

ART. XI. – *Another important copy of John Denton's Manuscript.* By D. J. W. MAWSON.

Read at Ulverston, April 1st, 1978.

IT is said that John Denton was imprisoned in the Tower of London as a result of a quarrel with Dr Henry Robinson, Bishop of Carlisle from 1598 to 1616; that he made extracts from the records kept there; and that these later formed the basis of his history of Cumberland.

Although Denton's MS. has been lost,¹ a number of copies, or rather editions (for they all differ) survive. In 1887 Chancellor Ferguson, upon examining those known to him, considered the original to have been written about 1610,² but in fact it is probably a little older than this, since extraneous evidence concerning the Hutton family shows that Denton's description of Skirwith could only have been written between 1601 and 1604,³ while the sections relating to Gamblesby and Biglands and to Grinsdale must be earlier than 1604, for in each case Denton reports: "It is now in the Queen's hand by the attainder of the heir of the Dacres".⁴ On the other hand, the account of Wythop cannot have been written before 1606, for Denton mentions the sale of the township which took place in that year.⁵

In his introduction to the transcript which Ferguson edited for the Society in 1887, he described the seven copies he had seen:

1. A very early edition, which had once been owned by Major Fairtlough of Keswick, but was then in Canada.
2. A folio copy written in about 1670, which having belonged to the local antiquary, Thomas Machell, passed into the hands of William Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle from 1702 to 1726.⁶ Nicolson subsequently presented it to the Dean and Chapter of Carlisle Cathedral, who still own it.
3. A folio volume written, as internal evidence shows, in 1687 by Dr. Hugh Todd. This copy is now in the library of Queen's College, Oxford.
4. A small manuscript book 6 inches high and 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches broad, which was at Scaleby Castle for many years. A note on the reverse side of the title page proclaims that this edition was copied verbatim from the original, only the sequence being rearranged. It has 445 numbered pages of text (followed by 92 leaves, some of which contain lists of Sheriffs and Judges of Assize) and is in the handwriting of William Gilpin, Recorder of Carlisle, whose signature with the date 20 Aug. 1687 is inscribed (the last two numerals of the year have been altered, but whether by Gilpin himself or by someone since, I cannot tell). In 1887 this volume was re-stitched and then put back in its original cover with a new piece of crimson velvet on its spine. Sold at Sothebys on 18 July 1967, it was subsequently acquired by Dr Andrew Thornton, who left it in safe keeping in Cumbria upon taking up a medical post in Newfoundland a few years ago.
5. Another folio copy, incorporating after the text but before the index, a description of the Forest of Inglewood and the privileges enjoyed by the King's tenants there, is owned by the Society of Antiquaries. This copy was written between 1734 and 1747, and has been collated with the Machell edition.

6. A small book measuring 7 inches by $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, formerly belonging to Josiah Relph, Curate of Sebergham, who died in 1743, was at Tallentire Hall, Cockermouth, in 1887, but has since disappeared.
7. In 1749, William Milbourne of Armathwaite Castle, Recorder of Carlisle, copied and updated the Gilpin MS. Ferguson bought this copy over a century later for £100 and it is now in Tullie House.⁷

In addition to the Milbourne copy, Tullie House possess several modern transcripts as well as an incomplete 17th-century copy (60 folio pages ending with Wigton). Of more interest, however, is:

8. Another folio edition containing 102 pages (Jacksoniana A 177). The copyist admits to having seen Machell's MS, and must have written his account some time after 1675, for he refers to the death of Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, which occurred in that year.

Chancellor Ferguson based his transcript primarily on editions 4 and 7, but since he published it, two more important copies have been discovered, namely:

9. The Hutton John MS., which was found in Lord Lonsdale's London house in 1892.⁸ This is a folio copy, measuring $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches by 7 inches. Some of the leaves at the beginning have been cut out, but the margins which remain reveal handwriting matching that of several pages found loose with the MS (but now bound up with it). Although dated 1698, these are in a more modern hand than the MS itself which, as internal evidence shows, was nevertheless written after 1674.

