

ART. VII.—*The parentage of William de Lancaster, lord of Kendal.* By GEORGE WASHINGTON, F.S.A.

Read at Kendal, April 7th, 1962.

I.

THE Rev. F. W. Ragg wrote in 1910 that “a somewhat strange history is that of the de Lancasters”, and that the family furthermore was of “mysterious” origin (see his long and scholarly article *De Lancaster* in CW2 x 395-494). Dugdale, relying on a pedigree manufactured by the monks of Cockersand, made the first William de Lancaster (d. before Michaelmas, 1170) the great-grandson in the male line of the Norman baron Ivo Taillebois (d. 1098), *dapifer* to William Rufus, who granted him the lordship of Kendal, as well as wide lands in the upper Eden valley; the said Ivo being allegedly the father of Eldred, the father of Ketel, the father of the aforesaid William, who changed his surname from Taillebois to de Lancaster by permission of the king. But Dr William Farrer, writing in *VCH Lancs.* i 358-359 in 1906, scouted such legends; charters proved that William’s father was named Gilbert, and the latter — according to Dr Farrer — was a Norman totally unconnected by blood with Ketel son of Eldred, who in turn was of native origin and in no way related to Ivo Taillebois. Nevertheless, three years later (1909) Mr Ragg printed two charters, by the first of which William, son of Gilbert de Lancaster and William, his eldest son, confirmed to the brethren of St Peter (afterwards called St Leonard) of York land in Newby, Westmorland, which they held “by the gift of Ketel, my uncle” (*avunculus*); and William II de Lancaster (d. 1184) subsequently granted to St Peter’s “the whole of the land in Newby which Ketel son of Elftred” gave them there (see Ragg, *Charters of St Peter’s*

Hospital, York, CW2 ix 237-239). It was thereupon concluded that the first William de Lancaster's father, Gilbert, was a *brother* of Ketel son of Eldred, from whom descended also the Curwens of Workington. But when in 1915 Canon James Wilson produced his valuable *Register of St Bees* he remarked that "evidence to make Gilbert the brother of Chetell and not his son is to be viewed with suspicion. Though Chetell was alive after 1120, his son Orm was old enough to witness a charter in 1094 . . . To regard Gilbert as a brother of Chetell would put him a generation too early" (pp. 248-249). And again, "Gilbert the father of William de Lancaster was the elder son of Chetell, and therefore the elder brother of Orm, father of Gospatric", *a quo* the Curwens (pp. 60-61).

Fortunately, the attention of my learned and distinguished friend, Mr G. Andrews Moriarty, LL.B., F.S.A., was attracted to this problem of William de Lancaster and his antecedents in 12th-century Westmorland; Mr Moriarty had known Dr Farrer before his lamented death in 1924, and he also possesses at his home in Ogunquit, Maine, U.S.A., an unexcelled collection of pedigrees relating to the baronial and knightly families of the North. Mr Moriarty's solution (as presented in the second section of this paper, all of which section moreover is from Mr Moriarty's pen and his work alone), is that William de Lancaster's father, Gilbert, was a Norman knight, as evidenced by the French Christian names given to all his recorded children; whilst William's mother, Godith, was clearly the sister of Ketel son of Eldred and thus of native English stock (it will be recalled that Ketel was called William de Lancaster's *avunculus*, a term which strictly speaking means "maternal uncle"). It is even possible, as Mr Moriarty surmises, that Ketel's wife, Christian or Christina, may have been a Taillebois by birth; for, according to Peter of Blois, Ivo himself "had an only daughter, nobly espoused" (see the Duchess of

Cleveland's *Battle Abbey Roll*, III 345), and certainly William de Lancaster's granddaughter, Helewise, along with her husband Gilbert fitz Renfrid, later confirmed some of Ivo's grants to the abbey of St Mary at York. Moreover, Gilbert fitz Renfrid (who was one of the "rebel barons" in 1215, though not a signatory to Magna Carta) is supposed to have been the son of Roger fitz Renfrid by Rohese de Gant, widowed Countess of Lincoln, herself the daughter of Richard de Clare by Alice, daughter of Ranulf "le Meschin" or de Briquessart, Earl of Chester, who had married Ivo Taillebois' widow, Lucy.

