to Normandy on a diplomatic mission to discover what had happened to Harold and that Wilton may have been the place where the

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17 Campbell, *op. cit.* (1984): 139-42. McNulty later modified his arguments. In *Visual Meaning in the Bayeux Tapestry: Problems and Solutions in Picturing History* (2003), 41-5, he no longer focused on Norway and instead regarded *"Aelfgyva's function [as] primarily thematic … epitomizing the story's central theme of rivalry for the throne"*.

18 Eric F Freeman, "The Identity of Aelfgyva in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Annales de Normandie* 41 (1991): 117-34.

19 Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (1997), 19-21.

20 J R Maddicott, "Edward the Confessor's Return to England in 1041," *English Historical Review* 119, 482 (2004): 650-66, at 657-59.

21 Foys, *op. cit.* (2003), commentary to panel 39.

22 Campbell, *op. cit.* (1984): 130-8, 143-5. McNulty, *op. cit.* (1989), 54, marshals the arguments against Eadgifu, although he errs in stating that Swein is not reported to have slept with her.

Tapestry was made.[23] His ideas were later revisited and modified by Patricia Stephenson. She suggested that the abbess was Harold's sister and that she was depicted not in Rouen but at Wilton Abbey. The abbess was included in the Tapestry because she was amongst those responsible for its creation.[24] Much of this is supposition and no evidence links the abbess of Wilton to the events in Normandy. The naked man is not explained: Gosling's reproduction of scene 15 omits him altogether.

So who exactly were they? There is much to consider in tackling this question. Firstly, the concerns of both those responsible for the Tapestry's creation and its intended audience are key to establishing its meaning and messages. Secondly, a number of innovative studies, many published since 1999, have demonstrated that much can be inferred, or at least supposed, about the characters and events depicted in the Tapestry by a careful study of its inscriptions and the derivation and iconography of its images. Lastly, the Tapestry's version of history is necessarily considered alongside other texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; but where these seem relevant to the identities of Ælfgyva and the cleric they too need to be assessed in terms of their purpose, bias and reliability. I shall now consider each of these areas and make my own suggestions as to who Ælfgyva and the cleric may have been.

I: The Tapestry: creation, purpose and audience

There is now very little dispute about when, where and for whom the Tapestry was made. There is a strong case for believing that it was commissioned by or for Odo, bishop of Bayeux and earl of Kent, half-brother to William the Conqueror and one of the most powerful men in post-Conquest England.[25] The designer undoubtedly based a large number of images on illustrations found in manuscripts at the libraries of St Augustine's Abbey and Christ Church Cathedral in Canterbury and Cyril Hart's work on such models has demonstrated that *"the art-historical evidence for the design and manufacture of the Tapestry at St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury is now so extensive and formidable that such a provenance should be taken as an established fact".*[26] The date of production can also be fixed with some certainty. It cannot have been commissioned before the early part of 1067, nor between autumn 1067 and *c.*1071 when Eustace, count of Boulogne, who supported William at Hastings and is

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[23] John Gosling, "The identity of the Lady Ælfgyva in the Bayeux Tapestry and some speculation regarding the hagiographer Goscelin," *Analecta Bollandiana* 108 (1990): 71-9.

[24] Patricia Stephenson, "Where a Cleric and Ælfgyva…," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches: Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum*, eds. Michael J Lewis, Gale R Owen-Crocker & Dan Terkla (2011), 71-4.

[25] For Odo see David R Bates, "The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50-1097)," *Speculum* 50, 1 (1975): 1-20; and for his association with the Tapestry see N P Brooks & H E Walker, "The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 1 (1979): 1-34, 191-9; and Elizabeth Carson Paston & Stephen D White, "Problematizing Patronage: Odo of Bayeux and the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations*, eds. Martin K Foys, Karen Eileen Overbey & Dan Terkla (2009), 1-24.

[26] Cyril Hart, "The Canterbury contribution to the Bayeux Tapestry," in *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe: Papers of the 'Medieval Europe Brugge 1997' Conference*, eds. Guy de Boe & Frank Verhaeghe (1997), 7-15, at 7. He develops this theme in "The Bayeux Tapestry and Schools of Illumination at Canterbury," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 22 (2000): 117-67 and "The *Cicero-Aratea* and the Bayeux Tapestry," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Gale R Owen-Crocker (2005), 161-78.

depicted, heroically, in battle (scene 55; W 68), was out of favour.[27] In April 1072 Scotland, a monk of Mont-Saint-Michel, became abbot of St Augustine's and his appointment seems the best explanation for the otherwise unwarranted appearance of the Norman abbey (scene 16; W 19).[28] The Tapestry's long association with Bayeux has prompted the suggestion that it was made for display at the consecration of Odo's new cathedral there in July 1077; and it was almost certainly made before Odo's arrest and imprisonment by his brother in 1082. My conclusions will in part be based on the premise that the Tapestry was made for Odo, designed in Canterbury, and most probably executed in the mid-1070s.[29]

The designer, however, remains anonymous.[30] His task cannot be underestimated. He was charged with devising a large-scale work for public display, depicting a series of recent political events that would please and reflect the interests of the ruling regime. This must at times have been a process fraught with worry. The Tapestry had not only to meet the approval of Odo and Abbot Scotland but also be acceptable to all who might see or feature in it, from local men such as Turold, Wadard and Vital,[31] to the king and his other half-brother Robert, count of Mortain. The community at Christ Church, having allowed the designer the use of their library, must also have had an interest in the finished work. From 1077, if not sooner, Christ Church was under the charge of a Norman prior, Henry; and both he and Scotland were close associates of Archbishop Lanfranc.[32]

Consequently, this was not and never could have been an unbiased work. The Conquest had been achieved with much bloodshed and upheaval in the face of widespread shock, disapproval and opposition, not only from within England but elsewhere in Europe, and *"the overwhelming reaction of the first generation Normans was one of legitimisation and justification"*.[33] Indeed, the process of legitimisation preceded the Conquest when, in the early months of 1066, Duke William, assisted by Lanfranc, then abbot of Saint-Étienne at Caen, first set out his case for invasion, making his claim to be Edward's heir and condemning Harold's betrayal.[34] William's

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27 Heather J Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England c.879-1160* (2004), 101-6.

28 Richard Gameson, "The Origin, Art and Message of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson (1997), 157-211, at 172. For the date of Scotland's appointment see Martin Brett, "Gundulf and the Cathedral Communities of Canterbury and Rochester," in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066-1109*, eds. Richard Eales & Richard Sharpe (1995), 15-25, at 23-24.

29 For alternative theories concerning the patron, place and date of production see Paston and White, *op. cit.* (2009), 2, n.5.

30 There may, of course, have been more than one person involved in the design but for simplicity's sake I shall assume overall responsibility lay with a sole male designer.

31 These men appear respectively in scenes 10, 41 and 49 (W11, 46, 55) and have been identified as followers of Odo: see Hirokazu Tsurushima, "*Hic Est Miles*: Some images of three knights: Turold, Wadard and Vital," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches: Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum*, eds. Michael J Lewis, Gale R Owen-Crocker & Dan Terkla (2011), 81-91.

32 Lanfranc and Henry were both monks at Bec; for Henry see David Knowles, C N L Brooke & Vera C M London, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales, I. 940-1216* (2001), 33, 243. Lanfranc regarded Scotland as his pre-eminent abbot: Brett, *op. cit.* (1995), 23-24.

33 Elisabeth van Houts, "The Memory of 1066 in Written and Oral Traditions," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 19 (1997): 167-79, at 176.

34 These claims are summarised by William of Poitiers in words attributed to William: *GG,* 120-21. For Lanfranc's role see George Garnett, "Coronation and Propaganda: some Implications of the Norman Claim to the Throne of England in 1066," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 5th series, 36 (1986): 91-116, at 107-111.

arguments were persuasive: having convinced his own court he embarked on a pan-European propaganda campaign which most notably resulted in papal approval and the support or at least the acquiescence of several foreign powers.[35] But in the decade after Hastings he faced criticism, rebellion and external attacks; and these were countered, in part, by the production of works emphasising his right to be king.[36]

The Tapestry supports William's case but in pictures rather than words. The ducal family and their supporters are portrayed sometimes heroically and always with respect; Norman military achievements are celebrated; and the conquest of England is justified for the Norman elite by scenes depicting Harold's adventures on the Continent, his personal debt and oath to William, and his succession to the English throne. These images bolstered their belief that Harold was a usurping perjurer who paid for his disloyalty with his life; and that the English who supported him shared in his crimes.[37] And for those who looked more closely there were a series of images in the Tapestry's borders that reinforced this message. These included eight Aesopian fables, all of which appear (some more than once) during the course of Harold's journey to the Continent and his return to England (scenes 4-7, 16, 24; W 4-8, 18, 27-28). All are tales of deception and it can hardly be coincidence that most are placed above or beneath images of Harold and his men. Some, such as the fables of the bitch who deprives another of her kennel, and the wolf who succeeds a childless king but becomes the cause of his subjects' deaths, must have seemed especially appropriate. An educated Norman audience would have read them as additional comments in the case against Harold.[38] Other border images, such as the chained bear in scene 11 (W 12) and the eels in scene 17 (W 19-20), seem also to offer up derogatory comments on Harold's character;[39] and I shall return again to this topic in considering the significance of the naked man.

It is a rare work of art that meets with universal acclaim but the Tapestry's preservation at Bayeux is testament to the designer's skill in creating a work that satisfied the demands and expectations of his original audience. Their concerns dictated the Tapestry's images and need to be borne in mind in attempting to understand why Ælfgyva and the cleric were included.[40] It is now time to focus on them.

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35 David C Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (1964), 184-92.

36 Such as *GND*, *GG* and the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* (*c.*1067), for which see Frank Barlow, ed. & trans., *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens* (1999).

37 For negative reports of Harold and the English see Hugh M Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity 1066 - c.1220* (2003), 241-57.

38 C R Dodwell, "The Bayeux Tapestry and the French Secular Epic," *The Burlington Magazine* 108, 764 (1966): 549-60, at 559.

39 Shirley Ann Brown, "Cognate Imagery: the Bear, Harold and the Bayeux Tapestry," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Gale R Owen-Crocker (2005), 149-60; Jill Frederick, "Slippery as an Eel: Harold's ambiguous heroics in the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches: Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum*, eds. Michael J Lewis, Gale R Owen-Crocker & Dan Terkla (2011), 121-6. On the borders and their relationship to the main register see Gale R Owen-Crocker, "The Bayeux Tapestry: the Voice from the Border," in *Signs on the Edge: Space, Text and Margin in Medieval Manuscripts,* eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer & Rolf H Bremmer (2007a), 235-58.

40 Claims have been made that the Tapestry represents an English, anti-Norman view of events eg. Wissolik, *op. cit.* (1979). As it was a product of the Norman regime those arguments lack power. It is certainly possible that an English audience, believing the account known to Eadmer, would read images in a different way: scene 23 (W 25-6), for example, would remind *them* that William coerced Harold into making an oath.

II: Analysis of scene 15

The composition and chronology of scenes 14 and 15

In discussing these scenes it must first be remembered that the scene numbers, though a handy reference, are not part of the original design and so can potentially mislead the modern viewer. The starting point in understanding scene 15 is to fix Ælfgyva and the cleric to a point in time. All other episodes depicted in the Tapestry occurred between *c.*1064 and 1066 and so it is not very likely that their appearance refers to an event outside of this time frame or to people who were not then alive. The story unfolds chronologically and although there are two episodes in which chronology is reversed - the sending of messengers to and from William (scenes 10-12; W 10-13) and the death and burial of Edward the Confessor (scenes 26-8; W 29-30) - these are each confined to consecutive scenes and do not distort the viewer's understanding of the sequence of events.[41] Given the space allotted to the capture and release of Harold and then to the Brittany campaign it would be extraordinarily perverse if Ælfgyva and the cleric did not fit chronologically between them; or that they were not connected in some way to either the preceding or succeeding scenes, or both. Indeed, closer examination of scenes 14 to 16 suggests a link to the former.

Scene 14 is best viewed in two parts: (a) the journey to Rouen and (b) the discussion that takes place there. Towers, along with trees, frequently mark the beginning or end of an episode;[42] and here we find that the second half of scene 14 is bracketed with scene 15 by towers to the left of the palace and to the right of the cleric. And within this space three other visual connections become apparent: Harold points towards the man or men standing behind him but also in the general direction of Ælfgyva and the cleric; the beasts touching paws in the upper border to the left of Ælfgyva are placed between the two scenes and look away from each other and down to the action behind them; and the two naked men are placed alongside each other in the lower border, one below the man behind Harold and the other below Ælfgyva.[43]

It seems too that the captions to scenes 14 and 15 are meant to be joined together. Richard Wissolik noted that all captions beginning with the word *ubi* can plausibly be linked to the preceding one; and that the omission of a verb, where the meaning is clear, is not uncommon in Latin. He proposed that the captions should be translated as "*Here Duke William and Harold come to his palace, where [are] a cleric and Ælfgifu*".[44] This reading suggests that they were already at Rouen when William and Harold arrived. But it is not impossible that other words have been left out, perhaps accidentally, and the sentence could be completed in various ways. Since William and Harold are deep in conversation the missing words might feasibly be "were discussed". On the other hand, J. Bard McNulty believed the caption was "*left*

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41 For scenes 10-12 see Richard David Wissolik, "Duke William's Messengers: an 'Insoluble, Reverse-Order' Scene of the Bayeux Tapestry," *Medium Aevum* 51 (1982): 102-7 and Brown, *op. cit.* (2005), 154-5; for scenes 26-8 see Gameson, *op. cit.* (1997), 194-5.

