

Archaeological Study Tour Normandy



Église Notre-Dame Jumièges

29 May to 5 June 2010

Archaeology in Europe

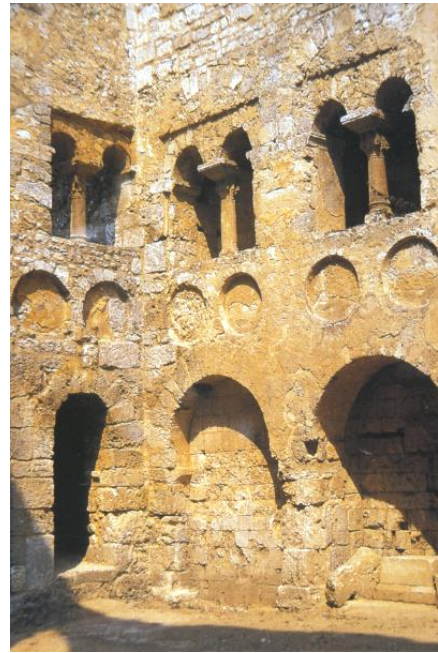
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Jumièges Abbey is an important site containing two churches which both occupy an important place in the development of French ecclesiastical architecture.

The original monastery at Jumièges was founded in the 7th century by St Philibert, a monk from Eauze (Gers). The monastery had royal protection from the start: it was Clovis II, the King at that time, and especially his wife Bathilde, who encouraged Philibert's appointment and gave him an area of the Crown lands as a gift.

Nothing remains of this original church which was destroyed by the Vikings in the 9th century. It was rebuilt in the 10th century by Duke William Longsword (893 – 942). In the 11th century, the church of Notre-Dame was built. This church was consecrated in the presence of William the Conqueror in 1167.



The earlier of the two churches, the 10th century Carolingian church of **St-Pierre**, survives best at the west end, where the distinctive double-light baluster shaft openings sit above a line of blind circular arcading, which in turn sits over the low main arcade. To the east, the church was heavily rebuilt in Gothic style in the 13th and 14th centuries.

The main church, **Notre-Dame**, is of importance not just in terms of the development of French architecture, but also of English Romanesque. This church is a magnificent piece of early Norman Romanesque. The church is of surprising height for its date – the additional height resulting in an area of blank walling between the triforium and the clerestory.



Excavation has shown that Notre-Dame at Jumièges was the sister church to Edward the Confessor's abbey church at Westminster. It is probably that Westminster was started after Notre-Dame, but with royal patronage work progressed quickly and the church was ready for dedication in 1066.

Caen

Caen was originally a settlement on an island at the confluence of the Rivers Orne and Odon. Although the town was fortified by the Normans, it only really achieved prominence through the patronage of William the Conqueror.

There had been papal opposition to the marriage between William and Matilda, owing to their being cousins. This actually resulted in the excommunication of William, which was only lifted through the intercession of Lanfranc. As an act of penance, William and Matilda were each required to found an abbey.

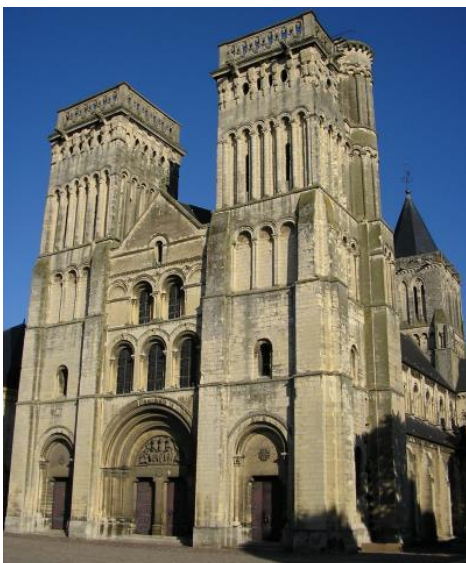
The church founded by William was **St-Etienne – l'Abbaye aux Hommes**. This is a Norman Romanesque masterpiece, with a severe unadorned facade flanked by twin Romanesque towers topped with Gothic spires. Rising 84 m (276 ft.) high, these helped earn Caen the nickname "city of spires." There is another Romanesque tower over the crossing.



Inside is a long Romanesque nave of the 11th century with a sexpartite vault (a transitional vault on the way to Gothic), an 11th-century transept, and a 13th-century Gothic choir with ambulatory.