At one time this edition was owned by the Hudlestons of Hutton John, but in 1771 Andrew Hudleston lent it to Sir James Lowther, who failed to return it.⁹ Thirty-four years later, Messrs. Lysons borrowed it from Lord Lonsdale, while writing their history of the County, but subsequently sent it back to the Earl's London home, where it remained until re-discovered in 1892. It is now in the County Record Office at Carlisle Castle.¹⁰

10. In 1921 the Earl of Leicester's librarian, Mr C. W. James, came across a manuscript copy at Holkham Hall. This measures 7 inches by $5\frac{1}{3}$ inches and contains 228 pages with 6 more for the index. It is written throughout in a neat 17th-century script, and there are some marginal notes in three different hands and inks. The MS. is Holkham 760 (not 759 as reported by Mr James) and I shall refer to it simply as 'Holkham'.¹¹

The account of Caldbeck, which would otherwise have concluded this edition, is followed by the words "N.B. Fouer Leaves in a different character stitched into the Originall MSS. referring to Millum". These leaves amplify an account already given of Millom and other places in south-west Cumberland, after which is written "N.B. Here ended the fouer Leavs that were stiched in".

In this respect Holkham closely resembles a copy which I bought some months ago from an antiquarian bookseller, and which I shall call "MS 11". Having compared the latter with each of the manuscripts already mentioned, or with their recorded descriptions (except for the first, which I have been unable to locate, and of which no description exists), I conclude that I have acquired another unreported edition.

The volume contains 229 pages measuring $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, with 5 more pages at the end for a somewhat rudimentary index of place names. The text, which is neat and for the most part perfectly legible, is written in two different hands. The second copyist takes over two-thirds of the way through an account relating to the hamlet of Langrigg, and indeed the first writer, after neatly completing page 178, leaves his successor to pick up the narrative at the head of the following page. There is a liberal scattering of marginal notes and pedigrees, but whereas throughout the first 178 pages these nearly all appear to be in the same hand as the adjacent text, this ceases to be so thereafter.

MS. 11 is vellum bound, with a frayed red label on its spine bearing the title "Hist: of Cumberland M.S.". It is complete except for the leaf following the title page, and for another which should have succeeded the introduction, both of which have been torn out. The latter was certainly detached before the copy was commenced, for part of the first word on page 1 is transposed to the leaf which now lies opposite, upon the book having been closed before the ink had dried.

The title page reads:

A
Description
of the County of
Cumberland,
as to it's
Civil State & Condition;
from the
Conquest,
'till this present
Time.

and is in the same rather crude hand as the index pages, which in turn are in a different hand from the text.

The leaf following the title page contains an introduction to the reader in yet another hand, reading "This imperfect account of the County of Cumberland was made by one Mr Denton of Cardew near Carlisle in the Latter end of Queen Eliz' Reigne. He was a Person that study'd the law and had Opportunity to search the Records in the Tower of London: so that most of his Observations relate to Gentlemen's Estates, how they have pass'd from one to another. It may be useful to any that designs a more accurate Description of the County."

It has not been easy to detect internal evidence from which this little volume may be dated. The catalogue of Bishops (pages 60 and 61) which in some editions is a valuable aid, is of no assistance, for it ends here as it does in Denton's original with the name of his contemporary, Henry Robinson. Similarly, Christopher Perkins (1596-1622) is the last of the Deans of Carlisle to be mentioned (page 184). With one exception, I can discover no evidence of the family pedigrees having been updated, but this single exception is important. It occurs in the account of Crofton (pages 149 to 152) which concludes with a pedigree of the Brisco family, ending "Jo: fil Willm an Infant Ao 1582"¹² and then, still in the text, adds "Since this account Willm fil John Jo: fil Willm Willm fil Johis". Thursby Parish registers show that John Brisco, the son of William, died in 1690, so MS 11 cannot have been written any earlier than this.¹³ Moreover, the last William died under age, four years after his father,¹⁴ from which it might be supposed that had the account of Crofton been written after 1694, the pedigree would have ended somewhat differently. In Holkham the same pedigree has been added in the margin by a later hand, a pointer perhaps to its being the earlier copy of the two, although the handwriting style is so similar that the two editions cannot be far apart in time.

Holkham and MS 11 are comparable in many other ways. For example, the sequence in which their texts have been arranged is the same, except that whereas in the former Ainstable ("Ainstapligh") follows Skelton, while Langrigg and Waverton Magna are entirely omitted, in the latter, Langrigg follows Skelton, while Ainstable and Waverton

Magna both appear at the end after Caldbeck (page 214) and then hard on the heels of Waverton Magna is written "N B Tower Leaves in a different Character Stichd into the Original Ms referring to Millum". The 13 pages of MS 11 which follow (217 to 229) expand the earlier material concerning Millom, Muncaster, Carleton and Drigg, and contain brief notes on Thwaites, Ravenglass, Whittingham, Whitbeck, Bootle and Corney. They conclude "Here end the Tower Leaves that were stitch'd in". These pages are in every respect identical to Holkham's "Fouer Leaves".

