

**Bridgeford A. (1999) - Was Count Eustace II of Boulogne the patron of the Bayeux tapestry? *Journal of Medieval History*, 25, 155-185.**

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### **Abstract**

The orthodox account of the Bayeux Tapestry takes Bishop Odo of Bayeux to have been its probable patron. This article argues that a very feasible alternative candidate for the Tapestry's patron is Count Eustace II of Boulogne. The traditional theory fails to explain the prominence of Count Eustace in the Tapestry, given that, with English support, he launched an attack on Odo's castle at Dover in 1067 and that a close kinsman of his (his *nepos*) was captured by Odo's men. The relationship between Eustace and Odo, post-1067, is seen as the key to understanding the Tapestry's origin. It is suggested that the Tapestry was commissioned by Eustace as a gift to Odo and that it formed part of the process of their reconciliation. This thesis is examined in the context of the Tapestry's relatively sympathetic attitude to Harold and the probability of English design and manufacture. The minor characters Wadard and Vital are identified conjecturally as Odo's knights who defended Dover castle against the Anglo-Boulonnais attack, a conjecture for which there is at least some circumstantial evidence. The strength of the identification of the figure traditionally taken to be Eustace is also discussed.

### Keywords

- Bayeux Tapestry
- Bishop Odo of Bayeux
- Count Eustace II of Boulogne