42 Francis Wormald, "Style and Design," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: A Comprehensive Survey*, ed. Frank Stenton (1957), 25-36, at 26.

43 McNulty, *op. cit.* (1989), 57-8, 98-9. If we look for similar bridges between scenes 15 and 16 there are only two: the paired dragons below the cleric and the first soldier riding to Brittany; and the bird above the cleric, which looks to the right.

44 Wissolik, *op. cit.* (1979): 83-6.

deliberately incomplete, carefully ambiguous".[45] But since those in the original audience who were unfamiliar with Ælfgyva are likely to have questioned the meaning of the caption too, we may simply be looking at an error on the part of the designer.[46] Overall, there can be little doubt that both text and image link the cleric and Ælfgyva to the scene in the palace; and it seems safe to conclude that whether or not they were there, they were certainly a subject of discussion.[47]

The name of the cleric and the name Ælfgyva

One might reasonably ask why the caption names Ælfgyva but not her companion. It has been suggested that his name was *"purposely suppressed"* [48] but, once again, contemporary audiences would either have known very well who he was or have expected to be told.[49] *Unus* may, however, not simply represent "a" or "a certain". In 1992 Arnold J Taylor, thinking of its other meaning as the number "one", wondered if it was in fact the cleric's name. He cited other names based on numbers, from various periods, but took the matter no further.[50]

This attractive theory is bolstered by the fact that every person accorded a title in the Tapestry is at the same time identified by name;[51] but seemingly stymied by the absence of anyone called Unus in standard collections of names.[52] However, the spelling of first names in the Tapestry's inscription is frequently inconsistent; and since the language used suggests (despite a number of English letter forms) that the person who composed it was French,[53] *Unus* might represent one of several other first names, perhaps with the loss of an initial *h* (a not uncommon

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45 McNulty, *op. cit.* (1989), 55.

46 For other errors in design or execution see Michael J Lewis, *The Real World of the Bayeux Tapestry* (2008), 180-1 and "Embroidery Errors in the Bayeux Tapestry and their Relevance for Understanding its Design and Production," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Interpretations*, eds. Martin K Foys, Karen Eileen Overbey & Dan Terkla (2009), 130-40.

47 See also Gameson, *op. cit.* (1997), 190-1, who provides a useful discussion on the use of *ubi*, and for the most part shares Wissolik's views. Freeman, *op. cit.* (1991): 124, argues that the distance of about 69 cm between *suu[m]* and *ubi* makes *"the reading of the two inscriptions as a connected narrative rather difficult"*, and that scene 15, and all other *ubi* scenes are self-contained episodes. But breaks of varying lengths within words or sentences occur frequently throughout the Tapestry, eg. at scene 48 (W 51-4), where *hic milites exierunt de hestenga et venerunt ad prelium contra haroldum rege* ('here the soldiers went out from Hastings and came to the battle against King Harold') spans some 262 cm, with a break of 63 cm between *venerunt* and *ad*.

48 Gosling, *op. cit.* (1990): 74.

49 In scene 27 (W 30), for example, the people at Edward's deathbed, though unnamed, can be identified from a written account of his death: Frank Barlow, ed. & trans., *The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster attributed to a monk of Saint-Bertin* (1992), 118-19; and there must be other instances where contemporaries would automatically recognise key characters.

50 Arnold J Taylor, "Belrem," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 14 (1992): 1-23, at 12.

51 Edward, Harold, Guy, William, Stigand and Odo are either always or regularly identified by both first names and title. In scene 43 (W 48) Odo is identified only as *EPISCOPUS* but his neighbour at the table looks towards him and points to his name in the caption to scene 44.

52 Those consulted include: William George Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum* (1897); Olof von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book* (1937); *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (hence *PASE*), last modified 18 August 2010: http://www.pase.ac.uk; Marie-Thérèse Morlet, *Les Noms de Personne sur le Territoire de L'Ancienne Gaule du VIe au XIIe Siècle*, 3 vols. (1968-85).

53 Ian Short, "The Language of the Bayeux Tapestry Inscription," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 23 (2001): 267-80.

feature of the work of Anglo-Norman scribes)[54] and/or with the addition of the *-us* nominative flexion.[55] These include *Unust* (a version of the pan-Celtic name *Unuist* or *Onuist*, modern Angus);[56] *Una*, now regarded as feminine but borne by men in the early medieval period;[57] and the Old English/Old Scandinavian name most commonly recorded as *Huna* or *Hune.*[58] But neither can I find any mid-eleventh century churchmen bearing any of these names. Much as I like the idea that the cleric has always had a name to put to his face, I can take Taylor's theory no further.

Ælfgyva, as a partly Latinised version of the popular Old English female name most commonly spelt *Ælfgifu* or *Ælfgyfu*, presents no such problems. That has not prevented Ælfgyva being identified with women bearing completely different names. If we pass over the cleric for the moment, every other person named in the Tapestry's inscriptions is given a recognisable form of their name. And all, with the sole exceptions of Ælfgyva and Turold, have been firmly identified from other sources.[59] It is therefore highly likely that Ælfgyva has been correctly named. Furthermore, since there are no known examples of Norman women named Ælfgifu, with the sole exception of Queen Emma once in England, her name serves to identify her as a woman who was almost certainly English by birth.

The status of the cleric and Ælfgyva

The final piece of information offered up by the caption is the word *clericus.* This, combined with the man's tonsure, clearly identifies him as a member of the clergy. *Cleric* was often used to describe any man, including monks, who had been ordained to either the higher clerical orders (priests, deacons, subdeacons) or lower orders (acolytes) and so the title alone is not an especially helpful guide to

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54 von Feilitzen, *op. cit.* (1937), 119 and 284, *sub* 'Haraldr'; Gillian Fellows Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (1968), xcviii.

55 Of which there are two examples in the Tapestry: EADWARDUS (scene 27; W 30) and E[USTA]CIUS (scene 55; W 68): Short, *op. cit.* (2001), 272, 278 n.31.

56 For the orthography of the name see Katherine Forsyth, "Evidence of a lost Pictish source in the Historia Regum Anglorum of Symeon of Durham', in *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500-1297: Essays in honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday*, ed. Simon Taylor (2000), 19-34. The Gaelic form *Óengus* is found in both Irish and northern English sources, *Unust* in the *Durham Liber Vitae* (see next note) and possibly a lost Pictish source, *Ungust* in Welsh and Cornish records, whilst *Ungus* and *Hungus* may reflect both Gaelic and Pictish spellings (*ibid*., 21-6). The pronunciation of the name at different times and places is uncertain, but a lenited -g-, combined with the loss of the final -t, might perhaps have given rise to a pronunciation-spelling, *Unus*.

57 *Una*, a cleric, is commemorated in a ninth-century list in the Durham *Liber Vitae*, for which see David & Lynda Rollason, eds., *The Durham Liber Vitae: London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.VII*, 3 vols. (2007), at f. 30r: i, 114; commentary at ii, 185. (For *Unust*, see f. 15r: i, 91; commentary, ii, 43). Another *Una* witnessed a Breton charter dated 871: Aurélien de Courson, ed., *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Redon en Bretagne* (1863), no.248.

58 *PASE sub* 'Hun' and 'Huna'. *Hunus* held land at Kirkton in Suffolk in 1066; seven other references nearby to a *Huna* or *Hune* suggest these all relate to a single man: Alex Rumble, ed., *Domesday Book 34: Suffolk* (1986), f. 297b, 3/99; f. 307a, 6/39; f. 308a, 6/45; f. 308b, 6/48; f. 324b, 6/251; f. 326a, 6/271; f. 342b, 7/117; f. 395a, 25/67 (Kirkton).

59 Thirteen other people are named: Edward, Harold, Guy, William, Conan, Stigand, Wadard, Odo, Robert, Vital, Gyrth, Leofwine and Eustace. Tsurushima's arguments, *op. cit.* (2011), in favour of Turold of Rochester are most persuasive.

a man's status within the church.[60] However, where titles are given in the Tapestry they accurately reflect the rank of the person shown: Edward is always *rex*, William and Harold are both *dux*[61] (and Harold becomes *rex* after his coronation), and Guy is *comitis*. More pertinently, two other churchmen are correctly identified: Odo as bishop on three occasions and Stigand as archbishop.[62] It seems most unlikely then that the cleric had a rank higher than that of priest. That he was a priest, and not a deacon, sub-deacon or acolyte, is suggested by his cloak and brooch, which mark him out as a man of some importance. Michael Lewis has observed that only high-status characters are depicted wearing these items, despite their ubiquity in everyday life.[63] Furthermore, cloaks and brooches are not used to identify *all* religious men: at Edward's funeral only one of the clerics or monks in attendance wears a cloak and brooch (scene 26; W 29-30) and his position at the forefront of the group suggests that he is its most senior member. The cleric's title and appearance indicate that he too held a senior post as a priest either within a secular or monastic community or in an elite household.

As one of just three women in the main register of the Tapestry, and the only one to be named, it is clear that Ælfgyva is also a person of some significance. If, as some suppose, she was a queen or abbess then there is sufficient space after her name for an abbreviated form of *regina* or *abbatissa* to have been inserted. But since titles are not consistently given it is best not to draw conclusions from their absence.[64] Similarly, there is nothing sufficiently distinctive about her appearance to mark her out as either a queen or an abbess. She does not wear a crown, but then neither does Queen Edith (scene 27; W 30); and although nuns were meant

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60 Christopher N L Brooke, "Priest, Deacon and Layman, from St Peter Damian to St Francis," in *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay*, eds. W J Sheils & Diana Wood (1989), 65-85, at 69-72; Simon Keynes, ed., *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester* (1996), 64-5; Julia Barrow "Grades of Ordination and Clerical Careers, *c.* 900 - *c.*1200," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 30 (2008): 41-61. She notes, at 47-8, that the very lowest orders (readers, exorcists and doorkeepers) were *"dead letters"* by the eleventh century.

61 For designations of Harold and other English earls as *dux* see Ann Williams, "How to be Rich: the presentation of Earl Harold in the early sections of the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches: Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum*, eds. Michael J Lewis, Gale R Owen-Crocker & Dan Terkla (2011), 66-70, at 69-70.

62 Stigand: scene 30 (W 31); Odo: scenes 43, 44 (W 48), 54 (W 67).

63 Michael John Lewis, "Identity and Status in the Bayeux Tapestry: the Iconographic and Artefactual Evidence," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 29 (2007): 100-120, at 104-6, 110-12, 115. It may also be relevant that the cleric is one of only five men - the others being Edward, Harold, William and Guy - whose cloaks are fastened with a square or rectangular brooch but it is not clear if a brooch's shape carries any particular meaning: *ibid*.,104-5.

64 William and Harold, for example, are frequently, but not always, described as *dux* and in later scenes Harold is not always described as *rex*. Five other named characters are not given their titles: Conan, duke of Brittany, Robert, count of Mortain, the English earls Leofwine and Gyrth; and Eustace, count of Boulogne (scenes 18, 20, 44, 52, 55; W 20-21, 23, 48, 63-4, 68). However, the captions including Conan's name are especially crowded and interrupted by battle scenes, perhaps accounting for the absence of *dux;* a title for Eustace may have been lost through the tear in the material around his name; and Leofwine and Gyrth are identified instead as brothers of King Harold. Scene 44 demonstrates the inconsistencies: William and his brothers are pictured together and although there is sufficient space for each to be given their title only Odo is described by his.

to wear black there is some evidence that they did not always do so.[65] The style of Ælfgyva's headdress, covering her head, neck and shoulders, is typical of those worn by women in contemporary art; however, the poncho-like overgarment she wears, which hangs down around her back and sides and falls into a point at the front of her body, is less commonly found. Since it was clearly impractical for carrying out any form of work, it may only have been worn by aristocratic women.[66]

A curious feature of Ælfgyva's appearance is that the embroiderer has stitched over part of her face. Wolfgang Grape describes the effect: *"A salmon-pink shadow, the same colour as her headdress, falls across her forehead, nose and eyes. This unmistakably shows that she is wearing a veil…*" He interprets this as a veil worn by betrothed women.[67] There is evidence from the early Christian period that women wore red veils during marriage (as opposed to betrothal) ceremonies, and when consecrated as nuns,[68] although we have no evidence that this was the practice in eleventh-century England or Normandy, or that special clothing was worn when a woman was betrothed.[69] In fact, there is no evidence for betrothal ceremonies in the west at this time (apart from Spain), suggesting *"that betrothal was a semi-private, domestic affair, without direct, official, liturgical intervention by the Church*".[70] There are very few descriptions or depictions of veils in Anglo-Saxon literature or art, but the little evidence there is suggests that Ælfgyva is not wearing a veil. If the veil held above Queen Emma's head in the frontispiece to the New Minster *Liber Vitae*[71] is anything to go by it seems that they were rather more elaborate garments. In addition the monastic mime for indicating a nun in the Old English *Monasterialia Indicia* suggests that their veils covered their whole faces down to their cheeks.[72] The colouring of Ælfgyva's face is more likely the result of the embroiderer running into difficulties in depicting her headdress. Although her face is shown in profile, the green outline of the headdress is clearly shown at the left side of her face; and the red of the headdress at the left side of her neck. But here the embroiderer has inadvertently stitched red thread over part of Ælfgyva's chin, and I suspect she did the same in working her way around the rest of Ælfgyva's face.

