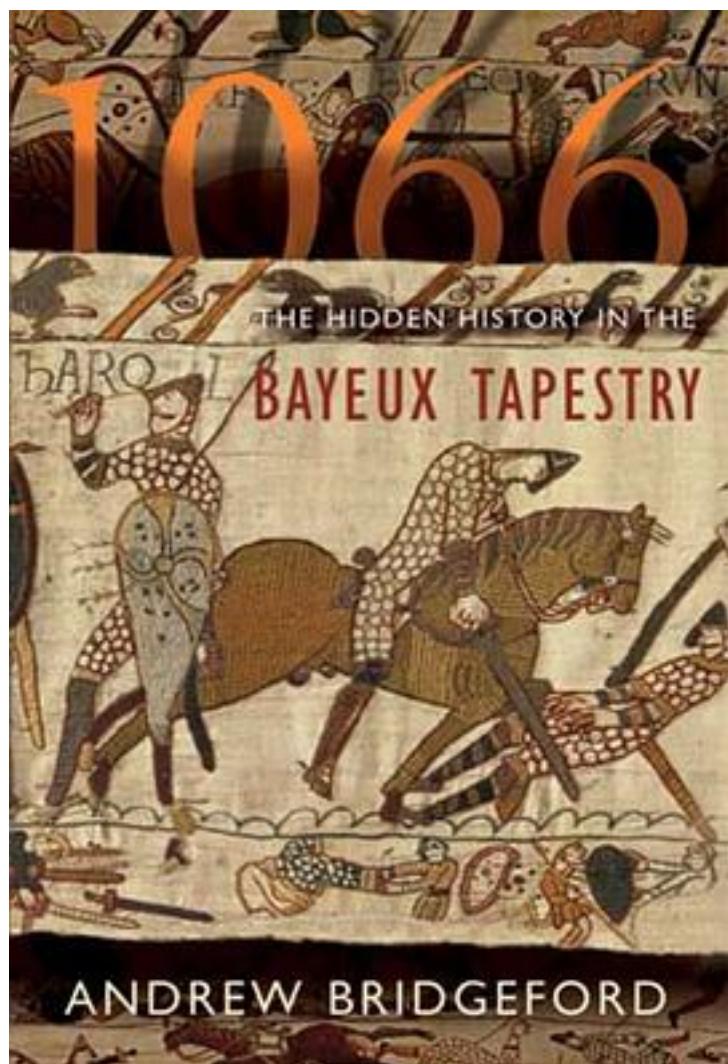


1066 the Hidden History



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Book Description

For more than nine hundred years the Bayeux Tapestry - one of the world's greatest historical documents and artistic achievements - has preserved the story of one of history's greatest dramas: the Norman Conquest of England, culminating in the death of King Harold at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. Historians have held for centuries that the majestic tapestry - almost 300 feet in length - trumpets the glory of William the Conqueror and the victorious Normans. But is this true? In 1066, Andrew Bridgeford reveals a very different story that reinterprets and recasts the most decisive year in English history.

Reading the tapestry as if it were a written text, examining each scene with fresh eyes, Bridgeford discovers a wealth of new information subversively and ingeniously encoded in the threads, which appears to undermine the Norman point of view while presenting a secret tale undetected for centuries - an account of the final years of Anglo-Saxon England quite different from the Norman version of events. In the midst of it all is a mysterious French nobleman - Count Eustace II of Boulogne, descended from Charlemagne - whose own claim to the English throne rivaled Duke William's.

While building his case, Bridgeford brings to life the turbulent eleventh century in western Europe, a world of ambitious warrior bishops, court dwarfs, ruthless knights, and powerful women. 1066 offers readers a rare surprise - a book that reconsiders a long-accepted masterpiece and chain of events - and sheds new light on a pivotal chapter in English history.

From Publishers Weekly

The simple linen background and bright woolen colors of the Bayeux Tapestry have always been interpreted as a French tribute to William the Conqueror, celebrating his victory over England in 1066 with its depiction of soldiers, archers, ships and battles. In an often riveting but ultimately unconvincing revisionist account drawing on the work of other scholars as well as on contemporary accounts of events, Bridgeford, a British lawyer, argues that the tapestry was more likely designed by English monks at St. Augustine's abbey in Canterbury under the direction of Count Eustace of Boulogne. English women, more famous for their embroidery skills than the French, stitched a tapestry containing a covert anti-Norman message. Bridgeford also provides details on minor characters in the tapestry, such as the dwarf Turold—who Bridgeford thinks might have written the medieval French epic poem *Chanson de Roland* and been the tapestry's patron—and Aelfgyva, the only woman named on the tapestry. While Bridgeford offers a fascinating look into the tapestry and the events it depicts, his language and method are so tentative ("Could it be that...?") that one is left doubting his interpretation. 16 pages of color illus., one map. (Apr.)

From Booklist

The Bayeux Tapestry, in the French town of Bayeux, draws half a million visitors a year. For more than 900 years it has been kept--and sometimes concealed--in several places around the town. The story of the Norman invasion of England in 1066 is set out in this masterpiece, recounting the Battle of Hastings, culminating in a victory for William the Conqueror and the death of King Harold. Although barely half a metre wide, the tapestry is about 70 metres long, embroidered on a plain linen background in wools of red, yellow, gray, green, and blue. Here are men feasting on birds, drinking from ivory horns, hunting, going to church, and loading provisions onto a ship. Bridgeford posits "the quest of [his] book is to unravel the millennial mysteries of the work, to investigate

the true origin and meaning of it, to understand more about the characters who are named in it, and to gain a new insight into some of the darkest events of the Norman Conquest." The result is a fascinating study.

George Cohen

About Author

Andrew Bridgeford is a lawyer and a historian. He lives on the Isle of Jersey in the United Kingdom.

Book Dimension

Height (mm) 232 Width (mm) 162

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