Besides my deep obligations to Mr Moriarty, my gratitude is due to Mr Henry Hornyold-Strickland, Mr C. Roy Hudleston and Mr W. Percy Hedley for their very kind interest in the present paper.

II.

The foregoing notes (says Mr Moriarty) afford some new considerations upon the parentage and immediate ancestry of the first William de Lancaster, lord of Kendal.

William derived his name from the fact that he had been made governor of Lancaster castle in the time of Stephen. He held considerable domains in Yorkshire, including the wapentake of Ewcross, of the barony of Mowbray (Farrer, *Lancs. Pipe Rolls*, 389); and *circa* 1150 Roger de Mowbray gave and confirmed to William, son of Gilbert de Lancaster, in fee and inheritance, "all my land of Lonsdale, and of Kendal, and of Horton in Ribblesdale, to hold by the service of four knights" (*ibid.*).¹ He is said to have died before Michaelmas, 1170, and he would seem from chronological reasons to have been over eighty at that date.

The family were important benefactors of the priory of St Bees, and there is much information regarding them in Canon Wilson's *Register of St Bees*, with several valu-

¹ The barony of Kendal itself was rated at 2 fees, so the remaining 2 fees were for "Horton in Ribblesdale" (the wapentake of Ewcross).

able notes. William plainly was affiliated with the race of Ketel Eldredsson, the Northern native magnate who flourished from 1094 until after 1120. Ketel was himself a benefactor of St Bees; and his Cumbrian manor of Workington descended to his son Orm, ancestor of the ancient house of Curwen of Workington (see Mr Ragg's paper on the Curwens in CW2 xiv 343 ff.). Ketel witnessed William le Meschin's foundation charter of St Bees, 1120-35 (*Register St Bees*, v). Ketel's wife, Christina, was perhaps the daughter of Ivo Taillebois; Ketel gave to St Mary's, York (the mother house of St Bees), the churches of Morlund, Brounfeld, and Workington, with the consent of his wife Christine and of his son William about 1125, which grant was confirmed by William le Meschin (*Register St Bees*, no. 4). Ketel Eldredsson died, apparently, well after 1120. He left sons William, who died s.p., and Orm of Workington. "Orm son of Ketel" witnessed a charter of Roger the Poitivin giving the church at Lancaster to St Martin of Sées in 1094 (*Reg. Lancaster Priory*, Chetham Soc., N.S. xxvi 8-10). Orm married a daughter of Earl Gospatric I of Dunbar, and left an eldest son, Gospatric (*a quo* the Curwens), who died 1179-80. From this it may be inferred that Orm, being old enough to witness a charter in 1094, was born about 1080.

Turning now again to William de Lancaster. As charters show, he was the son of Gilbert (who may well have come from Yorkshire) and his wife, Goditha (Farrer, *Lancs. Pipe Rolls*, 392). Ranulf le Meschin confirmed to St Bees the gift of William, son of Gilbert de Lancaster of Swartahof, between Whitehaven and Hensingham; witnessed by Turstin of Bayeux, the Archbishop of York, 1119-40 (*Register St Bees*, no. 3). William de Lancaster had younger brothers named Roger and Robert, the former of whom married Waldeve of Allerdale's widow, Sigrid (*ibid.*, nos. 32, 223, 232). In a footnote to no. 223, Wilson observes that Gilbert, father of William de Lancas-