Other inferences about Ælfgyva's status can be drawn from the architectural setting of the scene. She is framed by spiral columns and these had long been

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65 Goscelin is a useful observer on this point. He expressly states, in his *Life of St Edith* (*c.* 1080), that nuns were required to wear black in observance of the rule of St Benedict and makes several references in his writings to the black clothing and veils of nuns at Wilton: Stephanie Hollis, ed., *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius* (2004), 27, 28, 38, 67, 104. However, Gale R Owen, "Wynflaed's Wardrobe," *Anglo-Saxon England* 8 (1979): 195-222, notes, at 220-21, that nuns were at times criticised for wearing colourful or ostentatious clothing.

66 Gale R Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (2004), 213-4, 219-26.

67 Grape, *op. cit.* (1994), 40.

68 E Schillebeeckx, *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery* (1965), 307-8.

69 For the little that is known about betrothal in Anglo-Saxon England see Andreas Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage in Old English* (1986), 18-24. The few surviving documents mostly concern financial arrangements but confirm that the women's kin were actively involved: Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents c.500-1042* (1979), nos. 50, 128, 130.

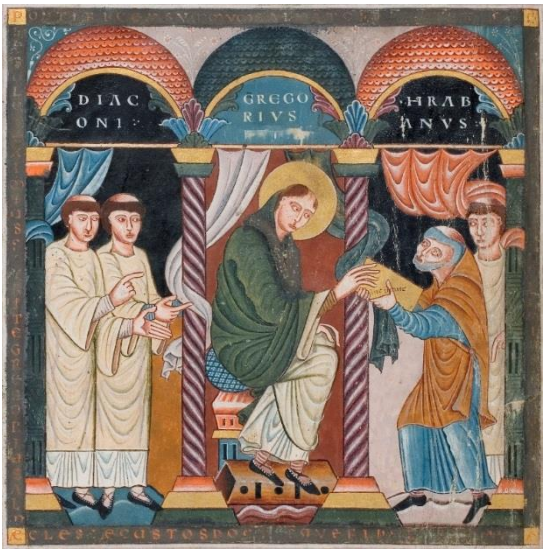
70 Mark Searle & Kenneth W Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy* (1992), 8.

71 BL, Stowe 944, f. 6r: Keynes, *op. cit.* (1996).

72 Owen, *op. cit.* (1979), 218.

employed to highlight people or places of importance.[73] Their use in contemporary art and architecture, though widespread, was by no means ubiquitous, and the Tapestry's spiral columns are of particular interest since the designer chose to use them on only one other occasion: in scene 33 (W 33), where a single column partly frames Harold. It is significant that at this point in the story he has reached the apogee of his power, and is depicted with every trapping of kingship and high status: crowned, enthroned, wearing a voluminous cloak and holding a spear. The designer's appreciation of the symbolic value of spiral columns is clear: by placing a single spiral column to Harold's left he further emphasises Harold's position and distinguishes him from the man addressing him. A spiral column to the right of the latter would have bestowed an unwarranted status upon him. Another good example, from the frontispiece of a tenth-century manuscript thought to originate from Canterbury, shows Rabanus Maurus presenting a copy of *De Laude Crucis* to Pope Gregory IV (Fig 4).[74] The pope is the central figure, seated in an arcade, with Rabanus and other churchmen to either side of him, but he is the only member of the group placed within spiral columns.

Fig 4. Rabanus Maurus presenting De Laude Crucis to Pope Gregory IV.[75]



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Eric Fernie has noted other examples of churchmen framed by spirals, and it is not hard to find images from various places or periods of Christ, the Virgin Mary or saints shown in this way.[76] But perhaps the most interesting parallel is from a continental illuminated book, showing, so far as I can tell, the only other secular

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73 Spiral columns are treated extensively, with numerous examples from antiquity to the middle ages, by Eric Fernie in "The Spiral Piers of Durham Cathedral," in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, eds. Nicola Coldstream & Peter Draper (1980), 49-58; and in "Archaeology and iconography: Recent developments in the study of English Medieval architecture," *Architectural History* 32 (1989): 18-29.

74 *Rabanus De Laude Crucis*, Trinity College, Cambridge MS. B.16.3; for images and commentary see http://sites.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=272.

75 Trinity College, Cambridge MS. B. 16.3, frontispiece.

76 Fernie, *op. cit.* (1980), 51.

women contemporary with Ælfgyva to appear alone within spiral columns. The *Vita Mathildis celeberrimae principis Italia*, dating from *c.*1115, includes portraits of Matilda of Tuscany and her family. In several of these the subjects, including Matilda, her mother and grandmother, are seated on thrones with spiral columns.[77]

The last miniature is especially pertinent since it functions, like the Tapestry, as a pictorial narrative of an historical event: Matilda, along with Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, meeting her cousin and overlord Henry IV at Canossa in 1077 (Fig 5). Henry was embroiled in a dispute with the pope and sought Matilda's support in negotiating a resolution. The group dynamic is especially interesting. Matilda is shown enthroned within an arched structure, supported by spiral columns. She is elevated above the abbot, who, though a larger figure, is seated outside of the arch, while the king kneels before her. Both men - and the viewer - focus their attention on Matilda and it is apparent that the artist saw her as the pre-eminent member of the group.[78] Matilda played a vital role at Canossa; but in the wider scheme of things she was subservient to her cousin (and the pope).

Fig 5 Matilda of Tuscany, Henry IV of Germany and Hugh, abbot of Cluny.[79]

Similar conclusions might be drawn about Ælfgyva. It can hardly be the case that the spiral columns mark her out as one of *the* most significant players in the Tapestry's drama; but they highlight her importance at a particular moment and so reinforce the view that she is one of the subjects of William and Harold's conversation. That only she and Harold are treated in this way is perhaps intended to stress a connection between them. Since spiral columns can also denote significant places I shall return to their relevance when considering more generally the architecture of scene 15.

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77 Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Codice Vaticano Latino 4922, ff. 21v, 30v and 49r: see Paolo Golinelli, ed. & trans., *Donizone: Vita di Matilda di Canossa* (2008), plates 4, 6 and 7; the ms is also available online at http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.4922.

78 The caption to the miniature similarly emphasises Matilda's role: '*Rex rogat Abbatem! Mathildim Supplicat Atq;[ue]*' ('The king begs the abbot; and pleads with Matilda').

79 Published in Christian Ludwig Scheidt, ed., *Origines Guelficae*, 5 vols. (1750-80), i, facing page 446 (digitised by Google), from Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, *Codice Vaticano Latino* 4922, f.49r.

On balance, the indications are that Ælfgyva was a secular noblewoman. The cleric was undoubtedly a man of high status and the close association of scenes 14 and 15 suggests that both were connected to either William or Harold.

Gestures and the models for the cleric and Ælfgyva

The brevity of the inscription is supplemented by the expressive and often dramatic gestures of the Tapestry's characters, who interact with the viewer, as much as each other, by frequently drawing attention to significant people, events and text. Most discussions of the Tapestry have paid at least some attention to gesture, and it forms a necessary part of any consideration of scene 15, but only twice has it been the subject of systematic surveys, by Andreas Kuhn and Gale Owen-Crocker.[80] In separate studies Owen-Crocker and others have also considered why the designer chose at times to copy images found in manuscript art and what those images may have signified to him and his associates at Canterbury. It might be the case that the designer simply copied images he found pleasing or useful but at other times their context and meaning seem to have dictated their use.[81] In this section I shall consider what can be discerned from the gestures of both the cleric and Ælfgyva and whether possible models for either figure might throw some light on their identities.

Gale Owen-Crocker's seminal study of gesture has demonstrated that the range of gestures is relatively small, and that those used most frequently often convey the same meaning. She noted that most characters hold something in one or both hands but *"[a] minority of the figures have both hands free and so are able to make double gestures [and are] usually significant characters depicted at important occasions."* The cleric and Ælfgyva fall into the second group.[82] Owen-Crocker's interpretations provide nuanced readings of some key scenes, but she felt that gestures alone were unable to establish what the cleric and Ælfgyva were meant to be doing. Nevertheless, she made some pertinent observations, which merit further attention.

Two of the gestures made by the cleric and Ælfgyva offer up straightforward interpretations. The first concerns the gesture that Ælfgyva makes with her left hand. Owen-Crocker concluded that an open hand, seen palm side to the audience with the thumb separated from the fingers, signified speech. Other than pointing, this is the most common gesture in the Tapestry. Owen-Crocker identified seventeen examples and found confirmation of her theory in scene 46. Here a man approaches William and makes this gesture with his right hand; the associated caption records that he is bringing news of Harold (W 50).[83] It is also of course

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[80] Andreas Kuhn, "Der Teppich von Bayeux in seinen Gebärden: Versuch einer Deutung," *Studi Medievali* 33,1 (1992), 1-71; Gale R Owen-Crocker, "The Interpretation of Gesture in the Bayeux Tapestry," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 29 (2007b): 145-78.

[81] Gale R Owen-Crocker "Reading the Bayeux Tapestry through Canterbury eyes," in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, eds. Simon Keynes & Alfred P Smyth (2006), 243-65, discusses and summarises the work in this area.

[82] Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2007b): 145. Of 627 figures only 24 (excluding those dying in battle) gesture with both hands. These include Harold at each of his three meetings with King Edward, when addressing William in scene 14, and in making his oath; the messenger who tells William of Harold's capture by Guy; the cleric and Ælfgyva; Robert, William and Odo planning the invasion of England; and Odo in conference with his brothers before Hastings (scenes 1, 12, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 35, 44; W 1, 13, 17, 26, 28, 30, 34, 48).

[83] Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2007b): 153-55, 176 (table 2). I would add the man in scene 12 who brings news of Harold's capture to William (W 13) and the groom who brings William his horse in scene 47 (W 51).

the gesture that Harold makes with his right hand in scene 14. We are meant therefore to understand that Ælfgyva too is speaking, to the cleric. He in turn would appear, from the placing of his left hand at his waist, to be listening closely to her. Owen-Crocker noted that only three other figures in the main register of the Tapestry make this gesture. They are Guy of Ponthieu in scene 10 (W 10-11), Harold in scene 29 (W 31) and William in scene 35 (W 34-5). Each is listening to argument and being persuaded to take a particular course of action: Guy is asked (or ordered) to release Harold from captivity; Harold is offered the crown; and William is encouraged to invade England. In the last of these scenes William's companions both use the open hand speech gesture. Owen-Crocker thought that "*clearly the cleric is not being persuaded of anything*";[84] but the gesture of Ælfgyva's left hand strongly suggests the opposite. She speaks, and the cleric considers her arguments.

Owen-Crocker considered that the whole figure of Ælfgyva was copied from an image of the personified Virtue *Spes* (Hope) found in a Christ Church, Canterbury manuscript of Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, dating from the late tenth century.[85] The two figures are indeed very similar; and although their clothing is rather different the designer was quite capable of bringing fashions up to date.[86] *Spes* makes with her right hand a gesture of approval or acquiescence, a Roman theatrical mime where "*the middle finger, or ring finger, makes an incomplete circle with the thumb, leaving the index finger (or all the other fingers) extended*". Owen-Crocker thought that the embroiderer had run into difficulties in executing this gesture, leaving Ælfgyva with a rather indistinct right hand, but that the meaning of approval or acquiescence was perhaps significant, and by modelling Ælfgyva on *Spes* the designer was indicating that at this stage in the story the future seemed hopeful for all concerned.[87] However, *Spes* is one of several possible prototype Ælfgyvas to be found in late tenth or early eleventh-century Canterbury manuscripts. There are very close similarities between Ælfgyva and Eve in Junius 11; and more general similarities with a woman crossing the Red Sea and the women at the sepulchre in the *Harley Psalter*; and with Noah's wife and Sarah in the *Old English Hexateuch.*[88] In all of these the women's right hands are held in a similar position to Ælfgyva's but none make the approval gesture. We cannot therefore be certain that Ælfgyva's

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84 Owen-Crocker, *op.cit.* (2007b): 157-60, 170, 171 (quote from p.171).

85 BL, Cotton Cleopatra C.VIII, f. 17r. For an edition see below, n.88.

86 As in his undoubted use of the figure of *Labor* from the same ms, f.27r, for a pillaging Norman in scene 41 (W 45). These figures are reproduced in colour alongside each other in David J Bernstein, *The Mystery of the Bayeux Tapestry* (1986), 40.

87 Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2007b): 168-9.

88 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11, p. 46; BL, Harley 603, ff. 58r and 71r; BL, Cotton Claudius B.IV, ff. 15v and 21v. Cotton Cleopatra C.VIII, Harley 603 and Junius 11 are all reproduced in Thomas H Ohlgren, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration: Photographs of Sixteen Manuscripts with Descriptions and Index* (1992); and the *Hexateuch* in C R Dodwell & Peter Clemoes, eds., *The Old English Illustrated Hexateuch: British Museum Cotton Claudius B. IV* (1974). Harley 603 and the *Hexateuch* can also be viewed respectively at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_603 and http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Claudius_B_IV.

right hand gestures in any meaningful way, or that she embodies the virtues or vices of any particular literary or biblical character.[89]

The gesture made by the cleric with his right hand is perhaps the most contentious aspect of the whole scene. It is the only occasion in the Tapestry where a character touches another's face and has been interpreted as a slap,[90] a caress,[91] the lifting[92] or placing[93] of a veil, a blessing[94] and a reference to the curing of an eye complaint.[95] Gale Owen-Crocker identified the gesture as one of resurrection or "raising up" and suggested that the viewer was meant to understand that Ælfgyva was dead at the time of Harold and William's discussions in Rouen.[96] These disparities of opinion are best addressed by considering *exactly* where the cleric's hand is placed (Fig 6). His thumb is touching Ælfgyva's forehead and his fingers are placed together at the side of her face. His index finger touches her cheek, near the base of her nose; his middle finger is just below her mouth; his ring and little fingers at her chin. The cleric's thumb, ring and little finger touch the material of her headdress; his other fingers appear to touch her skin. Since his fingers are clearly seen, it appears that only the tips touch Ælfgyva.

