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A Survey of the Poetry Collection in Manuscript of the Noble Family of Huntingdon

Mary Ann O'Donnell

With much national history gathered among the papers of the great families of England, but uncalendared and therefore inaccessible, in 1869 the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts assumed, under royal warrant, the duty to "make enquiry as to the places where manuscripts and private papers of historical interest were located and to report on their contents."[1] Among the papers that span centuries are those of the Hastings family, the family of the earls of Huntingdon, and the various families whose fates intertwined with theirs, usually through marriage, especially the Rawdons and the family of Bishop Bramhall. The Hastings papers have been described in the four-volume Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) study prepared by Francis Bickley,[2] and this collection represents a massive archive of materials spanning from the twelfth to the nineteenth century, with a strong focus on materials from the seventeenth century.

In 1927, the Huntington Library purchased the Huntingdon collection of approximately 50,000 items from Maggs Brothers, the major London book dealer that had acquired the collection from Edith Maud Abney-Hastings, twelfth countess of Loudon.[3] The Huntington Library also prepared a variety of handlists and guides as

1 The Historical Manuscripts Commission is now part of the National Archives. See National Archives, Information Management, "Historical Manuscripts Commission Warrant," <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk> (accessed June 3, 2019).

2 Great Britain. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq. of the Manor House, Ashby de la Zouch,* ed. Francis Bickley, 4 vols. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1928–1947). Cited hereafter as HMC Hastings. The first three volumes were prepared in part by John Harley, who died in World War I before he could complete the work, and finished by Bickley, whose own work was interrupted by World War II. Thus, the fourth volume of HMC Hastings was not published until 1947.

3 For a handsomely printed and illustrated catalog of many items that the Huntington Library purchased, see *The Huntingdon Papers (The Archives of the Noble Family of Hastings*), 6 parts (London: Maggs Bros., 1926). Cited hereafter as *The Huntingdon Papers.*

well.[4] However, it appears that not all the materials listed in the four-volume HMC Hastings listings were acquired by the Huntington Library. For example, in the description of the Huntingdon papers in HMC Hastings, there is a brief entry with the heading "Poetry":

> A MS. Volume, some of the poems in which are printed in Nichols' *History and Antiquities of Leicestershire* as by the Rev. Thomas Pestell [1613–1701], vicar of Packington. A large number of single poems, chiefly of the 17th and 18th centuries, in English, Latin, French and Italian, mostly anonymous. Complimentary and memorial verses. Copies of poems by John Wilmot, earl of Rochester, Samuel Garth and others.[5]

This is followed by a notice that Pestell's poems, edited by Hannah Buchan, had recently been published.[6]

However, these manuscripts, along with some others listed in the HMC Hastings, are not found in the Huntington collection. The other manuscripts not in the Huntington Library include the poem by Robert Codrington on the death of Alice, countess dowager of Derby, and the copy of Bathsua Makin's poem in her own hand addressed "To the right honorable the Countesse Dowager of Huntington," Lucy Hastings.[7] Also among the materials not accounted for are printed tracts by Lady Eleanor Davies Douglas.[8] The poetry and Lady Eleanor's tracts, as noted, were not calendared until the fourth volume of the HMC Hastings, but this fourth volume was not published until

4 See especially Huntington Library, The Staff of the Department of Manuscripts, "Summary Report on the Hastings Manuscripts," *The Huntington Library Bulletin* no. 5 (April 1934): 1–65. See also the *Guide to British Historical Manuscripts at the Huntington Library* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), 78–144. For a reproduction of the finding aid for the Hastings papers, the Huntington handlists for most categories are available as downloadable PDFs. See the Online Archives of California (OAC), Hastings Family Papers. After accessing <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8d2200p/entire_text/>, view or download the *Hastings Finding Aid* under Additional Collection Guides at the bottom of the page (accessed June 3, 2019).

5 HMC Hastings 4:358.

6 Ibid. This refers to the edition of Pestell's poems published by Blackwell in 1940.

7 Codrington's poem on the death of the countess dowager of Derby is noted in HMC Hastings 4:341–342. See entry 2.1. For information of Makin's poem to Lucy, countess dowager of Huntingdon, see entry 4.7.

8 The listing of Lady Eleanor's tracts held among the Hastings papers prior to the purchase by the Huntington is found in HMC Hastings 4:343–346. Some of these printed tracts may now be held by Harvard, but these have not been examined for this study, which is confined to manuscripts.

twenty years after the cache was acquired by the Huntington Library. Only over time was the absence of these items noticed.

While no explanation is readily available, a few of these absent manuscripts, manuscripts clearly in the collection of the Hastings family and calendared by HMC Hastings, were separated prior to the final sale of the overwhelmingly larger collection to the Huntington Library by Maggs Brothers.[9] These separated manuscripts were sold at different times to two other libraries, Harvard University and the William Andrews Clark Library of UCLA. It must be stressed, however, that these separated materials were never specified among any of the documents that Maggs published at the time of the sale of the larger collection to the Huntington.