Both Gilpin and Todd knew of these pages, as an inspection of their copies shows, but unlike Holkham and MS. 11, neither writer mentions them specifically. Similarly, in volume 6 of the Machell collection (350 pages after the end of his copy of Denton and not, it would seem, ever part of it) there are nine pages which although different in sequence are otherwise practically the same as the Tower Leaves. Machell does not refer to these as the Tower Leaves, but at the head of the first page there is an introductory note, in a contemporary hand, which reads, "There are Som loose sheets writtin in a faire hand with fair margin, put in the Ancient copy (Penes fr Denton) which are not Part of the copy, but of a fair Transcript collected out of it & (as I think) prepared for the Press; being writt more compendiously, & in a Smarter Stile. Qy if the rest can be found". None of the other copies I have seen either acknowledges the existence or incorporates the content of the so-called Tower Leaves.

It is tempting to conclude from the similarities in sequence and appendix, as well as from many other features common to both (but not found in other copies) that MS 11 may be a copy of Holkham, or vice versa. However, since each also incorporates material not included in the other, I take the view that they are more probably contemporary copies from the same source. Some of the more important discrepancies upon which this conclusion rests are set out in the Appendix 1.

Before Mr C. W. James discovered Lord Leicester's copy at Holkham in 1921, it had been thought that the layout of Denton's original MS must have followed the general pattern discerned in Machell and the other editions which may now be termed Series 1. Certainly Gilpin (later copied by Milbourne) had not followed the original format, for he freely admitted to having re-arranged the manors and townships within their proper baronies in order to redress the confusion he found in the original, but if Gilpin and Milbourne comprise Series 2, the importance of MS 11 is that it establishes beyond doubt that Holkham, far from being unique, was in fact the first discovery in a third series. As to whether this third series resembles the original more closely than the first, remains an open question which, unless the original itself can be found, only the discovery of further copies may help to resolve.¹⁵ As an aid to future research, the differences in sequence between Series 1 and Series 3, as well as between the various editions within those series, are compared in Appendix 2. The appendix also serves to illustrate that in terms of the manors and townships included within its pages, MS. 11 is the most comprehensive of all the Series 1 and Series 3 copies to be discovered so far.

Each newly discovered copy of the Denton MS is worth recording, and I conclude, therefore, by describing yet another unreported manuscript in the Holkham style. This is an 18th-century folio volume owned by Mrs Myrtle Rowley of Glassonby, who bought it twenty years ago from a bookseller in Darlington. Not only is the sequence identical to MS. 11, but they share many other features not found elsewhere. For example, each refers to the concluding pages as the "Tower Leaves" whereas Holkham calls them the "Fouer

Leaves". Similarly, the introduction to the reader, which I have seen in no copy except MS. 11, is exactly reproduced. Bound in vellum, the volume measures $12\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 8 inches and contains 206 pages written throughout in the same uniform script. There is no index, but after leaving a number of clear pages at the end of the text, the writer adds a pedigree of the Orpheur family brought down to 1732. I am in no doubt that Mrs Rowley's edition is a copy of MS. 11. It is certainly the most elegant transcript of Denton I have seen.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Dr W. O. Hassall of the Department of Western MSS., Bodleian Library, and librarian of the late Lord Leicester, who went to a great deal of trouble to have the Holkham edition copied for me, to Dr Andrew Thornton for arranging for the Gilpin MS. to be placed at my disposal and to Mrs Myrtle Rowley, M.B.E., of Glassonby for permitting me to inspect her copy. I have also received invaluable help from the staff of Tullie House Library and the Record Office, Carlisle, the Society of Antiquaries, Queen's College, Oxford, from Mr C. R. Hudleston, F.S.A., Mr Michael Moon, the Rev. F. B. Swift, Mr. R. N. Matthews, and many others.