Fig 6. Ælfgyva's face: the cleric's hand.

In accordance with the requirements from the City of Bayeux this illustration (a detail from Fig 2 above) is not included in this file. A low resolution version may be viewed in the online version of this article, or it may be seen in higher quality in the printed edition of the journal.

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89 Ælfgyva's closest match is Mary Magdalene in the *Tiberius Psalter* (BL, Cotton Tiberius C.VI, f. 13v), a Winchester manuscript dating from 1064-92: T A Heslop, "A Dated 'Late Anglo-Saxon' Illuminated Psalter," *The Antiquaries Journal* 72 (1992): 171-4. This image also includes a spiral column, forming part of Christ's tomb.
See http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Tiberius_C_VI. For further comparisons between the Psalter and the Tapestry see Heslop, *ibid*., and Lewis, *op. cit.* (2008), 114, 138-9; and below, n.144.

90 Of admonition (Wilson, *op. cit.* (1985), 178) or as an aid to memory (Henri Prentout, "An Attempt to Identify Some Unknown Characters in the Bayeux Tapestry," in *The Study of the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. Richard Gameson (1997), 21-30, at 23-4). Boys were sometimes beaten or slapped as *aide-mémoires* but there does not seem to be any evidence that the same practice was performed on adults. For incidences in Normandy see Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (1988), 149-51.

91 Or 'face-fondling', McNulty, *op. cit.* (1980): 665.

92 Grape, *op. cit.* (1994), 40.

93 Hill, *op. cit.* (1999): 26.

94 Wissolik, *op. cit.* (1979): 91; Hill, *op. cit.* (1999): 26.

95 Gosling, *op. cit.* (1990): 71-3; Stephenson, *op. cit.* (2011), 71-2.

96 Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2007b): 161-3.

The manner of this gesture would appear to rule out some of the interpretations listed above. Anatomical realism was not the designer's strongpoint (as demonstrated elsewhere by some fantastically contorted arms) but the gesture does not much resemble a slap. It is almost impossible to slap another with an outstretched arm; and the assailant's thumb could not realistically land on the victim's forehead. Neither is it at all likely that the cleric is meant to be drawing attention to Ælfgyva's eye. Since the identification of Ælfgyva as the abbess of Wilton rests primarily on the miraculous cure of that lady's eye complaint it is notable that none of the cleric's fingers or his thumb touch either of Ælfgyva's eyes. Depictions of Christ healing the blind are common in medieval art and Christ either touches an eye with an extended index finger, or with his index and middle fingers in a conventional sign of blessing.[97] One might have expected the designer to draw on such imagery had he wished to illustrate this episode from the abbess's life. And if the cleric is meant to be lifting, placing or in some way adjusting a veil or Ælfgyva's headdress then his hand is not holding or grasping her clothing with curled fingers in the way that many of the Tapestry's figures are shown holding a multitude of objects. Most relevantly, the cleric's gesture does not mirror that of William in scene 21 (W 24), where he is shown giving arms to Harold. William places or adjusts Harold's helmet with his left hand; we do not see his fingers, which are hidden from view, but his elongated thumb is shown part way up and at one side of the helmet, towards the top of Harold's head. He must therefore be grasping the other side of the helmet with his fingers. If the designer had wanted to show that the cleric was doing something with Ælfgyva's headdress he would presumably have employed a similar gesture.

There are difficulties too with Gale Owen-Crocker's suggestion that the cleric is resurrecting or raising up Ælfgyva. The examples she found in two Canterbury manuscripts and an eleventh-century manuscript from Poitiers all show the subject's chin being cupped by the hand of another.[98] Another example appears in the depiction of a miracle cure on a late eleventh-century ivory crosier head, probably Anglo-Norman.[99] In each the chin is quite firmly grasped, with the thumb, where shown, at the chin or side of the face. However, this is not the gesture we see in the case of the cleric and Ælfgyva. Only the tips of two of his fingers are placed near her chin, whilst his thumb is at her forehead.

By far the most popular explanation is that the gesture signifies affection or desire of an erotic nature and so suggests some sort of sexual impropriety, either on the part of the cleric alone, or between them both, or between Ælfgyva and someone else. Once again, it is essential to consider exactly how medieval artists depicted such matters. The most extensive published collections of hand-to-face gestures indicating love or carnal desire, gathered separately by François Garnier and Leo Steinberg, and ranging in date from ancient Egypt to the sixteenth century, demonstrate that the chin was the sole focus of attention. In thirty or so examples the hand of the lover is invariably placed under the chin, which was tickled, stroked

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97 Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 2 vols. (1971-2), i, 170-73.

98 *St Augustine's Gospels* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 286, f. 125r); the *Paris Psalter* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 8824, f. 2v) and Fortunatus, *Life of St Radegund* (Potiers, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 250, f. 42).

99 Janet Backhouse, D H Turner & Leslie Webster, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art*, (1984), no. 272.

or grasped. The forehead is never touched, the cheek only rarely.[100] This gesture is markedly different to the cleric's; and given this body of evidence the theory that the cleric is fondling Ælfgyva's face in a manner indicative of romantic love or sexual impropriety is simply not sustainable.

The conundrum might usefully be approached by breaking the gesture down into two actions: the thumb at the forehead and the fingers on the face. If we first consider the cleric's thumb only one answer presents itself: he must surely be blessing Ælfgyva by making the sign of the cross on her forehead. Crossing the forehead with the right thumb or index finger was one of the usual ways of bestowing a blessing and was a prescribed feature of certain religious ceremonies: baptism, confirmation, ordination, the consecration of nuns and anointing of the sick. It was not confined to the clergy: the laity commonly blessed themselves and their young children by making the sign of the cross upon their foreheads as a profession of faith, a protection against danger and in imitation of the priest when at mass.[101]

It is difficult to think of any other reason why the cleric's thumb should be placed at Ælfgyva's forehead but the motive for blessing is not immediately apparent. The absence of ceremonial paraphernalia and the fact that certain rites, such as confirmation and consecration of nuns, could only be carried out by a bishop indicate that the blessing was not liturgical. Nor is it clear why the cleric's fingers should be touching the side of Ælfgyva's face since it would be natural to curl the fingers into the palm. Furthermore, his gesture bears no resemblance to other instances of blessing in the Tapestry. There is a nice collection of images: the hand of God blesses Westminster Abbey (scene 26; W 29); a priest blesses the dead body of King Edward (scene 28; W 30); and Bishop Odo blesses food and drink (scene 43; W 48). The gesture on each occasion is the most common mode of benediction, where the index finger, middle finger and thumb are extended and the other fingers curled in. In each of these the blessing hand is held above, and does not touch, the person or object being blessed.[102] If the designer had wished to show that Ælfgyva was being blessed by a man whose relationship to her at this particular moment was solely spiritual one might have expected him to have used the same gesture. The cleric's touching of Ælfgyva's face certainly suggests a more personal (though non-sexual) relationship.

The problem of the cleric's right hand would be best resolved by comparison with identical or near-identical gestures in other works of art but the matter is further complicated by a dearth of such images. I can find only two; and in each case we shall have cause to return to the theme of blessings and the manner in which they

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[100] François Garnier, *Le Langage de l'image au Moyen Age*, 2 vols. (1982-9), ii, 120-6; Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (1996), 3-7, 110-18. See also McNulty, *op. cit.* (1980): figs. 4 and 5.

[101] For the practice and various modes of blessings see William Smith & Samuel Cheetham, eds., *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, 2 vols, (1875-80), i, 195-200 ('Benedictions'), 828-9 ('Imposition of Hands'), ii, 1895-8 ('Sign of the Cross'). For an especially useful overview of the signing gesture in everyday life see Carol Neuman de Vegvar, "*In Hoc Signo:* The Cross on Secular Objects and the Process of Conversion," in *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies in Honor of George Hardin Brown*, eds. Karen Louise Jolly, Catherine E Karkov & Sarah Larratt Keefer (2008), 79-117; see 89-90 for the crossing by parents of children's foreheads until they were old enough to do so themselves. Gregory of Tours related how a woman's failure to sign her three year old son *c.*570 led to his blinding during a dust storm: see Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (1993), 266-7.

[102] Harold also uses the blessing gesture when at Bayeux (scene 23; W 26) but here it derives from a theatrical gesture for swearing an oath: Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2007b): 160, 169.

were bestowed. An ivory panel in the British Museum, thought to be Italian and to date from the 4th or 5th centuries, shows a man touching the face of a boy in exactly the same way that the cleric touches Ælfgyva (Fig 7). The thumb of his left hand is placed at the boy's forehead and his fingers touch the side of the boy's face. The boy, and a second man behind him, both hold open books.

Fig 7. Christ with the doctors in the temple.

Ivory panel (detail), BM 1856,0623.3
© Trustees of the British Museum

(link to full original)

This scene had long been identified as Christ amongst the doctors in the temple (Luke 2: 41-52), whilst the scene to the left, of a boy being baptised, was thought to depict Christ's baptism.[103] More recently, the panel was considered instead to show the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.[104] However, the story of Christ's visit to the temple is strongly suggested by the characters' other gestures. Although the men clearly make the benediction gesture with their right hands, this was, before the sixth century, used to signify speech, particularly in the context of preaching or teaching. The speaker would commonly hold a book or scroll in his left hand and "speak" with his right.[105] The man to the right performs exactly in this way and although the boy's right hand is a little indistinct, he may very well be making the speech gesture too. Their gestures indicate that all three are engaged in discourse; and since the next event to follow in Luke is Christ's baptism the traditional interpretation of the panel seems most likely.[106] However, Luke makes no reference to a blessing or any activity in which Christ's head or face was touched. But the artist may have known the extended account in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, where the doctors tell Mary that God has blessed the fruit of

[103] BM 1856,0623.3; O M Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities and Objects from the Christian East in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* (1901), 51-2.

[104] The label on display with the panel in 2012 read: *"Panel showing the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. Probably northern Italy 4th-5th century AD. The haloes, which may have been engraved at a later date, led to the identification of the scenes as the baptism of Christ and Christ among the doctors in the temple. But the interior setting of the baptism and the appearance of the flanking figures suggest that this may be incorrect."* The panel is not currently (March 2015) on display.

[105] H P L'Orange, *Studies in the Iconography of Cosmic Kingship in the Ancient World* (1953), 171-97. By the ninth century the change in the meaning of the gesture was complete: *ibid*., 182-3.

[106] See Schiller, *op. cit.* (1971-2), i, 132-34 for images of Christ as a boy at the time of his baptism.

her womb; if so, a blessing gesture was entirely appropriate.[107] The doctor's fingers at the side of Christ's face add a realistic note of affection. This image will not, of course, have been known to the Tapestry's designer but it takes us a little nearer to understanding the cleric's intent in touching Ælfgyva.

The second image I wish to consider is found in the *Harley Psalter*. This is not so exact a match for the cleric's gesture but has the merit of being rather nearer in time to the creation of the Tapestry, from the same artistic milieu, and from a work which influenced the Tapestry's designer.[108] It is also somewhat easier to interpret. At f.67v is an illustration of Psalm 130:2 (Vulgate; King James 131:2), *sicut ablactates super matrem suam ita retribues in animam meam* (*"as a child that is weaned is towards his mother, so reward in my soul"*) (Fig 8).

Fig 8. Mother and Son

British Library, Harley 603, f.67v (detail).
© The British Library Board

(link to full original: select f.67v from the drop down list)

A woman is shown seated in a domed arcade, reaching with her left hand towards a standing adolescent boy. He in turn reaches towards her to take a large ring that she holds in her right hand. The boy holds a staff and since his body is turned slightly away it is clear that he is about to part from his mother. There are a number of differences between the composition of this scene and scene 15 but there are also two striking similarities: the woman lightly touches the side of the boy's face; and they are separated, and their arms partially obscured, by the central pillar of the arcade. The woman's fingers and thumb are difficult to distinguish but her hand is placed near to her son's eye and nose. The gesture is evidently one of affection but it seems equally likely that she is blessing him on

[107] Tony Burke, *The Childhood of the Saviour (Infancy Gospel of Thomas): A New Translation*, 15:4 (2009), at http://www.tonyburke.ca/infancy-gospel-of-thomas (accessed 29 January 2015).

[108] See above, n.88. A number of parallels have been noted: Hart, *op. cit.* (2000), 123 and figs. 7, 8, 13, 16, 19; Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2006), 254-5, 256-8, 259-60; Lewis, *op. cit.* (2008), 117-8, 124-5, 132, 159, 162, 175-6.

leaving home.[109] That both they and the cleric gesture *behind* the pillar is also distinctive: it is rather more usual for subjects to act in front of the structure which frames them (as in Fig 4).[110] The rarity of these two motifs strongly suggests that the Tapestry's designer drew inspiration from this image and that he did so because he wished to illustrate a very particular and similar situation. If so, the logical conclusion is that the cleric and Ælfgyva are father and daughter and that she is receiving his blessing on leaving his care. In this context their other gestures suggest that Ælfgyva is persuading him to agree to her departure, perhaps reassuring him that all will be well. Parental and familial blessings at significant moments in an individual's life - such as leaving home, undertaking journeys or marriage - were common, influenced by biblical examples,[111] and although descriptions and illustrations of such blessings are rare, the verbal expression of a blessing would appear to be accompanied by the touching of the head and/or face, perhaps with the signing of the cross on the recipient's forehead - a gesture that a Christian parent was used to making when his or her children were young.[112]

The architectural setting

The Tapestry's architecture can be roughly divided into two types: buildings which incorporate contemporary architectural features, copied either from manuscript art or real life; and buildings bearing no resemblance to contemporary structures and copied instead from classical models in manuscript art.[113] The structure which frames Ælfgyva, and the tower to the right of the cleric, fall into the first of these categories, but their precise function is not immediately apparent and their identification with known buildings or types of buildings has rested very much with whichever theory is being advanced about the pair's identities.

