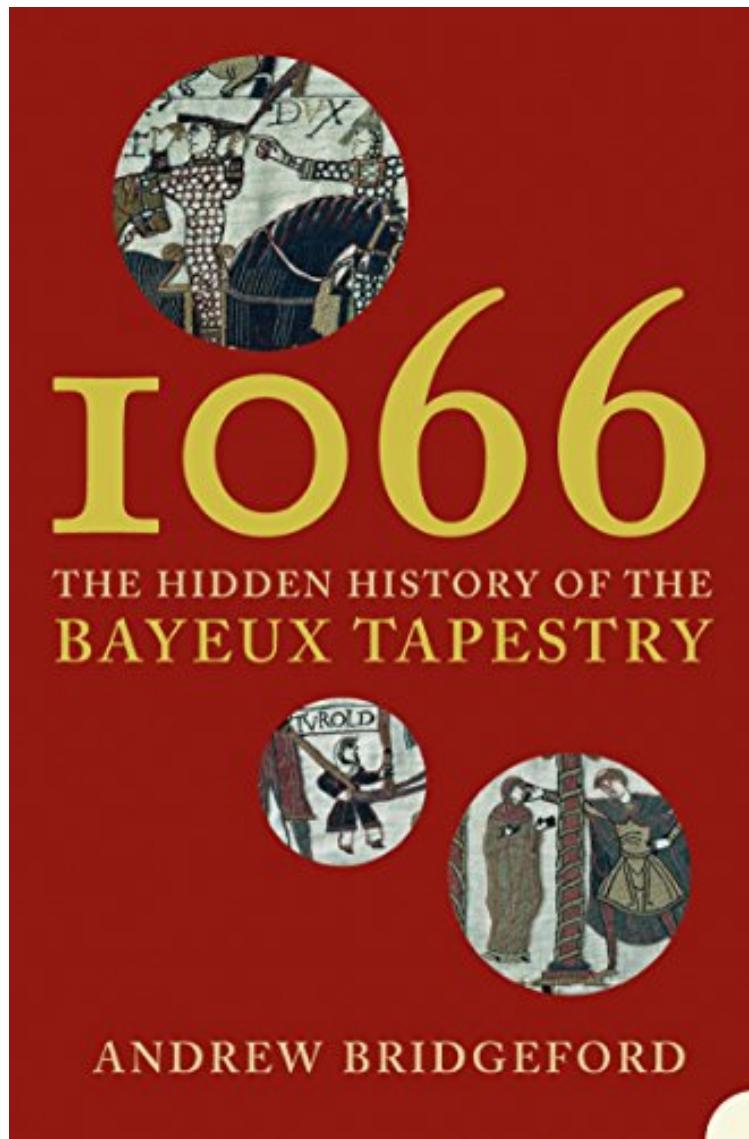


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1066: The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry

Andrew Bridgeford
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Andrew Bridgeford : 1066: The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 1066: The Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Author sheds light on an ancient mysteryBy Robert Fripp Andrew Bridgeford's "1066, the Hidden History of the Bayeux Tapestry," brings a fresh interpretation to an amazing, mysterious piece of cloth. This strip of linen seventy meters (230 feet) long, presents an account of events leading up to William the Conqueror's successful invasion of England. The traditional interpretation is that the Tapestry was a costly trophy commissioned by a Norman baron or bishop celebrating the Norman victory. Bridgeford disputes that

view. He finds conflicting messages stitched onto the fabric, messages that tend to support the French, rather than the Norman, point of view. He even finds support for the English, and perhaps a challenge to Duke William's right to the English throne. Such messages would have been punished by death, and whoever commissioned and stitched the Tapestry would have taken great risks. Nevertheless, the ambiguous message was embroidered less than a decade after William's invasion. What were the real intentions of the sponsor who dictated the images and message stitched into the Bayeux Tapestry? The whole tale is here: ambiguous negotiations, fatal misunderstandings, Duke William's landing, the battle of Hastings, the death of King Harold in battle and the aftermath of war in a ravaged land. The Tapestry (an embroidery, really) was originally longer, but the final scenes are missing. Did fire, damp or rats carry the ending away? Or did fear suborn courage, causing an unknown hand to cut off a dangerous truth in a deadly world? That is one of a thousand mysteries inhering to the Bayeux Tapestry. Nor is that all. The Tapestry brings us a dwarf who may have been a founding father of French literature; and reminds its contemporary viewers of an unlovely tale, of two queen-mothers thrusting their several sons forward, sometimes fatally, in their own lust for royal power. Why? How do these apparent sub-plots relate? It has been an abiding mystery, one for which Andrew Bridgeford may have supplied - if not the missing end of the cloth - then at least several answers. By Robert Fripp, author, *Power of a Woman. Memoirs of a turbulent life: Eleanor of Aquitaine*

A brilliant new reading of the Bayeux Tapestry that radically alters our understanding of the events of 1066 and reveals the astonishing story of the survival of early medieval Europe's greatest treasure. This edition does not include illustrations. The Bayeux Tapestry was embroidered (it's not really a tapestry) in the late eleventh century. As an artefact, it is priceless, incomparable – nothing of its delicacy and texture, let alone wit, survives from the period. As a pictorial story it is delightful: the first feature-length cartoon. As history it is essential: it represents the moment of Britain's last conquest by a foreign army and celebrates the Norman victory over the blinded Saxon Harold. Or does it? In this brilliant piece of detective interpretation, Andrew Bridgeford looks at the narrative contained within the tapestry and has discovered a wealth of new information. Who commissioned it? Who made it? Who is the singular dwarf named as Turold? Why, in a work that celebrates a Norman conquest is the defeated Harold treated so nobly? Is Harold indeed the victim of the arrow from the sky? And who is the figure depicted in the tapestry who, at the moment of crisis for the Normans rallies the army just at the point when it mistakenly believes William is dead and it will be defeated? Using the tapestry, the book retells with vivid characterisation the story of the remaking of England in and after 1066. It is a compelling story, as is the tale of the extraordinary survival of the tapestry itself: history has rarely been writ so large, with such fine detail and yet been so veiled in mystery.

Here is an author who could easily make a living writing thrillers because it is precisely this technique he has applied to this highly readable book. We are left chapter after chapter on the edge of our seat wondering what unexpected rabbit will next be pulled out of the Tapestry's hat, if one can use the expression. . . . a haunting book. Roy Strong, *Daily Mail* 'An often gripping yarn . . . Bridgeford gives an exciting account of the tapestry's busy drama and engaging realism.' Daily Telegraph 'The quality of Bridgeford's research, and the originality of his suggestions, is delightful.' Independent 'Bridgeford marshals the battalions of his argument with all the analytical force, lucidity and panache of a counsel from the golden age of advocacy.' Sunday Times About the Author Andrew Bridgeford is a lawyer and historian who has been published in the *Journal of Medieval History*. This is his first book.