APPENDIX I

<i>Passage in the text</i>	<i>MS 11</i>	<i>Holkham</i>
After "the 3rd part of William Fitz Duncomes land", adds "Which was Skipton in Craven came to the Kings land".	7 omitted	7 included
After "lands enclosed in the mountains and woody country", adds "by the then inhabitants as other places upon like occasion do testify in diverse parts of the country".	11 omitted	12 included
The account of Newton Regny concludes with a pedigree of 12 names in the text.	141 6 names	142/3 12 names
After "Johan Morvill and her husband" adds "Sr Richard Gernon".	153 Richard	153 Hugh
The account of Aikton concludes "It is now in the Queens hands by the Attainder of Dacre Lord of Burghe".	155 omitted	155 included
After "grows there" adds "that kind of grain Cumberland men call Bigg and thereupon the Hamlett is so called Bigglands".	157 included	157 omitted
After "and in this country people call Neese" adds "and for that it makes a crooked point on the sea at Bowness".	162 included	163 omitted
After "Hubert died" adds 6 lines "and the king remitted to this Robert Robert dyed without issue male".	174 omitted	176 included
After "wife of Richard Lucy" adds 3 lines "by whom he had issue Daughters and Coheirs of Rich Lucy".	175 included	177 omitted
After "came unto the Mulcastres" adds 4 lines "In the time of K Hen 3 The Mulcastres Patrimony".	191 omitted	193 included
After "to be rightly called Robert de Dorpe" adds 8 lines "And that Torpe or Stutvile I know not".	193 included	195 omitted
After "Adam the 2d dyed wthout issue" adds 3 lines "therefore the inheritance Odard the fourth likewise".	205 omitted	206 included

APPENDIX 2

Key based upon the Sequence of MS 11	
1	Cumberland General Introduction to Linstock
2	Wetheral to Holme Cultram
3	Waverton Parva
4	Crofton to Orton
5	Wiggonby
6	Bampton to Skelton
7	Langrigg
8	Carlisle to Caldbeck
9	Ainstable
10	Waverton Magna
11	Tower Leaves

Text Sequence Series 1.

Machell 1 9 8 4 6 7 2 3 10 [5 11]^(a)

Society of Antiquaries 1 9 8 4 6 7 2 [3 5 10 11]^(b)

Jacksoniana A 177 1 9 8 4 6 7 2 [3 5 10 11]

Hutton John 1 9 8 4 6 7 2 [3 5 10 11]

Text Sequence Series 3.

Holkham 1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 11 [7 10]

MS 11 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Rowley 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

[] denotes section omitted.

(a) Pages similar to the Tower Leaves are bound up later in Machell. Volume 6.

(b) But Sections 3 and 10 have been added after the Index in a different hand.

Notes and References

- ¹ *Hutchinson*, 1, 43 reports "the original MS, we are informed, is in the possession of the Earl of Lonsdale". Certainly the latter owned Thomas Denton's MS. 1687-8, for this was discovered with the Hutton John edition of John Denton's MS. at the Earl's London home in 1892. The original of John Denton's MS., however, has never been found.
- ² *Ferguson*, CW Tract 2, iii.
- ³ CW2, xi, 19.
- ⁴ *Ferguson*, *op. cit.*, 75, 81.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁶ The Machell edition contains the following note in Bishop Nicolson's hand "Before the 2d part of Mr Denton's MS. in a copy lent to me (W. Carliol) by Mr Bird of Brougham June 3, 1708 there are these pedigrees". He then described pedigrees relating to the manors of Cardew and Dalston Magna. I have not been able to find any other reference to Mr. Bird's copy which, like the original, seems to be lost.
- ⁷ In his additions to Milbourne, Ferguson mentions having inspected another MS. copy of Denton owned by Mrs Dykes of Red House, Keswick (containing a list of the Sheriffs of Cumberland). I have not seen this edition referred to elsewhere.
- ⁸ C.R.O. D/Lons/L, Denton MSS.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ The Hutton John edition is more fully described in CW1, xiii, 218 et seq.
- ¹¹ The Holkham edition is more fully described in CW2, xxiii, 103 et seq.
- ¹² This John was Bishop Nicolson's grandfather. *Hutchinson*, 2, 460.
- ¹³ C.R.O., Thursby Parish Registers.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* and *Whellan*, 253.
- ¹⁵ Dr Todd's copy also differs from the other known editions, but I fancy it does not follow the original, for not only does the text appear to have been re-arranged, but its prose style in places is more appropriate to the end of the 17th century than to the beginning. Numerous blank spaces separate the text, and it is possible that Dr Todd made this copy with the unfulfilled intention of using it as the basis for a history of the county to complement his earlier account of the city of Carlisle.