ter, was probably "son of Ketel" and that to place him as a brother of Ketel's would make him a generation too early. It should be noted that when William's brother, Roger, gave his charter to St Bees (no. 223) both Gilbert, his father, and William de Lancaster, his brother, were dead. In this connection the following charters to St Peter's hospital, York, are of interest: William I de Lancaster and his son and heir, William confirmed *circa* 1120-30 to St Peter's the land of Newby in Kendal, which the grantor held by the gift of Ketel, "avunculus meus".² About 1170 William II de Lancaster bestowed on St Peter's "the whole of the land in Newby, which Ketel, son of Elftred had given" (charters to St Peter's Hospital, York, printed by Mr Ragg in CW2 ix 237-239). If William II de Lancaster was old enough to be a party to a grant to St Peter's in 1120-30 he may well have been born *circa* 1110, and have died in old age in or about 1184, the date given by Robert de Monte in his chronicle (Farrer, *Records of Kendale*, I xiii). William I, who occurs in the 1130 pipe roll, would presumably have been born about 1090; and his father, Gilbert (the founder of the line), could well be of the same generation as Ketel Eldredsson, whose young son Orm was a witness in 1094, and the earlier charter to St Peter's would confirm this view.

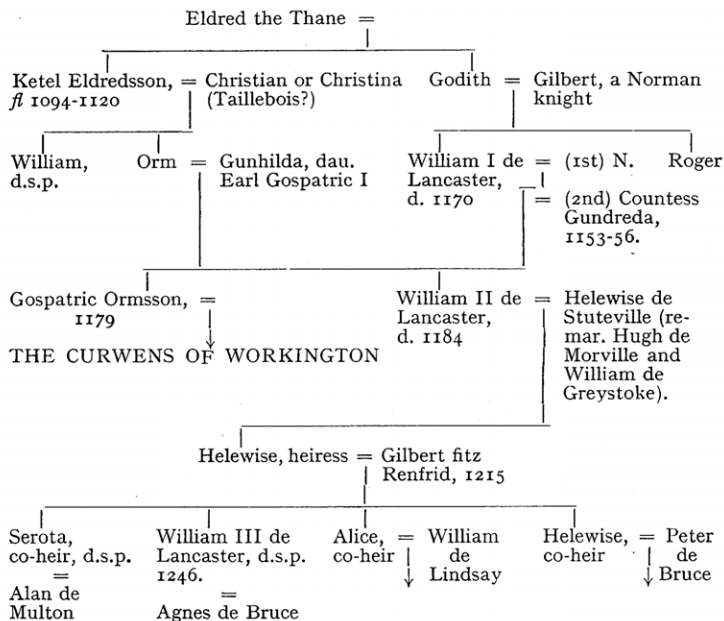
The word *avunculus* usually, if not invariably, denotes a maternal uncle; and it may be suggested that, as the name Gilbert is Norman and that of Gilbert's wife Goditha is English, she may well have been the sister of Ketel and daughter of Eldred [who, as stated in my recent article, "Strickland and Neville", was possibly a scion of the great house of Dunbar.—G.W.].³ Furthermore, the dates are too early for Eldred's immediate family to have adopted Norman Christian names, although Eldred

² The second wife of William I de Lancaster was Gundreda de Warenne, the widowed Countess of Warwick, married 1153-56 (G.E.C. XII, pt. ii, 362).

³ CW2 1xi 75-76.

later had a grandson (the eldest son of Ketel Eldredsson) who bore the typical Norman name of William.

All things considered, it would seem that William de Lancaster came of mixed blood; his mother was native English, but his father was Norman-French.



The second William de Lancaster, lord of Kendal (d. 1184) left also a natural son, Gilbert (d. before 1220), ancestor of the Lancasters of Sockbridge Hall, Westmorland; and the third William de Lancaster (d. *s.p.* 1246) had a bastard brother, Sir Roger de Lancaster (d. shortly before 22 February 1290/91), one of whose younger sons, Thomas (1292), was father of Laurence de Lancaster (1317), father of John Laurence (1338), father of Edmund Laurence (d. 1381), of Ashton Hall in Lancaster, who married *circa* 1369 Agnes de Washington, granddaughter and ultimately sole heiress of Robert de Washington (M.P. for Westmorland 1300) and his wife, Joan de Strickland (*VCH Lancs.* viii 51-53). Their second son, John, born *circa* 1371-72, took his mother's surname and founded the "second" house of Washington, squires of Tewitfield in Warton, Lancs., afterwards of Sulgrave Manor and Virginia. For a good account of Sir Roger de Lancaster (d. 1291), see G.E.C. vii 371.