The Early Gothic choir replaced the original Romanesque sanctuary in 1202. This was the earliest example of Norman Gothic, and it became the model for many subsequent choirs.

An inscribed marble slab in the choir marks the site of William the Conqueror's tomb. The tomb itself was destroyed by Huguenots in 1562 during the Wars of Religion.



The church founded by Matilda was **Eglise de la Trinité - l'Abbaye aux Dames**. It is a fine example of 11th-century Romanesque architecture. The long nave is plain, with tall round arches typical of Norman Romanesque churches. The style is more conservative than that of St-Etienne. The choir, the vault and the upper levels of the nave date from the early 12th century. Queen Matilda is buried under a slab of black marble in the choir.

The original spires of the abbey church were destroyed in the Hundred Years' War and replaced with the present short towers in the early 18th century. The abbey domestic buildings were rebuilt in the 18th century.

The Château de Caen was built by William the Conqueror c. 1060. His son Henry I then built the Saint Georges church, a keep (1123) and a large hall for the Duke Court.

In 1182 a royal court celebration for Christmas in the aula of Caen Castle brought together Henry II and his sons, Richard the Lionheart and John Lackland, receiving more than a thousand knights.

Caen Castle, along with all of Normandy, was handed over to the French Crown in 1204. Philip II reinforced the fortifications.

The castle saw several engagements during the Hundred Years' War (1346, 1417, 1450). The keep was pulled down in 1793 during the French Revolution, by order of the National Convention.



Abbaye d'Ardenne is the site of a Premonstratensian monastery in Saint-Germain-la-Blanche-Herbe, near Caen, containing a chapel built in 1121 and other medieval buildings.



The Abbey was used as an observation post by the Germans in the Battle of Normandy, and was heavily damaged by Allied forces. As a result, much of the Abbey visible today has been rebuilt or restored. The Abbey is most notorious for being the site of a massacre of prisoners of war during World War II.

The abbey of **Cerisy-la-Forêt** was originally founded by St Vigor c. 510.

In 1032 Robert I of Normandy, father of William the Conqueror refounded the abbey and dedicated it to St Vigor. Only three of the original seven bays of the nave remain, but they are remarkable for their elevation. The monks' stalls date from 1400.



Bayeux

Bayeux was founded as a Gallo-Roman settlement in the first century BC under the name Augustodurum. It was the capital of the territory of the Bessin people of Gaul, whose name appears in the writings of Pliny the Elder. The earliest evidence of human occupation of the territory comes from fortified Roman camps, but there is so far no evidence of any major pre-existing Celtic settlement before Roman arrival.



Bayeux was built on a crossroads between Lisieux and Valognes, developing first on the west bank of the river. By the end of the 3rd century a walled enclosure surrounded the city until it was removed in the 18th century. Its layout is still visible and can be followed today. The citadel of the city was located in the southwest corner and the Cathedral in the southeast. An important city in Normandy, Bayeux was part of the coastal defence of Roman Empire against the pirates of the region and a Roman Legion was stationed there.

Bayeux was largely destroyed during the Viking Raids of the late 800s but was rebuilt in the early 10th century under the reign of Bothon. William the Conqueror's half brother Odo of Conteville completed the cathedral in the city and it was dedicated in 1077. However, the city began to lose prominence when William placed his capital at Caen. When King Henry I defeated his brother Robert Curthose for the rule of Normandy, the city was burned to set an example to the rest of the duchy. Under Richard the Lion Heart, Bayeux was wealthy enough to purchase a municipal charter. From the end of Richard's reign to the end of the Hundred Years' War, Bayeux was repeatedly pillaged until Henry V captured of the city in 1417.



Charles VII recaptured the city and granted a general amnesty to its populace in 1450. The capture of Bayeux heralded a return to prosperity.

The Oath of Bayeux was sworn by Harold Godwinson promising to uphold William's claim to the English throne. The scene from the Bayeux Tapestry shows Harold swearing on holy relics as William sits on his throne.