This article attempts, then, to reconstruct as fully as currently possible the literature collection that was held in the Rawdon-Hastings collection at the time of its description in the fourth volume of HMC Hastings and prior to the transfer of the thousands of documents of the overall collection to the Huntington Library.[10]

This survey comprises four parts. Part One briefly describes the literary and miscellaneous materials contained in the "literature" box (HA Lit. 1) at the Huntington Library and reported in *Guide to British Historical Manuscripts*,[11] along with several other pertinent poems that the Huntington accessioned separately. This serves to connect these HA Lit. 1 papers to those that were separated from the original collection. Part Two examines one identifiable fugitive document, the Codrington elegy, and two others that may have been part of the Hastings collection and are now housed at the William Andrews Clark Library. Part Three looks at the Pestell manuscript (MS Eng 228) at Harvard. Finally, Part Four describes the bulk of the materials now housed at Harvard University as MS Eng 623; this comprises the largest part of the study.

In these four categories, a sub-number has been assigned to each individual piece for cross-referencing. For convenience, where poem titles are given, they are bolded in order to distinguish them from the poems' first lines, which are placed in quotation marks. Titles or descriptions not in the original are placed in square brackets. The use of "sic" has been avoided in most cases, and the spellings are as they appear in the documents. Much more work must be done to identify, where possible, the large number of hands represented in this collection. Some identifications have been made;

9 It is unlikely that any further information about these fugitive manuscripts exists—or if such information does exist, it is most likely not locatable since Maggs Bros. "never kept stock records." Robert Harding of Maggs. Bros., email to author, September 9, 2015.

10 The National Archives has a lengthy list of other papers belonging to the Hastings-Abney family, the Earls of Loudon, and the Barons Donington. See <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F24488> (accessed June 3, 2019). The literary papers examined in this study are not noted in the National Archives list.

11 *Guide to British Historical Manuscripts*, 134–135.

for example, the hand of Bathsua Makin has long been recognized (see 1.3, 1.38, 4.2, and 4.7) as has that of Lucy Hastings (see 1.37) and of Robert Codrington (see 2.1). In this study, the hand of Lucy Hastings can also be identified in 4.9.c, and the hand of her daughter Christiana is surmised in part of the poem on the death of John Smith (see 4.9). Also of note are the hands of Francis Hastings, tenth earl of Huntingdon (see 1.8, 1.12, 4.45, and 4.46.b) and of his nephew Francis Rawdon-Hastings (see 1.16). The daughter of Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Lady Flora, is represented by a large cache of papers (see 1.17), not all in her hand, and it is possible that the hand of her mother, Lady Flora Campbell, is seen in 1.18.

This survey also requires some information about the Hastings family, the Rawdon family, and Bishop Bramhall and his connections (among others), because the various papers entered the collection at different times as a result of intermarriage (see Hastings Family Tree).[12] The papers begin with several documents related to Lucy Davies Hastings, countess of Huntingdon (1613–1679), and her mother-in-law Elizabeth Stanley Hastings (1587–1633/4). In brief, the papers of the Huntingdon/Hastings line, as we can reconstruct them herein, passed from Lucy to the seventh earl, her son Theophilus (1650–1701), and through his son George (1677–1705) to George's half-brother Theophilus, the ninth earl (1696–1746). This direct line ended with Francis, the tenth earl, who died in 1789 without legitimate issue. The Hastings/Huntingdon family papers joined the Rawdon papers when John Rawdon, first earl of Moira (1719–1793), an Irish peerage, married Elizabeth Hastings (1731–1808), who was Baroness Hastings in her own right.[13] Their son Francis Rawdon (1754–1826) added the surname Hastings by license when he inherited much of the estate of his uncle Francis, tenth earl; he then succeeded his father as second earl of Moira in 1793. The Bramhall papers had previously entered the Rawdon family papers in early 1683 when Bishop Bramhall's granddaughter Helen Graham (1663–1709) married Arthur, second baronet of Rawdon (1662–1695). Information about these families and their complicated interrelationships will be given as needed, with cross-references to other related sections.[14]

A note about access to the manuscripts at Harvard, the manuscripts examined in Part Four, is in order here. Over the past several years, Harvard University Library has digitized many of its manuscripts and provided free and easy access to them online. This opens many new directions for research. Unfortunately, a few libraries have assigned the digital rights to their manuscripts to for-profit companies. However, some libraries are following Harvard's example by offering open access to digital versions of their manuscripts online. It can only be hoped that more research libraries will do the same.

12 Unless transcribed, spelling of names has been standardized throughout the survey.

13 Elizabeth was the sister and co-heir of Francis, tenth earl.

14 The four volumes of the HMC Hastings refer to some of this information, with the fourth volume covering some of the persons involved in this survey.

Contributors

Mary Ann O'Donnell is an adjunct professor in the Bedford Hills College Program of Marymount Manhattan College. She is professor emerita, English department, Manhattan College, and was also dean of the school of liberal arts there for seventeen years. She currently serves as a contributing editor for *Scriblerian* and on the editorial board of the new Cambridge University edition of the works of Aphra Behn. She has published extensively on Behn, including *Aphra Behn: An Annotated Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Sources* and "Bodleian MS. Firth c. 16: Aphra Behn's Verse Miscellany" in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700* 2(1990). She also co-edited *Approaches to Teaching "Oroonoko"*; *Aphra Behn (1640–1689): Le Modéle Européen*; and *Aphra Behn (1640–689)*: *Identity, Alterity, Ambiguity*.