

## Geometry constructs space and time in the Bayeux Tapestry.

François Murez

[www.francois-murez.com](http://www.francois-murez.com)

The Bayeux tapestry is a long ribbon which invites us to follow it. Its history becomes ours and our paces embraces its rhythm which brings to life our space and time. But how is this rhythm developed, in order to combine painting, art of space, poesy and music, art of time ?

### *Geometry constructs space.*

Geometric construction is the secret architecture of plastic arts. Thus, the author analyses works of both ancient and modern artists, works in which compositions is based on squares and rectangles. The closest are Caillebotte et Courbet and the earliest quoted in this work are the Virgilius Vaticanus scroll, V<sup>th</sup> century work, but also pieces of Ottonian art, or other scrolls like the Golden Psalter of St. Gallen ,the Utrecht Psalter, contemporaries of the tapestry, and the Junius scrolls or the Old English Hexateuch. Moreover, the life of Jesus visible on the Bernward column in Hilderlshein cathedral is based on invisible squares like was already Trajan's Column. Thus, this last one leads the reader to the Tapestry because their plastic narrations, sometimes similar, escape both as an incentive to move.

### *Geometry gives structure to time too.*

The study explores the successive squares of the Tapestry, which place horses and ships, put in order soldiers and identify buildings in the direction of travel and determine the position of clothes, heads, furniture and also of writings... vertically. The embroiderers may have used it in order to copy the drawings, like a grid pattern. In the course of geometry, the Tapestry is elaborated, showing Harold's betrayal with verses, caesura and transitions, which come from theses squares and make the phrasing. Recurring plastic elements create assonances. Colours follow the medieval spectrum to intensify movement.

The tapestry is composed of several panels of different lengths. But why ? This study will present these panels: they are like a poem with verses, caesura, assonances, coloured tones, as a *chanson de geste*.

Finally, this work takes an interest in the tapestry edges. It is based on many works dedicated to the Bayeux tapestry, including Jean-Claude Schmitt's « Broder les rythmes : à propos de la Tapisserie de Bayeux », in *Revue : Intermédialités : Histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques*, 16, 2010, p. 23-34, and Lucien Musset's (*La Tapisserie de Bayeux*, in Editions Zodiaque, 2002, p. 70). The last one, based on a reconstruction of a Viking house in Fyrkat, suggests a symbolic relation between the wooden poles of the straw roof and the poles rhythm which seems to maintain the Bayeux tapestry scenes.