Bayeux Cathedral

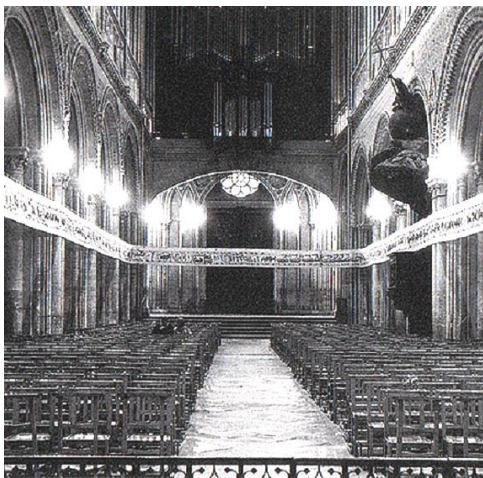
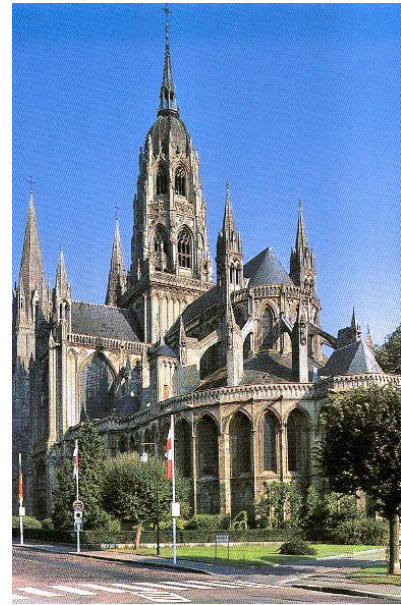
The Cathédrale Notre-Dame is a fine example of Romanesque and Gothic. Only the west towers and the crypt remain from the original church built by Odo of Conteville, William's half-brother and Bishop of Bayeux. This church was consecrated in 1077.

The original west towers were reinforced in the 13th century when they received Gothic spires. The central tower is 15th century, but the hideous cupola is a 19th century excrescence.

The tympanum over the south transept doorway shows the story of Thomas Becket.

The nave main arcade is impressive 12th century Romanesque, while the clerestory and vaults are 13th Gothic.

The chancel with its apse ambulatory is a superb example of Norman Gothic. The great arches are separated by pierced rose windows; the triforium is highly ornate and the clerestory is spacious and well lit. The stalls are 16th century.



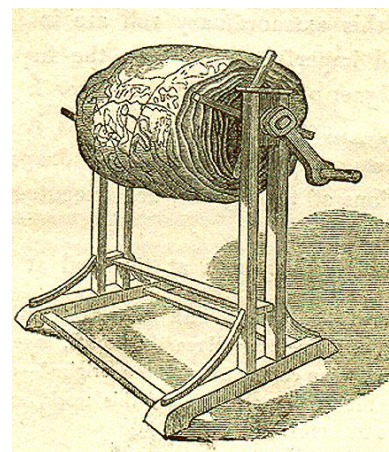
The Inventory of the Treasury of Bayeux Cathedral of 1476 contains the entry: "very narrow strip of linen, embroidered with figures and inscriptions representing the Conquest of England." The entry goes on to describe the tradition of hanging the textile around the nave of the cathedral during the Feast of Relics, as can be seen in the photo.

Later, however, the tapestry was not so well treated. It was recovered during the Revolution, when it was seen being used as a cover for a wagon!

Later, it was stored in the cathedral on a large drum.

An early 19th century descriptions tells how it was displayed: "It is right, first of all, that you should have an idea how this piece of Tapestry is preserved, or rolled up. You see it here, therefore, precisely as it appears after the person who shews it, takes off the cloth with which it is usually covered." (Thomas Frognall Dibdin's *Travelogue*, 1829)

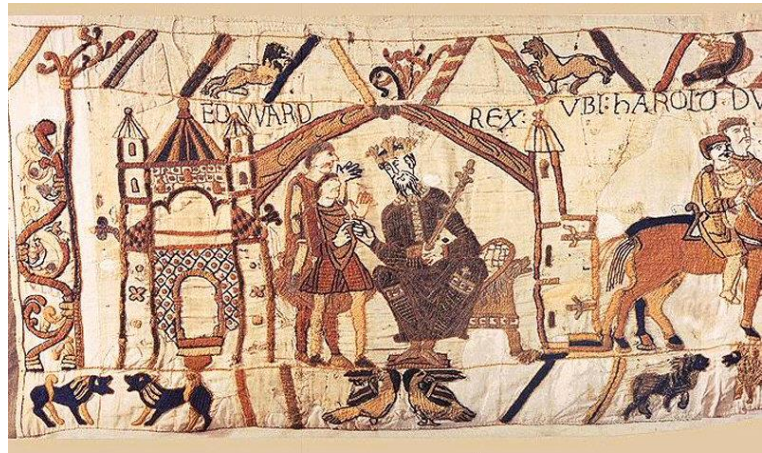
This explains the amount of damage on the first part of the Tapestry.