The first step in analysing their form and function is to consider that the earliest audience would have visualised them in a very different way to the modern viewer. As Lynda Neagley has shown, the two-dimensional buildings of the Tapestry were meant to be imagined as three-dimensional spaces, into which the viewer might step, with open doors and other entranceways leading forward and backward through interconnecting scenes.[114] A three-dimensional imagining of scene 15,

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[109] An interpretation first proposed by Judith Ellen Duffey, "The Inventive Group of Illustrations in the Harley Psalter (British Museum MS. Harley 603)" (PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1977), 69-70, 138-44. See also Carol Neuman de Vegvar, "Images of Women in Anglo-Saxon Art V: Matron as Ring-giver in Harley 603," *Old English Newsletter* 28,1 (1994): 22-24.

[110] See also, for example, Robert in scene 44 (W 48); Duffey, *op. cit.* (1977),142-3; Backhouse, Turner & Webster, *op. cit.* (1984), nos. 6, 28, 57,116.

[111] For example Genesis 28:1, Ruth 1:8-9 (on undertaking journeys), Genesis 24:60 (on leaving home to marry), Joshua 15:29 (on marriage), Genesis 27, 48:9-20, 49 (by patriarchs when fearing or nearing death).

[112] Jacob blessed his grandsons by placing his hands on their heads (Genesis 48: 9-20); this is the only blessing gesture described in the Old Testament. It is depicted in exactly that way in the *Old English Hexateuch* (see n.88 above), f. 70v. Other illustrations of parental blessings by the patriarchs in the *Hexateuch* - eg. ff. 42r, 43r, 70v - show them making the conventional benediction gesture without touching the child, the artist presumably reflecting their status as religious leaders. For examples of parental blessings in the context of marriage and leaving home in eleventh-century Spain and twelfth-century Flanders see Patricia Skinner & Elisabeth van Houts, *Medieval Writings on Secular Women* (2011), nos. 54 and 55.

[113] Lewis, *op. cit.* (2008), 102-13.

[114] Lynda Elaine Neagley, "Portals of the Bayeux Tapestry: visual experience, spatial representation and oral performance," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: New Approaches: Proceedings of a Conference at the British Museum*, eds. Michael J Lewis, Gale R Owen-Crocker & Dan Terkla (2011), 136-46.

aided by the designer's positioning of Ælfgyva and the cleric, indicates that we are meant to look through an entranceway, leading to a tower, in front of which a man and woman stand in the middle-distance.

That the frame in which Ælfgyva stands is a gateway (rather than a doorway) can be inferred by comparison to other models. Firstly, there are especially close similarities with the gateway to the city of Bayeux (scene 22; W 25). This too has a rectangular frame, with columns connected by a decorated lintel and a large-tongued animal head at the top of the left-hand column (the top of the right-hand column is obscured). K J Galbraith observed that the basic form of posts and lintel can also be found in twelfth-century English representations of the gates of Gaza, Ephesus and Jerusalem and thought that these and Ælfgyva's gate might derive from pre-Conquest prototypes.[115]

Ælfgyva's gateway differs from the others in its spiral columns and, as previously mentioned, these were invariably employed to emphasise people or places of importance. When used to frame people (such as Harold in scene 33) there was probably no intended representation of actual structures; but they can also denote holy places and where architectural examples survive there are nearly always religious connotations. In western Europe they are found before 1100 in only a handful of churches in England and the Netherlands and usually demarcate altars or crypts containing the remains of saints.[116] There is not, so far as I am aware, any archaeological evidence that spiral columns were used for city or church gateways in England at this time, although instances of the latter can be found elsewhere.[117] Nor do spiral columns often feature in Anglo-Saxon manuscript art.[118] There is, however, one rather interesting example in the Cotton Cleopatra C.VIII version of *Psychomachia*, where spiral columns mark a city entrance *and* frame a holy building. The *Psychomachia*, or "battle of the soul", an allegorical poem in which Virtues overcome Vices, concludes with a detailed description of the building of a temple (the soul) in a city (man's body). The metaphor is voiced by *Fides* (Faith): 'What does it profit us to drive out the earthly phalanx of Vices with a sword if the Son of Man on coming down from His heavenly home enters the cleansed city of a body which is unadorned and without a shining temple?';[119] and depicted by the artist in his final illustration (f. 36v) (Fig 9). Prudentius stands in prayer before the temple, which resembles an Anglo-Saxon church,[120] and he

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115 K J Galbraith, "The iconography of the biblical scenes at Malmesbury Abbey," *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series, 28 (1965): 39-56, at 47-8. The others are Samson carrying the Gate of Gaza, on the south porch of Malmesbury Abbey; the gates of Ephesus, shown in John's raising of Drusiana, in *The Littlemore Anselm* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D.2.6, f. 176r); and Anna and Joachim meeting at the Golden Gate, in the *Winchester Psalter* (BL, Cotton Nero C.IV, f. 8r), an image which bears comparison to scene 15: see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Nero_C_IV.

116 Fernie, *op. cit.* (1980) and (1989). In this context, note the sole spiral column in the illustrations of the *Tiberius Psalter*, f. 13v (see above n. 89).

117 Fernie, *op. cit.* (1980), 57, n.8.

118 Spiral columns are conspicuous by their absence from Canterbury manuscripts most closely associated with the Tapestry, such as the *Old English Hexateuch* and Junius 11. There are only three examples in the *Harley Psalter*, at ff. 1v, 31v and 33r, none of which bear relation to scene 15.

119 Louis B Snider, "The Psychomachia of Prudentius: Introduction, Text, Prose Translation, and Commentary," (MA thesis, Loyola University, Chicago 1938), 104-5, available at http://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/372.

120 Mark Atherton, "The Image of the Temple in the *Psychomachia* and Late Anglo-Saxon Literature," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 79, 3 (1997): 263-85, at 272, compares the tower to that of St John, Barnack, Northamptonshire.

approaches through a gateway with spiral columns. These are the only spiral columns in this copy of *Psychomachia* and here they have spiritual significance: they serve not to frame Prudentius (who stands to one side) but the temple.

Fig 9. Prudentius before the temple

The Latin legend on the picture reads "Prudentius gives thanks to God"

British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C.VIII, f.36v (detail). © The British Library Board

This image may well be the model for much of scene 15's architectural scheme, given the spiral gateways and the similarity of the towers. Another indication that scene 15's tower is a church are the four crosses on its walls. The two x-shaped crosses mirror those on the towers either side of the gateway to Edward's palace in scene 1 (W 1), where they may serve a purely decorative function,[121] but their use in scene 15 alongside two Greek crosses (+) suggests that here they are symbols of Christianity, since this is the sole function of Greek crosses when used elsewhere on the Tapestry's buildings.[122] In addition, the vertical lines extending up the centre of the building from the ground to the first floor window can only be explained as examples of pilaster strip-work, an occasional feature of Anglo-Saxon church architecture but not found in Normandy.[123]

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[121] Most commentators view this building as a palace; but the crosses add weight to Paul Lampl's argument that it is instead a cathedral: "Schemes of Architectural Representation in Early Medieval Art," *Marsyas* 9 (1961): 6-13, at 11.

[122] It is perhaps possible that they are consecration crosses, although the practice was for three, rather than four, to be marked on each of the interior and exterior north, south, east and west walls: see John Henry Middleton, "On Consecration Crosses, with some English examples," *Archaeologia* 48, 2 (1885): 456-64. Greek crosses are shown on the roofs of Bosham church (scene 3; W 3) and Mont-Saint-Michel (scene 16; W 19); they also appear on one of the reliquaries on which Harold makes his oath 9 (scene 23; W 25-6) and alongside x-shaped crosses on the feretory on which Edward's body is borne to Westminster Abbey (scene 26; W 29) and the *pallium* worn by Stigand (scene 30; W31).

[123] E A Fisher, *Anglo-Saxon Towers: An Architectural and Historical Study* (1969), 57-8 and 116-20. Note the similarity to the strip work on the tower of Sompting church, Sussex, 134.

If the form and function of the buildings are certain, their location is not. Clues may lie, once again, in the architectural motifs. We have already noted that both spiral columns and pilaster strip-work were a feature of English, but not Norman, architecture; and that the Tapestry's only other spiral column is part of a building in England. In addition, Maylis Baylé has observed that *"the column bases* [of Ælfgyva's frame] *are not simple motifs, but refer to a type of moulding in use in Anglo-Saxon architecture, as at Bradford-on-Avon"*, and are unlike the Tapestry's other column bases, which, more bulbous in shape, are found both in England and Scandinavia and, for a brief period *c.*1080-90, in Normandy.[124] The designer may perhaps have made use of this range of motifs to place the cleric and Ælfgyva in a peculiarly English setting, especially since the specific or general geographic location of all other episodes is either clear from the captions or easy to discern.[125]

Taken together, the architectural features suggest that scene 15 takes place somewhere other than Rouen, in a walled town or city, possibly in England. Ælfgyva and the cleric stand in front of a church; and the cleric is presumably its priest. The spiral columns have been rather cleverly employed to serve a dual function: to help identify a place of Christian worship and to emphasise Ælfgyva's importance at this point in the story.

The naked man

The man in the lower margin is of particular interest in deciphering scene 15 since it is immediately apparent that he is not simply a decorative feature but a miniature and sexualised version of the cleric. His gestures mirror the cleric's: he has his right hand at his hip and his left arm stretched out in front of him; and he has a tonsure which - presumably in error - has been filled in with differently coloured wool, giving him a two-tone head of hair. Here the similarities end since, unlike the cleric, he is shown completely naked in a squatting position. His facial features are non-existent and his hands incompletely drawn; in contrast his pubic hair and genitals have been most carefully delineated and coloured in, drawing the viewer's attention to what the designer must surely have considered was the most significant part of his anatomy. None of the characters in the main register are shown unclothed but there are a number of naked or semi-naked figures in the margins. Some of these - a naked man undoubtedly intended to represent the monkey in the fable of the Wolf King (scene 5; W 5) and most of the men stripped of their armour at Hastings (scenes 57-8; W 71-3) - are shown without genitals. One dead man is depicted with a penis (W 72) but it is not in any way emphasised. In contrast, the man below Ælfgyva is one of six marginal men whose genitalia is one of their most prominent features. The others are a hunter in scene 7 (W 7), whose penis and testicles hang down incongruously beneath his tunic; a naked man in scene 13 (W 14), who is sexually aroused and reaches towards a naked woman; the naked man in scene 14, who is shaping a plank with an adze; and two more naked men in the upper margin of scene 48 (W 52-3), each of whom, like the man in scene 13, is paired with a naked woman.

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[124] Maylis Baylé, "The Bayeux Tapestry and Decoration in North-Western Europe: Style and Composition," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History*, eds. Pierre Bouet, Brian Levy & François Neveux (2004), 303-25, at 309.

[125] It is beyond the scope of this article to consider whether other localised architectural motifs are consistently used in such a way. Pilaster strip-work, for example, also appears on the towers of the castle in scene 12 (W 13), on which see Taylor, *op. cit.* (1992): 10.

Leaving aside the man-monkey and, for the moment, the man beneath Ælfgyva, the first point to note is that every other naked figure, along with the hunter exposing his genitals, can either be identified as English or is associated with an English character in the main register. There is no doubt that the naked bodies at Hastings represent dead or injured Englishmen; whilst the men in scene 48 are given attributes - moustaches and, in the case of the first man, a broad-axe - which are almost always used to identify Englishmen (and so serve to identify the women as English too).[126] These markers of nationality make it clear that these figures are not to be associated with the Norman soldiers below them. The other marginal nudes are not identified in similar ways but this is presumably because each is placed beneath characters who are undoubtedly English. The hunter and the first nude couple are placed below images of Harold whilst the naked woodworker is placed below the man next to and touched by Harold and whose hairstyle and facial hair indicate that he is English. Since the naked man of scene 15 is evidently modelled on the cleric and is placed beneath Ælfgyva this suggests that they too are meant to be recognised as English.

