Introduction: This Medieval embroidery - incorrectly called tapestry is a band of linen - 231 feet long and more than 19 inches wide. A portion of it is missing including the final portion. It depicts the Norman Conquest of England leading up to the Battle of Hastings in 1066 A.D. in which Harold Godwin king of England was killed.

It is a remarkable work of art and important as a source of mid-11th Century history. Legend states that the Bayeaux Tapestry was made by Queen Matilda William of Normandy with the help of the ladies of his court. It contains 70 scenes and various Latin words.

Scene 31 of the Bayeaux Tapestry states in Latin: “ISTIMIRANT STELLAE” - “Marveling at the star.”

The six men are in the scene pointing to the comet in the sky with signs of fear. On the border above is a drawing of a comet moving from left to right. The comet appears as a round ball of red with white points and a burning rake like object tail being drawn from the ball.

Scene 32 is of King Harold on his throne bending towards a man who appears a soothsayer or an interpreter of dreams.

On the lower border is a picture of ghostly empty vessels floating on a calm sea with only black thread. It is only a sketch that is why it is taken as a dream. The comet was hung around inside the church once a year on a special feast day for centuries.

In conclusion this is the first pictorial record of a comet. The first time that it is mentioned in literature outside of the Chronicles was in 1476 A.D. So we can date the comet because of the battle of Hastings. The comet appeared in April 1066 A.D. for almost two weeks. By day and by night. It was very bright.

Contemporary Literary Manuscript Accounts:
Anglo Saxon Chronicle: Winchester, Ms.
In this year King Harold came from York to Westminster at the Easter which was after the midwinter that the king passed away; and Easter was then on 16 April. Then throughout all England, a sign such as men never saw before was seen in the heavens. Some men declared that it was the star comet, which some men call the ‘haired’ star; and it appeared first on the eve of the Greater Litany, that is on 24 April, and shone thus all week.

Anglo Saxon Chronicle: Land, Ms.
Mathali Paris
Apparuit in Normannia cometa mense Augusto, maximum cernentibus incutiens timorem, radiosque versus Aangliam extendens; eodem tempore Willemus Comes, congregato exercitu classeque parata, circa festivitatem Sancti Michaelis ventis vela commit-
tens, in Angliam transvehitur, nulloque resistente, inter duo castra, Hastinges atque Pevenesellum, terram Anglorum ingreditur, cui rei astipulantur versus illi quos dominum Lanfrancum eo tempore ferunt fecisse. Sunt autem hii:

“Anno milleno sexageno quoque seno”
“Anglorum mete flammas sensere cometae”
Le Livere de Reis de Engletere
Harald, le counte de Kent, le fiz le counte Godwin, tantost len demein, cest adire le jur del Epiphanie, prist la corune par sa auctorite demeine, e fust coroune de Aldred le erceveske de Euirwik a Loundres, e ne regna pas un an. Memes le an une esteile, ki hom aple comete, fust vewe non pas souleument en Engletere mes par tut le mund, les viii. Kal. De Mai; e resplendist de trop grant claret.

Harold, the earl of Kent, the son of earl Godwin, soon, on the morrow, that is to say, on the Epiphany, seized the crown on his own authority, and was
crowned by Aldred, the Archbishop of York, at Lon-
don, and reigned not so much as a year. The same
year a star, which they call a comet, was seen, not only
in England, but throughout the whole world, on April
24, and shown with very great splendor.

Henry of Huntingdon
Et facta est mutatio dexterae Exeelsi; quam cometa
ingens in exordio ejusdem anni designaverat. Unde
dietum est:

“Anno milleno sexageno quoque seno”
“Anglorum metae flammes sensere cometae”
Chronica Rogeri de Hoveden
Eodem anno, viii. Kalendas Maii, stella cometis,
un solum in Anglia, sed etiam, ut fertur, per totum
mundum sae, per vii. Dies splendore nimio fulgebatur.
Unde quidam sic ait,
Anno milleno, sexageno, quoque seno,
Anglorum metae crinem sensere cometae.
Flores Historiarum
Hane autem regni subversionem sanguinea atque
crinita, in exordio illius anni apparens, minaci fulgore
praesignavit, unde quidam,
Anno milleno sexageno quoque seno,
Anglorum metae flammes sensere cometae.
Apparuit in Normannia cometa mense Augusto,
maximum cernentibus incutiens timorem, radiosque
suos versus Angliam extendens; eodem tempore Wil-
lemus Comes, Congregato exercitu classeque parata,
circa festivitatem Sancti Michaelis ventis vela commit-
tens, in Angliam transvehitur, nulloque resistant,e,
inter duo castra, Hastings atque Pevenseellum, terram
Anglorum ingreditur, cui rei astipulantur versus illi
quos dominum Lanfrancum eo tempore ferunt fecisse.
Sunt autem hii:

“Anno milleno sexageno quoque seno”
“Anglorum metae flammes sensere cometae.”
Geoffroy Gaimar  Lestorie des Engles
After their death a comet
(A star that is of which soothsayers and good ast-
ronomers know that it portends either good or ill)
showed itself in the firmament. Many people saw it
well. On the night of “Litania Major”, it made as
much brightness as if it were day. Many men looked
at it. In many places they foretold from it. Each man
said his guess, but soon followed the great strife, and
the great tribulation, which afterwards came to the
country. Then came Tostig with much folk.

Liber de Hyda
A star which prophets, and clerks learned in astro-
nomery, when it shows itself, know well that God
makes this sign seen, that the people will know that
there are some who do none of all his commandments;
That his faithful people have not peace among them-

Annales de Morgan
Comet Apparuit
[In that year a comet appeared]
Annales de Waverleia
Tune gens hujus patriae pecuniam et obsides illi
dererant, et terram suam erga cum relevaverunt:
Anno milleno sexageno quoque sene,
Anglorum metae flammes sensere cometae
Quam cometa ingrens in exordio ejusdem anni des-
ignaverat: unde dietum est,
How anno seno milleno bisque triceno,
Anglorum gentes bello periere cadentes,
Haroldus cecidit, Willelmus dux superavit.
Draco Normuisus
Hujus temporibus resplenduit ipsa cometa, Cujus
ab igne novo Neustria clara nitet.

Conclusion: The breadth of separate references to
the appearance of Halley’s Comet in 1066 A.D. in
England indicated that the comets appearance was an
important historical event and indicates a serious con-
temporary interest in astronomy. It indicates that more
effort should be directed in the research and recovery
of historical references to astronomical events such as
comets or as sometimes referred to as ‘star.’ Their
could be more historical references to comets that have
long periods that we have as yet to see appear again in
the 21st Century or some time in the far future.

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