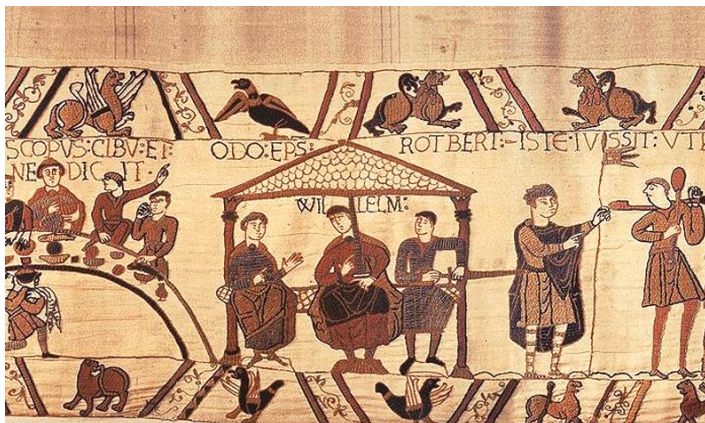
The Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry is both a superb work of art and an important historic document.

The Tapestry tells the story of Harold's visit to William as an emissary of King Edward; the death of Edward and the coronation of Harold; William's preparations for the invasion of England; the landing at Pevensey and foraging for provisions and the Battle of Hastings. The ending to the tapestry is now lost.



The Origin of the Bayeux Tapestry:



Given the prominence of Bishop Odo, half-brother of William, Bishop of Bayeux, and Earl of Kent, the association of the Tapestry with Bayeux and Kent, the inclusion of probable vassals of Odo, and the relative lack of such emphasis in other accounts of the Conquest, scholars have widely accepted the theory that Odo was the patron of the Tapestry.

In the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, the question of whether the Tapestry was English or Norman remained open, though scholars generally favoured the idea of an Anglo-Saxon provenance. This idea was based primarily on the *Opus Anglicanum*, the famous embroidering tradition of English women.

In his study of correlations between images in the Tapestry and contemporary manuscript illuminations from Canterbury, Wormald (Wormald, Francis. "The Inscriptions with a Translation." *The Bayeux Tapestry, a Comprehensive Survey*. Ed. Sir Frank Stenton. 1st ed. New York: Phaidon Press, 1957, pp. 117 - 180) presents artistic evidence that the Tapestry was produced in Canterbury, at a time when the probable patron, Odo, was also the Earl of Kent.



The illustration alongside shows a scene from the Tapestry compared with an illustration of the Last Supper from the Canterbury manuscript *The St Augustine Gospels*.

Brooks and Walker (Brooks, N.P and H.E. Walker. "The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry." *The Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1* (1978): 1-34.) went on to develop this argument and gave reasons why the tapetry was made in Canterbury:

- Canterbury was the chief town of Odo's earldom, and he held most extensive properties there.
- Tuold, Wadard and Vital (minor figures depicted in the Tapestry) all held lands from Odo in Kent, and Vital was specifically known as Vital of Canterbury.
- Where the Tapestry remarkably departs from the Norman version of the events of 1064-1066, it appears to be following traditions that are only found elsewhere in chronicles connected with Canterbury.
- Canterbury was the outstanding centre of late Anglo-Saxon drawing, especially notable for the skill of its artists in pictorial narrative. Professor Wormald demonstrated many of the stylistic similarities between the Bayeux Tapestry and Canterbury manuscripts of the period 1000-75.
- One figure in the Tapestry, the rope-carrying Norman forager (see panel 107), was copied from a mistaken figure in a late-Saxon Prudentius from St. Augustine's; whilst the meal scene at Hastings ((see panel 112) was derived, probably indirectly, from the Last Supper in the famous St. Augustine Gospels.
- St. Augustine's, in stark contrast to the other Kentish houses, enjoyed good relations with Odo and his tenants. He was their major post-conquest benefactor during the very years that Bayeux cathedral was being completed.

The end of the tapestry is missing. The last remaining scene shows the English fleeing from the Battle of Hastings after the death of Harold. The illustration alongside shows a suggestion made by Jan Messent of how the tapestry may have ended, (Messent, J. *The Bayeux Tapestry Embroiderers' Story* Thirsk: Madeira Threads Ltd., 1999.)