Nudity is not, however, simply another signifier of nationality. Christian teachings and traditions commonly associated nudity with sin, shame and embarrassment; and both Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman art and literature provide ample evidence to demonstrate that the naked body, and more especially, exposed genitalia, were indicators of transgressive behaviour, most commonly sexual in nature.[127] Two of the nudes - the woman in scene 13 and the very last naked man (presumably stripped of his armour whilst unconscious and now hiding in undergrowth) - resemble images of Adam and Eve in Canterbury manuscripts[128] but there are no apparent models for any of the six men and one woman (the second in scene 48) with exposed genitalia. However, as Karen Rose Mathews has observed, these figures bear "*striking visual similarities*" to the many sexually graphic depictions of naked and semi-naked men and women found in Romanesque marginal church sculpture, both in Britain and the Continent.[129] These date mostly from *c.*1080 to *c.*1250 and have been mapped and rigorously analysed by Anthony Weir and James Jerman, who found the most numerous examples adorn churches in and around pilgrimage routes in France and Spain, where they are frequently found in the company of other figures similarly associated with activities considered sinful by the church or regarded as symbols of sin. These include

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[126] Lewis, *op. cit.* (2007): 101, 107, 112 and 117 (for moustaches and hairstyles) and 102, 105-6, 112 and 114 (broad-axes). For the sole exceptions to the general rule that moustaches and broad-axes denote Englishmen see 102 n.17 (Guy of Ponthieu with a broad-axe) and 107 (Eustace of Boulogne with moustache). It seems highly likely that Eustace was identified by name so that the audience did not mistakenly assume him to be English.

[127] See the essays in Benjamin C Withers & Jonathan Wilcox, eds., *Naked Before God: Uncovering the Body in Anglo-Saxon England* (2003), especially Karen Rose Mathews, "Nudity on the Margins: The Bayeux Tapestry and its Relationship to Marginal Architectural Sculpture," 138-61; Catherine E Karkov, "Exiles from the Kingdom: the Naked and the Damned in Anglo-Saxon Art," 181-220; Jonathan Wilcox, "Naked in Old English: The Embarrassed and the Shamed," 275-309. Karkov discusses the Tapestry's nudes and the differing views on the topic in "Gendering the Battle? Male and Female in the Bayeux Tapestry," in *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry,* ed. Gale R Owen-Crocker (2005), 139-47, at 141-5.

[128] For Adam see the *Old English Hexateuch*, f. 7v, noted by Hart, *op. cit.* (2000), 160 and fig.31. Eve in the same illustration holds her hand to her head in the manner of the woman in scene 13; and there is an even closer resemblance between the latter and Eve in Junius 11 (above, n.88), p. 34, who also faces left, holds her right hand to her face and her left hand to her genitals. All of these images can be usefully compared in Withers & Wilcox, *op. cit.* (2003), figs. 2, 25 and 35.

[129] Mathews, *op. cit.* (2003), 153.

entertainers, misers, barrel-toters, hair, mouth and tongue-pullers, mythological and monstrous creatures, and animals such as serpents, apes, rams and goats. Many of these also have exposed genitals. Weir and Jerman concluded that exhibitionist figures were not intended for amusement or titillation but served a didactic purpose and were *"part of an iconography aimed at castigating the sins of the flesh, and that in this they were only one element in the attack on lust, luxury and fornication…"* [130] Similar scenes can be found in post-Conquest illuminated manuscripts from Canterbury and other scriptoria.[131] There can be little doubt that nudity and the display of genitalia performed the same function in the Tapestry and, alongside the fables and certain other images in the borders, invited its earliest viewers to draw unfavourable impressions of the English in general, and certain Englishmen and women in particular.

Quite what those impressions were meant to be is not always clear. The hunter and the woodworker defy easy explanation; but allegations of fornication levied against Harold (which quite probably had some basis in fact) no doubt accounted for the naked man and woman placed below him in scene 13. The woman here, modelled on depictions of Eve, is ashamed of her nudity; in contrast the man (representing Harold) is evidently not burdened by moral concerns.[132] The couples in scene 48 very likely refer to a variation of the stories written down in the twelfth century about the English army on the eve of Hastings: whilst the Normans devoted themselves to prayer, the English were said to have spent their time drinking, dancing and singing; activities which (then and now) are often associated with sexually immoral behaviour. This is the only glimpse we have of English preparations; and when next we see naked Englishmen, they are dead, wounded and hiding in defeat. The message now is that they are shamed by their nakedness and paying the price for their sins.[133]

Sin of a sexual nature - lust or fornication - must also be the cleric's offence: the naked man is shown without any attributes that might suggest sin of another type. He is so integral a part of scene 15 that his gestures merit as much attention as those of the cleric and Ælfgyva. His left arm and hand sweep upward towards Ælfgyva, surely indicating that she is in some way relevant to the cleric's sin or tainted by it.[134] It is not, however, safe to infer that she has sinned in the same way or even that she has sinned at all. Had the designer wished to indicate that they were engaged in a sexual or erotic relationship he could easily have inserted a miniature nude version of her below the cleric (or employed the eroticised chin

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130 Anthony Weir & James Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings in Medieval Churches* (1986), quote from pp.15-16.

131 Richard Gameson, "English Manuscript Art in the late Eleventh Century: Canterbury and its Context," in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066-1109*, eds. Richard Eales & Richard Sharpe (1995), 95-144, at 134-6; Elisabeth van Houts, "The Women of Bury St Edmunds," in *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. Tom Licence (2014), 53-73, at 69-71.

132 For Harold's character in this respect, and disparaging notices on his sexual conduct from Norman sources, see Frank Barlow, *The Godwins: the Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (2003), 77-8.

133 That the very last naked man is based on an image of Adam hiding from God makes the connection between sin and shame explicit: see Wilcox, *op.cit.* (2003), 286-95, on Anglo-Saxon expositions of Adam and Eve's sins of disobedience (akin to English resistance to William) and lust. For accounts of drinking on the eve of Hastings see Thomas, *op. cit.* (2003), 302, and for the *"very close"* links between drunkenness and lust in the teachings of the church see Elaine Treharne, *Gluttons for Punishment: the Drunk and Disorderly in Early English Homilies* (2007).

134 His gesture serves the same function as pointing, the gesture most commonly used to direct attention to significant characters, action or text: Owen-Crocker, *op. cit.* (2007b): 147-53.

touching gesture in the main register). That he did not suggests otherwise. The naked man differs significantly from the cleric - and from every other exhibitionist - in adopting a squatting position and so it seems very likely that his posture has meaning too. Squatting is a common feature of both the male and female exhibitionist figures discussed by Weir and Jerman and in many examples is undoubtedly intended to display often over-sized genitals to their best advantage.[135] That could have been the designer's intent but is probably unlikely since every other exhibitionist male is shown side-on without hindering the display of genitalia. An integrated reading of all the naked man's gestures has been proposed by Michael Lapidge and Jill Mann, who considered that he is in fact intended to evoke an image of childbirth: *"he is squatting, supporting himself by placing one hand against a wall, in the posture adopted for evacuation, and he has the other hand clasped to his side, as if registering pain"*. Their contention is that he bears no relation to the action in the main register and is instead an illustration of a fable concerning a pregnant man.[136] Accounts and illustrations of women in labour from medical texts later than the eleventh century certainly add weight to their interpretation of the naked man's posture.[137] The idea is not so strange as it may seem: satirical or defamatory tales of pregnant men were widespread in the medieval period and include a surprising number relating to monks and priests.[138] If correct - and whether or not a reference to a fable is intended - this reading of the naked man strengthens my proposition that the cleric and Ælfgyva were father and daughter.

It also provides a context for the cleric's sin of fornication, for clerical marriage and fatherhood were under attack throughout Europe at the time the Tapestry was made. The eleventh century saw a drive by successive popes to stamp out clerical marriage, a policy which reached its zenith in the 1070s under Gregory VII (1073-85). Married men in higher orders, who had duties to perform during mass, were deemed to contaminate the purity of the sacrament through their sexual activities. Congregations were urged to boycott their masses and they were frequently ordered to separate from their families or face the loss of benefices and excommunication. Their wives were condemned as prostitutes and at times faced the threat of enslavement. Their children were stigmatised as bastards, losing rights of inheritance, and sons were forbidden to follow their fathers into clerical

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135 As a glance at almost any page in *Images of Lust*, *op. cit.* (1986), will show. A selection of such figures is also reproduced in Withers & Wilcox, *op. cit.* (2003), figs. 8, 9, 10, 13 and 15.

136 Michael Lapidge & Jill Mann, "Reconstructing the Anglo-Latin Aesop: the Literary Tradition of the "Hexametrical Romulus"," in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Medieval Latin Studies: Cambridge, September 9-12 1998*, eds. Michael W Herren, C J McDonough & Ross G Arthur, 2 vols. (2002), ii, 1-33, at 14 (on the fable of a pregnant man who gives birth to a mouse), 18-25 (on the fables of the Bayeux Tapestry; scene 15 is discussed at p. 22).

137 On the vertical positions widely adopted for delivery prior to *c.*1750 see Jacques Gelis, *History of Childbirth: Fertility, Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern Europe* (1991), 121-33; and Barbara Freitag, *Sheela-Na-Gigs: Unravelling an Enigma* (2004), 84-5. For images of medieval women giving birth see L C MacKinney, "Childbirth in the Middle Ages, as seen in manuscript illustrations," *Ciba Symposium* 8, 5/6 (1960): 230-36.

138 Roberto Zapperi, *The Pregnant Man* (1991). For Peter, William II's 'pregnant' chaplain (and his devil-worshipping brother) see Barlow, *op. cit.* (1983), 409.

orders. In 1031 a French church council, at Bourges, had gone so far as to rule that no one should marry sons, daughters or former wives of priests.[139]

The movement against married clergy had no effect in England during the reign of Edward but this changed after 1066, for one of the leading agents of reform, partly in return for papal endorsement of the invasion, was the new king. William made a point of presiding over his church councils and he oversaw a range of increasingly stringent legislation, from the late 1050s or early 1060s in Normandy, and from 1070 in England, to prohibit clerical marriage. In 1070 his first church council in England, conducted under the auspices of papal legates, directed clerks to live chastely or relinquish their office; and the married bishops of Elmham and Lichfield were deposed. Pope Gregory was at his most active in attempting to end clerical marriage during 1074 and 1075 and it was probably no coincidence that Lanfranc repeated and clarified prohibitions against married clergy at the council of Winchester in 1076. There was some leeway for priests who were already married; but at least one bishop, Wulfstan of Worcester, took a harder line and sought to dismiss all married priests from his diocese unless they gave up their wives. There was much opposition to these measures from married clergy and their families, especially in Normandy, and William was not completely successful in enforcing his councils' legislation. Nor was he always consistent in his approach but his general commitment to reform is not in doubt. At Canterbury he had an equally committed archbishop in Lanfranc and their views were undoubtedly shared by the communities of St Augustine's and Christ Church.[140] There were long-standing tensions, from well before the Conquest, between monks and clerks and the latter were frequently accused of sexual immorality.[141] It is therefore of no great surprise that at the height of the campaign against married clergy the Tapestry's designer, closely associated with the Canterbury communities, should have sought to condemn a priest for sexual incontinence. It is significant that the only other English churchman to feature prominently in the Tapestry is Archbishop Stigand, another cleric, who was the focus of both papal and (later) monastic disapproval and who was also deposed in 1070.[142] To the Norman hierarchy and reform-minded monks their images provided not only documentary evidence of episodes from their lives but also symbolised the lax state of the English church before the Conquest.

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[139] Much has been written on this topic. For good general surveys see Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: the Eleventh-Century Debates* (1982); and Michael Frassetto, ed., *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform* (1998), especially Uta-Renate Blumenthal, "Pope Gregory VII and the Prohibition of Nicolaitism," 239-67, and H E J Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII and the Chastity of the Clergy," 269-302.

[140] For William's commitment to reform, his occasional failings, and his church councils see Douglas, *op. cit.* (1964), 332-5, 341; Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1066-1154* (1979b), 122-8; Barstow, *op. cit.* (1982), 85-9. For Lanfranc's views and the deposition of the bishop of Lichfield see Helen Clover & Margaret Gibson, eds. & trans., *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury* (1979), 8, 34-9; and for Gregory's efforts in 1074/5 see Cowdrey, *op. cit.* (1998), 271-8.

[141] John Blair, "Secular Minster Churches in Domesday Book," in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. Peter Sawyer (1985), 104-42, at 115-6, 119-20, 137-8; for other complaints, including accusations of drunkenness, gluttony, dicing and laziness see Rebecca Stephenson, "Scapegoating the secular clergy: the hermeneutic style as a form of monastic self-definition," *Anglo-Saxon England* 38 (2009): 101-35.

[142] The behaviour of Stigand in particular, and priests in general, was condemned for contributing to England's woes *c.*1067 by the author of *The Life of King Edward,* Barlow, *op. cit.* (1992), 118-23; for his poor post-Conquest reputation see Mary Frances Smith, "Archbishop Stigand and the eye of the needle," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 16 (1994): 199-219.

Animals of scenes 14 and 15

The animals of the Tapestry - whether real or mythical - have attracted a great deal of interest and most commentators have sought meaning from them, especially those that adorn the borders. Since the naked man beneath Ælfgyva is so clearly linked to the action in the main register it is worth considering whether the animals of scenes 14 and 15 also carry some symbolic significance or whether their function is purely decorative. Studies of other scenes have thrown up some interesting and convincing interpretations but such observations are really only useful if the animals can be readily identified, are used in a consistent way or otherwise appear only once or rarely, and have a limited range of fables or meanings attached to them.[143]

The most eye-catching beasts in scene 15 are the dragon heads, with large protruding tongues, at each corner of Ælfgyva's frame.[144] The placing of another dragon in the border below the cleric suggests that the creatures have a particular relevance at this point; but what that might be is hard to discern since images of dragons and dragon heads appear frequently throughout the Tapestry, are associated with characters from England, Normandy, Brittany and Ponthieu, and are used as military and naval emblems, architectural features and decorative carvings on furniture. Only once is a dragon clearly linked to nationality and a particular character: at Hastings, where the dragon standard of Wessex is trampled by a horse, just before Harold meets a similar death (scene 57; W 71).[145]

Something a little more useful might be gauged from some of the other animals. Throughout the borders animals paired with another of the same species are presented in the same stance as their partner, mostly, but not always, as mirror images. The sole exception are the peacocks in the upper border of scene 14, placed above William and Harold. The peacocks instead imitate the poses of the men and, as Gale Owen-Crocker has noted, each is embroidered in the same colour thread as the man directly below them. Their meaning, if intended to be more than a decorative fancy, is uncertain[146] but since they are clearly intended to represent William and Harold it is worth considering if other animals in the upper border serve a similar function. The most notable feature of the next two beasts is that each extend a foreleg to the other and very nearly touch. In this they mimic the hand-touching gestures of Harold and the bearded Englishman who stands behind him. Only one other pair of border animals gesture in this way (a pair of lions in scene 4; W 4) and it is also an uncommon trait of human characters,

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143 The most detailed study of the Tapestry's animals is by W Brunsdon Yapp, "Animals in medieval art: the Bayeux Tapestry as an example," *Journal of Medieval History* 13, 1 (1987): 15-75; see too Lewis, *op. cit.* (2008), 147-57.