Such an ending would aptly parallel the first scene showing King Edward (see above).

Jublains

The modern town of Jublains is built on the site of a major Roman settlement and Gallo-Roman town known as Noviodium (New Town).

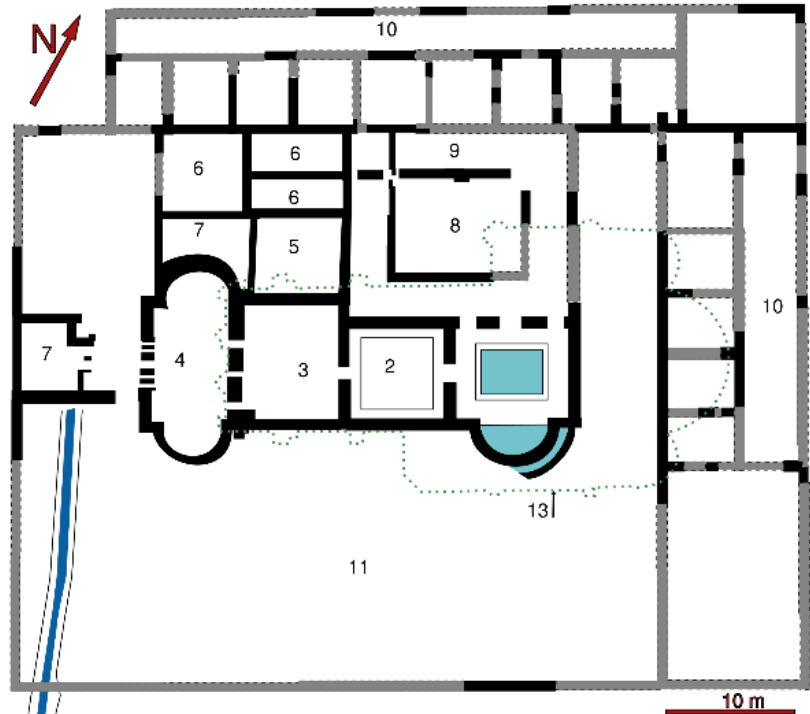
There are four major ruins visible today: the temple, the baths, the amphitheatre and the fortress.



The fortress is alongside the museum and is unique in design. It was funded by the Roman administration but appears to have been for storage rather than for military purposes.

Further up the road is the amphitheatre, donated to the town by a wealthy Gaul named Orgetorix. Excavations have shown that the site held two successive theatres, perhaps to cater for changing tastes in entertainment.

The remains of a Roman bathhouse have been excavated beneath the foundations of a later church.



The Bathhouse
(the outline of the later church is in green)

Abbaye de la Trinité de Fécamp

The abbey was founded in 658 by Waningus, a Merovingian count. It was originally a nunnery.

In 842, the abbey suffered badly from Viking raids. After further Viking raids in 851, Richard I of Normandy rebuilt the church. It was Richard II who invited Guillaume de Volpiano in 1001 to reform the abbey, under strict Benedictine rules.



The abbey at Fécamp had an important role in the Norman conquest of England. Edward the Confessor granted the royal minster church in Steyning to the abbey, in gratitude to his Norman protectors during his exile. With its large, wealthy manor lands and thriving port, this grant was to take effect after the death of Aelfwine, Bishop of Winchester, who had charge of Steyning. The bishop died in 1047 and ecclesiastical jurisdiction then passed directly to Pope Clement. In the same way, Fécamp Abbey itself answered to no Norman bishop, only to the Pope. The gift was later confirmed by William the Conqueror.

A nearby port with land around Rye, Winchelsea and Hastings had already been given to the same Abbey by King Cnut, to honour a promise made by his wife Emma of Normandy's first husband King Aethelred.

However, in 1052 Godwin, Earl of Wessex expelled the monks from Steyning and seized it for himself. His son Harold decided to keep it upon his accession, rather than restore it to them. This made commercial and strategic sense, as Harold would not have wanted a Norman holding at a potential invasion port.

Before setting out to invade England, William swore that he would recover it for the monks. This gained him a ship from the abbey and, upon his victory at Hastings, he made good his promise and returned Steyning to the abbey, with whom it remained until the 15th century.

The abbey also provided William with Remigius de Fécamp, the first Bishop of Lincoln.