144 Note the similarity of their ears and snouts to the dragons below and to the right of the cleric (scenes 15-16; W 17-18), in the upper border of scene 18 (W 18) and the lower border of scene 39 (W 43). See too the dragon in the *Tiberius Psalter* (above, n. 89), f. 16r.

145 On the range of meanings that might be attached to dragons see Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Medieval Dragon: The Nature of the Beast in Germanic Literature* (1998), 1-22. On dragons in the Tapestry see Yapp, *op. cit.* (1987), 33 and 59-60. For beast-headed terminals from both Scandinavian and English contemporary architecture see Baylé, *op. cit.* (2004), 309; and Gale R Owen-Crocker, "Embroidered Wood: Animal-Headed Posts in the Bayeux "Tapestry"," in *Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp*, eds. Catherine E Karkov and Helen Damico (2008), 106-38, at 120-1. On Harold's death see Brooks and Walker, *op. cit.* (1979), 23-34; the dragon standard of Wessex is discussed at 32-3.

146 For suggestions see Yapp, *op. cit.* (1987): 57-58; and Gale R Owen-Crocker, "Squawk talk: commentary by birds in the Bayeux Tapestry?," *Anglo-Saxon England* 34 (2005): 237-54, at 248-9.

occurring at only two other points in the Tapestry. Harold is again involved, touching fingers with Edward at significant moments: on meeting with him before leaving England, and at Edward's deathbed (scenes 1 and 27; W 1 and 30). This suggests that Harold's relationship to the bearded man is also of import; and a first meeting in some dozen years with a brother or nephew whose release he hoped to secure is the most likely reason for the inclusion of a hand-touching gesture and its reinforcement by the actions of the two border animals.

The third pair of creatures in the upper border are the birds placed directly above the cleric and the tower behind him. They do not imitate Ælfgyva and the cleric but since the first and second pairs so evidently reference the other protagonists it seems reasonable to assume that the birds serve a similar purpose. They are not readily identifiable although W Brunsdon Yapp, an ornithologist, thought they bore a *"slight resemblance"* to pigeons.[147] That they are turned away from each other and have both wings raised, as if to take flight,[148] suggests separation and chimes with my earlier suggestion that the cleric and Ælfgyva are taking leave of each other.

Preliminary Conclusions

A number of quite certain conclusions can now be drawn. Ælfgyva's name was Ælfgyva. She was a secular noblewoman and the cleric a priest of high rank. Both were English and alive at the time of the discussions in Rouen. Ælfgyva is framed by town or city gates, somewhere other than Rouen and probably in England. She and the cleric stand in front of his church. They are one of the subjects of William and Harold's conversation, with the focus on her, and the use of motifs such as spiral columns and naked border figures associate them with Harold. The cleric is blessing Ælfgyva and touching her cheek affectionately. At the same time she is persuading him to take or agree a particular course of action. Although the image in the main register is innocuous, the naked man serves to condemn the cleric for sexual incontinence. The designer's apparent use of particular elements from an image of a son taking leave of his mother, combined with the evocation of childbirth in the naked man's posture, suggests that the cleric and Ælfgyva are parent and child and that she is to leave his care. These clues to their identities indicate that we now need to look to England, and to Harold and his circle, for a solution.

III: Other Texts

Only one Englishwoman features in any other account of Harold's time in Normandy and she is Harold's unnamed sister, whom Eadmer states was to be married to one of William's nobles. Eadmer (born *c.*1060) joined Christ Church as a boy and in or shortly after 1093 became chaplain, and possibly secretary, to Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1093-1109). His *Historia Novorum* is mainly concerned with the public life of Anselm and the first four books (of six) were composed and completed between 1109 and *c.*1115.[149] He wrote primarily for the community at Christ Church[150] and his brief account of pre-Conquest events

147 Yapp, *op. cit.* (1987): 58.

148 Yapp, *op. cit.* (1987): 52.

149 R W Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059-c.1130* (1963), 229-40 (on Eadmer's life and career), 298-313 (on HN).

150 *HN*, 1 (1), 215 (229-30).

commands attention because it was written merely by way of explaining the state of the English church during the time of Lanfranc and Anselm and is free of the propagandist agenda of the earlier Norman writers. Neither is it informed by their works. Eadmer does not cite sources for his narrative of the 1060s but elsewhere, and in his other works, he credits older monks at Canterbury for stories about past characters and events and it is likely that the whole of his account is based on information learned from his elders.[151] It is not therefore surprising, given their Canterbury origins, that the narratives of the *Historia* and the Tapestry often converge more closely than either do with Norman histories. Only they record the sending of a messenger from Harold to William, the sending by him of two sets of messengers to Guy, and Harold's audience with Edward on his return to England.[152] Moreover, Ælfgyva and Harold's sister appear at exactly the same points in each, in the context of discussions that take place once Harold was under William's protection. This seems unlikely to be mere coincidence. Eadmer reports that Harold told William that he had set out for Normandy in the hope of securing the hostages' release. Some days later William told Harold that Edward had many years earlier made him his heir:

"William went on to say this: 'If you on your side undertake to support me in this project [to succeed Edward] *and further promise that you will make a stronghold at Dover with a well of water for my use and that you will at a time agreed between us send your sister to me that I may give her in marriage to one of my nobles and that you will take my daughter to be your wife, then I will let you have your nephew now at once, and your brother safe and sound when I come to England to be king. And if ever I am with your support established there as king, I promise that everything you ask of me which can reasonably be granted, you shall have.'"* [153]

Harold, seeing no way out, agreed under oath to these terms and was allowed to return to England with his nephew. Eadmer continues: *"Shortly after this Edward died; and as he had before his death provided, Harold succeeded him on the throne. Thereupon, there arrived in England a messenger from William, asking for Harold's sister in accordance with the agreement that had been made between them. He also reproached him for not having kept his other promises in violation of his oath. To this Harold is said to have made the following reply: 'My sister, whom according to our pact you ask for, is dead. If the duke wishes to have her body, such as it now is, I will send it, that I may not be held to have violated my oath …"* [154]

Harold went on to reject the other terms of the oath, including marriage to William's daughter. Their betrothal, and her name, are independently attested and although the same cannot be said for the other couple there are no reasons to reject Eadmer's report out of hand. He does not identify the Norman bridegroom but the most obvious candidate, from amongst William's few leading men who were then unmarried, is his brother, Robert of Mortain.[155] Nor is there is anything improbable about a double marriage alliance. Early in the eleventh century two siblings in the ducal family had married the count of Brittany and his sister and in the early 1060s the count of Maine and his sister were at the same time betrothed

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151 *HN*, 107-10 (111-14); Andrew J Turner & Bernard.J Muir, eds. & trans., *Eadmer of Canterbury: Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald* (2006), 45-9.

152 *HN*, 6-8 (6-8); scenes 10-12, 25; W 10-13, 28. On the messengers see n.41 above.

153 *HN*, 7 (7).

154 *HN*, 8 (8).

155 Brian Golding, "Robert of Mortain," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1991): 119-44, at 141, demonstrates that he did not marry his first wife until after the Conquest.

to William's eldest daughter and son.[156] Eadmer also recorded a number of incidental details that do not appear elsewhere and which further serve to inspire confidence, such as the name of Harold's nephew, his exact relationship to Harold, and the name of the river where Harold landed in Ponthieu (the Maye).[157] Eadmer appears to be well-informed about Harold's family and the events in Ponthieu and Normandy. All of this forms the basis for the thesis that Ælfgyva was therefore Harold's sister and that she died at some point between *c.*1064 and early 1066.

So did Harold have a sister named Ælfgifu? An entry in Domesday Book for Buckinghamshire records that a man of Ælfgifu, sister of Earl Harold [*Alveve soror Heraldi com[itis]*] held land at Waldridge during the reign of King Edward. As is frequently the case with titles in Domesday Book, *com[itis]* was written above Harold's name after completion of the main text.[158] However, there are other entries in Buckinghamshire for women named Ælfgifu and a thegn named Harold, who is not the earl. Ann Williams's careful reconstruction of this Harold's family has shown that *com[itis]* was almost certainly inserted in error in the Waldridge entry and that *Alveve* was the sister of the thegn, not the earl.[159] No other entries in Domesday - nor any other source - state or suggest that Earl Harold had a sister named Ælfgifu.

Harold did have a sister named Gunnhild and two daughters, Gytha and Gunnhild, but none could be the proposed bride since all were alive long after 1066.[160] Ann Williams suggested that the woman might be another sister, Eadgifu, who, according to Domesday, held Crewkerne, in Somerset, from King Edward. At the same time Godwine, the king's reeve, held Easthams, a dependency of Crewkerne, and a separate entry for Easthams states that he held it with [*cu[m]*] Crewkerne. Dr Williams thought this *"might imply that* [Crewkerne] *had reverted to the king's possession after the demise of its previous holder*". However, Exon Domesday, the circuit return on which the Exchequer Domesday was based, tells a slightly different and probably more accurate story. Eadgifu is explicitly said to be holding Crewkerne on the day of King Edward's death (and so it is not at all certain that she might have predeceased him); whilst Godwine is said to hold Easthams from [*de*], rather than with, Crewkerne. The situation may well be analogous to that of Seaborough, where two manors were held separately in 1066 by thegns named Ælfweard and Ælfhere. Easthams and Seaborough were both stated to be part of the manor of Crewkerne; and neither could be separated from it. It seems most likely that the king had granted Crewkerne to Eadgifu, its (much smaller and less valuable) dependencies to certain of his thegns or servants, and that she was still alive in 1066.[161]

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156 Douglas, *op. cit.* (1964), 29, 73.

157 *HN*, 6 (6).

158 John Morris, ed., *Domesday Book 13: Buckinghamshire* (1978), f. 144c, 4/21.

159 Williams, o*p. cit.* (2008).

160 For the younger Gunnhild see Richard Sharpe, "King Harold's Daughter," *Haskins Society Journal* 19 (2007): 1-27; for notices of her aunt Gunnhild and sister Gytha see p. 25. The elder Gunnhild's memorial plaque reveals that she took a vow of chastity as a young woman and declined to marry so she is not at all likely to be the subject of a marriage alliance in the 1060s.

161 Williams, *op. cit.* (2008), gathers the evidence for Eadgifu's life; Caroline & Frank Thorn, eds., *Domesday Book 8: Somerset* (1980), f. 86d-87a, 1/20 (Crewkerne); f. 87d, 3/1 (Seaborough); f. 92b, 19/33 (Easthams); Henry Ellis, ed., "Exon Domesday," in *Libri Censualis vocati Domesday Book Additamenta* (1816), f. 105b (p. 97) (Crewkerne); f. 272 (p. 252) (Easthams).

There is, however, one other woman who is by far most likely to have been both the proposed bride and Ælfgyva. She is a kinswoman of Harold named Ælfgifu, whose relationship to him is recorded in a history of Abingdon Abbey, and she is his only female relation in England, outside of his immediate family, for whom some notice survives. The *Historia Ecclesie Abbendonensis* (*The History of the Church of Abingdon*) was composed about 1160 by an elderly monk, who had joined the community before 1117 and who drew on both documentary and oral sources for his work. He records that Ælfgifu had been given the Oxfordshire village of Lewknor by her husband on their marriage and had often lived there. At her death she bequeathed Lewknor to her kinswoman [*consanguinea*], Harold's sister Queen Edith. Ælfgifu was obviously a childless widow since her estate was administered by her reeve, who failed to inform the queen of the bequest and kept Lewknor for himself. The queen, following complaints from one of the tenants about the reeve's oppressive behaviour, came to learn of her inheritance and took control of Lewknor. A short time later she was visiting Abingdon with the king and his mother. Edith was touched by the meagre rations given to the boy monks, and so she and Edward made a gift of Lewknor to the abbey to provide an income for their meals. These events are not dated, and no supporting documents are cited, but they appear, from preceding and succeeding entries in the *History*, to have taken place during the abbacy of Æthelstan (1044-48). Since Edith and Edward were married in 1045 Ælfgifu's death would seem to have occurred between then and 1048; and certainly before September 1051, when Edward and Edith were temporarily separated, and March 1052 when Edward's mother died.[162]

There are, however, serious difficulties with the chronology of this account. Immediately after relating these events the author of the *History* goes on to say that Lewknor had earlier been bequeathed to the abbey by a "*very noble Dane*" named *Novitovi* when on his deathbed, but that "*it had afterwards been for a time alienated from the church's desmesne*" until returned to the abbey by the king and queen.[163] The implication is that Ælfgifu should never have been in possession of Lewknor. *Novitovi* (or, more correctly, Nefetofi) is a very uncommon name, recorded only in records associated with Abingdon, and he can confidently be identified with the Nefetofi, *minister* (or thegn), named as a witness to three charters concerning land then or later held by the abbey. Two of these are dated 1050, and the third dated 1054. The first of these, which dates from mid-1050, is authentic, the second an early fabrication, the third a later fabrication.[164] If Nefetofi was alive in 1050 there is too little time to allow for his death, Ælfgifu's and then Edith's acquisition of Lewknor, and its eventual transfer to Abingdon, all by September 1051. To further complicate matters, a later Abingdon history, *De abbatibus Abbendonie* (*c.*1225), which appears to incorporate material from yet another history, now lost, compiled *c.*1150s,[165] records that Edith gave Lewknor to the abbey during the abbacy of Ealdred (1066-71).[166] *De abbatibus* confirms the reason for the gift but makes no mention of Ælfgifu. The very next chapter concerns the abbey's affairs following the Norman invasion, suggesting that Edith's grant occurred between Ealdred's

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[162] John Hudson, ed. & trans., *Historia Ecclesie Abbendonensis: The History of the Church of Abingdon* (hence *HEC*), 2 vols. (2002-7), i, xv-xvi (on the author), xxii-xxxiii (on his sources), 186-97 (for events dated to the abbacy of Æthelstan), 190-5 (for Lewknor).

[163] *HEC*, i, 194-5.

[164] S E Kelly, ed., *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, 2 vols., (2000-1), ii, nos. 144, 145, 147.

[165] *HEC*, i, lvi-lvii; ii, xxi-xxiii.

[166] Joseph Stevenson, ed., *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, 2 vols. (1858), ii, 283.

election after 23 January 1066[167] and September 1066. Domesday Book, on the other hand, indicates that Lewknor was already held by the abbey at the time of King Edward's death on 5 January 1066.[168]

These accounts can, I think, be reconciled but it should first be noted that the chronological inconsistencies of the *History* doubtless result from a lack of documentary evidence before its author. He relied very much on charters, which he frequently copied into the *History*, but evidently did not have one for Lewknor.[169] The story he tells (and which I have only briefly summarised) is an entertaining one, including, for him, rare examples of direct speech,[170] and shows every sign of being orally transmitted. Some aspects of it have been doubted[171] and there may be embellishment in places but there is nothing especially unlikely. The most folkloric element concerns the deceitful and oppressive reeve but such stories frequently have a basis in fact.[172] The author also worked from wills or other written notes of bequests and his very specific reference to Nefetofi's lands – *"We have found besides that this same village, together with its members (that is Ackhamstead and others) had in former times been given to this church by a certain very noble Dane named Nefetofi when he was dying*" - indicates that he had for this piece of information some written memorandum or a copy of his will.[173]

The starting point is that Nefetofi was alive in 1050. A plausible reconstruction of events is that he died *c*.1055, leaving Lewknor to Abingdon; that he had a son who failed to honour his bequest; and that that son soon thereafter married Ælfgifu, to whom he gave Lewknor on the occasion of their wedding. If he died *c*.1060 Ælfgifu would have been a still youthful widow in *c.*1063/64, and a suitable Norman bride. She then died, leaving Lewknor to Edith, who took possession of it some time later. Edith's visit to Abingdon with Edward most probably took place before September 1065 although their grant of Lewknor to the abbey may not have been fully effected until shortly after Edward's death.[174] The one remaining chronological obstacle – the presence of Edward's mother at the visit to Abingdon – can be explained if it was in fact Edith's mother Gytha (d. after 1068) who accompanied the couple.[175]

Although Eadmer writes of Harold's sister as the potential bride, rather than a cousin, it may be that by the early 1100s the exact relationship had been forgotten. It is worth noting too that Edith, in *The Life of King Edward*, commissioned by her

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167 The date of his predecessor's death: *HEC*, i, cvi.

168 John Morris, ed., *Domesday Book 14: Oxfordshire* (1978), f. 156d, 9/1.

169 In *c.*1284 a charter pertaining to Lewknor in the name of King Edward was presented in court to prove the abbey's title: C F Slade & Gabrielle Lambrick, eds., *Two Cartularies of Abingdon Abbey*, 2 vols. (1990-2), i, 349-50. It has not, unfortunately, survived but since it was not before the author of *HEC* was probably concocted from his narrative account.

170 *HEC*, i, xxxvii.

171 Barlow, *op. cit.* (1979a), 85; Kelly, *op. cit.* (2000-1), ii, 582.

172 For a modern parallel in the rural Chinese region of Xiashuixi, see "Public rally behind teenager who killed corrupt leader," *The Times*, 22 January 2010, 45.

173 *HEC*, i, 194-5.

174 The king and queen were at Windsor on 24 May and 15 August 1065: Simon Keynes, "Giso, Bishop of Wells (1061-88)," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 19 (1997): 203-71, at 232-4; in Wiltshire by late September and throughout October; and in Westminster by Christmas: Barlow, *op. cit.* (1979a), 233-7, 244.

175 Queen Emma is not actually named and 'the queen's mother' could easily have become 'the king's mother' in the retelling over time of the story.

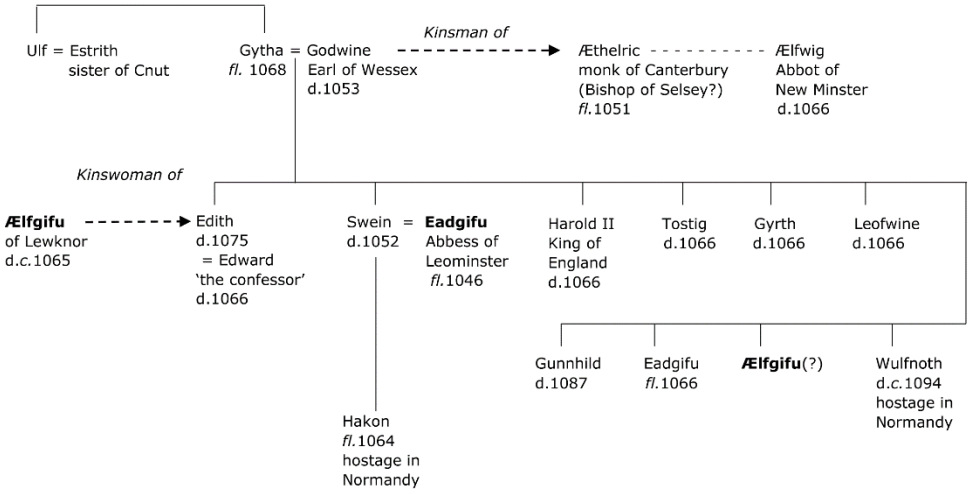
*c.*1065-7, had Gytha described as the sister of King Cnut, when she was in fact only his brother-in-law's sister.[176] It may be that Harold similarly elevated the status of his cousin for diplomatic reasons and it was this that was later remembered.

There is, of course, a good deal of supposition in all of this but if we are looking to find a woman named Ælfgifu amongst the members of Harold's family then Ælfgifu of Lewknor is the only possible choice. Given the probable chronology of her life it is reasonable to presume that she is also the *Alveva* who held land at *Burlei* in Berkshire during the reign of King Edward since that estate too was subsequently held by Queen Edith and may be another of Ælfgifu's bequests to her cousin.[177]

The question of the cleric's identity now remains to be considered. If we accept that he was Ælfgifu of Lewknor's father then we need to look again at Harold's extended family. His mother's family, resident in Denmark, are well-documented and yield no clerical candidates.[178] The family of his father, Earl Godwine, are mostly unknown but record survives of two relations who happened to be monks: Æthelric, monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, and Ælfwig, abbot of New Minster, Winchester (Fig 10).

Fig 10. The family of Earl Godwine

Women identified as Ælfgyva shown in bold



176 Barlow, *op. cit.* (1992), 10-11.

177 Philip Morgan, ed., *Domesday Book 5: Berkshire* (1979), f. 63d, 65/17. *Burlei* or Burley lay within Reading hundred but has not been identified. *Alveva* held one hide there, and two other hides were held separately by men named Leofwine and Ælfweard, both from King Edward (f. 60d, 21/21; f. 63d, 65/16). Since Leofwine's estate included a fishery Burley was presumably on the Thames, perhaps within Reading itself, the only other riverside community in the hundred stated to have fisheries (f. 58a, 1/41; f. 60a, 15/2). Reading is about 15 miles south of Lewknor. It is not entirely clear from the wording of the entry if *Alveva* held Burley in her own right or from Queen Edith; either way there was clearly a close relationship between them. After the Conquest it was held by Harding, the queen's butler, from her. For further commentary on Ælfgifu of Burley, Ælfweard and Harding see Stafford, *op. cit.* (1997), 307, 308-9, 313. Professor Stafford provides a useful résumé of women named Ælfgifu at 307 which first alerted me to the existence of Ælfgifu of Lewknor.

178 Barlow, *op. cit.* (2003), 22-4.

Æthelric, who *"sprang from the stock"* of Godwine, had been a monk at Christ Church since boyhood. In late 1050 or early 1051 he was elected archbishop of Canterbury but Edward blocked the appointment, a move that led, in part, to the crisis of 1051-52, when Godwine and his family (excepting Edith) were exiled from England.[179] He fades from view after this episode but Ian Walker has very plausibly argued that he is the same man as Æthelric, monk of Christ Church, who became bishop of Selsey in 1058. In 1070 he was deposed but Pope Alexander raised objections and ordered that he be reinstated pending an inquiry. His deposition was eventually confirmed at the council of Winchester in 1076.[180] If Walker's identification is correct it is highly unlikely that Æthelric is the Tapestry's cleric. Not only was he a bishop in the 1060s but, as mentioned earlier, the depositions of 1070 also included Leofwine, bishop of Lichfield. He too had been a monk from childhood but had married and fathered children. That was the primary reason for his deposition and the pope would surely have raised no objections if the same was true of Æthelric.

Ælfwig is an even more obscure figure. He joined the community at New Minster as a boy *c.*1032/33 and so was probably born in the early 1020s. He became abbot in late 1063 (his predecessor having died on 9 December) and was killed at Hastings in 1066. The *Annals of Hyde*, dating from *c.*1415, is the first source to state a precise relationship to Godwine, describing them as brothers, but the disparity in their ages (Godwine was probably born *c.*990) makes it rather more likely that he was a younger cousin or nephew.[181] He might, if the cleric, have not yet become abbot when Harold was in Normandy and so, if raised to priesthood, have been accurately described as *clericus*. But it is rather more likely that the Tapestry's designer would have designated him abbot in scene 15 and shown his death in battle too. For these reasons it would be unsafe to assume that he is the cleric. There is little more that can be definitively said about Earl Godwine's wider family and this particular line of inquiry can be taken no further.[182]

IV: Conclusion

The cleric's precise identity may never be known but the part that he and Ælfgyva played in English-Norman relations before the Conquest is best interpreted in the context of Harold's plans to bring his brother and nephew back to England. It is highly likely that negotiations had already taken place before he set off for Normandy and that it was he who proposed a marriage alliance between his family and William's. In doing so, he enlisted the cooperation of his cousin and her father. In scene 14 we see Harold reunited with Wulfnoth or Hakon and discussing the terms of their release with William. In scene 15 we see the proposed bride, with her father, at his church in England. At this particular moment their participation in Harold's designs was a key factor in what he hoped would be a successful venture, leading not only to the release of the hostages but to a new and profitable alliance with a powerful ruler across the Channel. In a short space of time events

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179 Barlow, *op. cit.* (1992), 30-31.

180 Ian W Walker, *Harold: The Last Anglo-Saxon King* (1997), 203-4. Æthelric died on 15 August, in or after 1076: Robin Fleming, "Christchurch's Sisters and Brothers: An Edition and Discussion of Canterbury Obituary Lists," in *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L T Bethell*, ed. Marc Anthony Meyer (1993), 115-53, at 120, 124, 153.

181 Keynes, *op. cit.* (1996), 41, 91-2.

182 Godwine's father was Wulfnoth; his mother's name is unknown. For discussion of Wulfnoth's supposed ancestry and summaries of earlier work on the topic see Barlow, *op. cit.* (2003), 21, 23-7.

in Normandy took a markedly different turn, with Harold forced to agree to rather more than he had intended. The alliance was on shaky ground from the start and completely collapsed in the early months of 1066. By then Ælfgyva was dead and her role as a potential Norman bride an irrelevance to most contemporary or near-contemporary historians. But a decade later she was brought back to life by the Tapestry's designer, who found that she and the cleric served a dual purpose in his portrayal of events - events coloured by the new regime's claims to legitimacy, negative perceptions of Harold in particular and the English in general, and reformist disapproval of married priests. In the main register he provided a straightforward narrative depiction of a fond father blessing his daughter in anticipation of her forthcoming betrothal; but by inserting a naked man in the lower margin he took a swipe at the cleric's moral values, condemning him for fornication and utilising their images to symbolise what were, for him, the depravities of the pre-Conquest church. And so Ælfgyva and the cleric were memorialised not so much for their political importance before 1066 but as part of a much more extensive process to legitimise, and justify, the Norman Conquest.

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GND: van Houts, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducem,* 1992-95.

HEC: Hudson, *Historia Ecclesie Abbendonensis*, 2002-7.

HN: Rule, *Eadmeri Historia novorum,* 1884, and Bosanquet, *Eadmer's History, 1964.*

PASE: *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England*, 2010.

W: Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, 1985.

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