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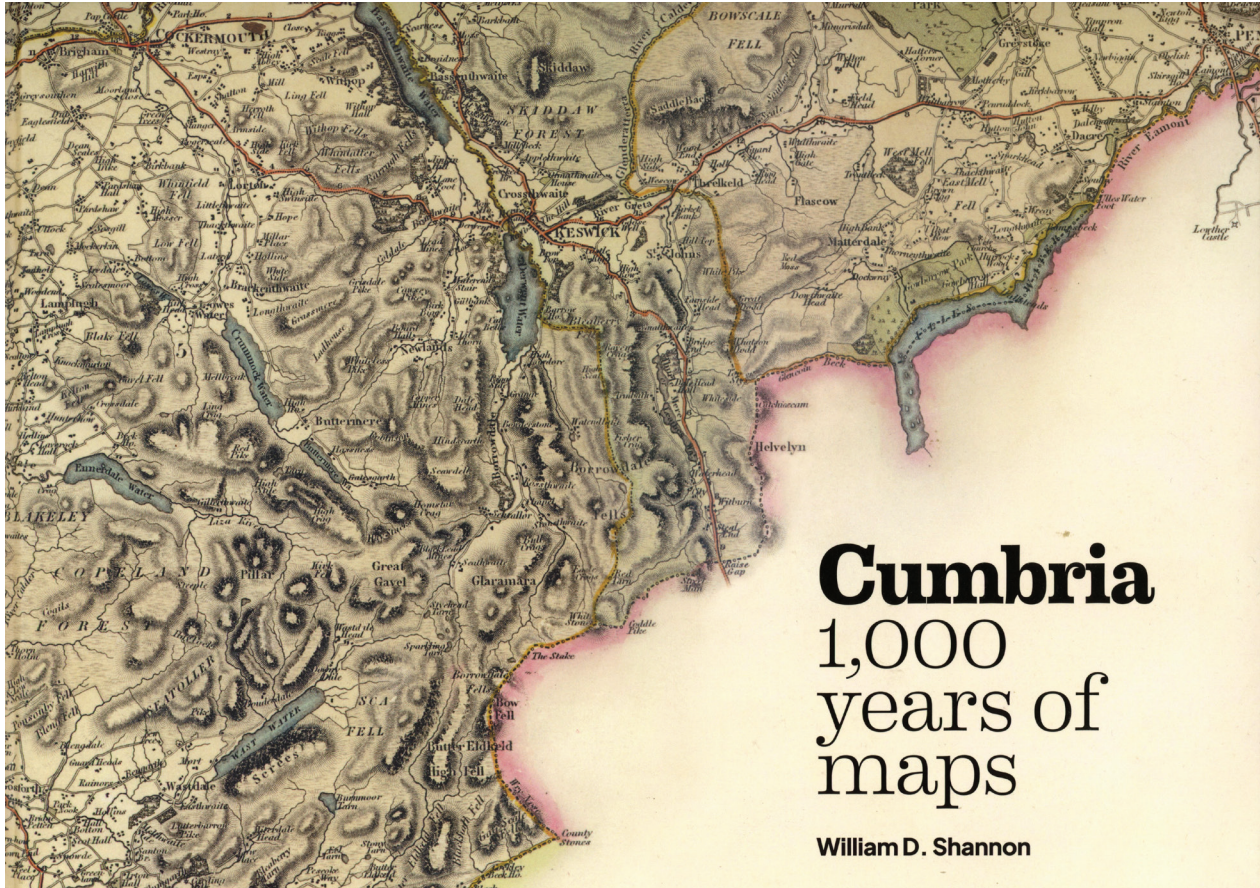
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Book Review

Cumbria; 1,000 years of maps

William D. Shannon

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This book won the 2025 Lakeland Book of the Year. It is a massive tome, measuring some 12 by 10 inches (a hardback in landscape format) weighing in at over 4 lbs and costing almost £30. It has 256 pages and details 68 different maps. There is a great variety of maps, ranging in scale from estate plans to county maps. Typically each map is described over four pages, including the whole map and enlarged extract(s). The reproductions are excellent, though a few maps are spread over both pages, and some detail disappears in the tight binding. The text is excellent too, with a lot of background contextual detail included (such as latitude, longitude, old measures, scales, map publishing, depicting relief, and the use of colour). Overall this is an extensive and fascinating collection of maps and there is much good and unusual material to be found here.

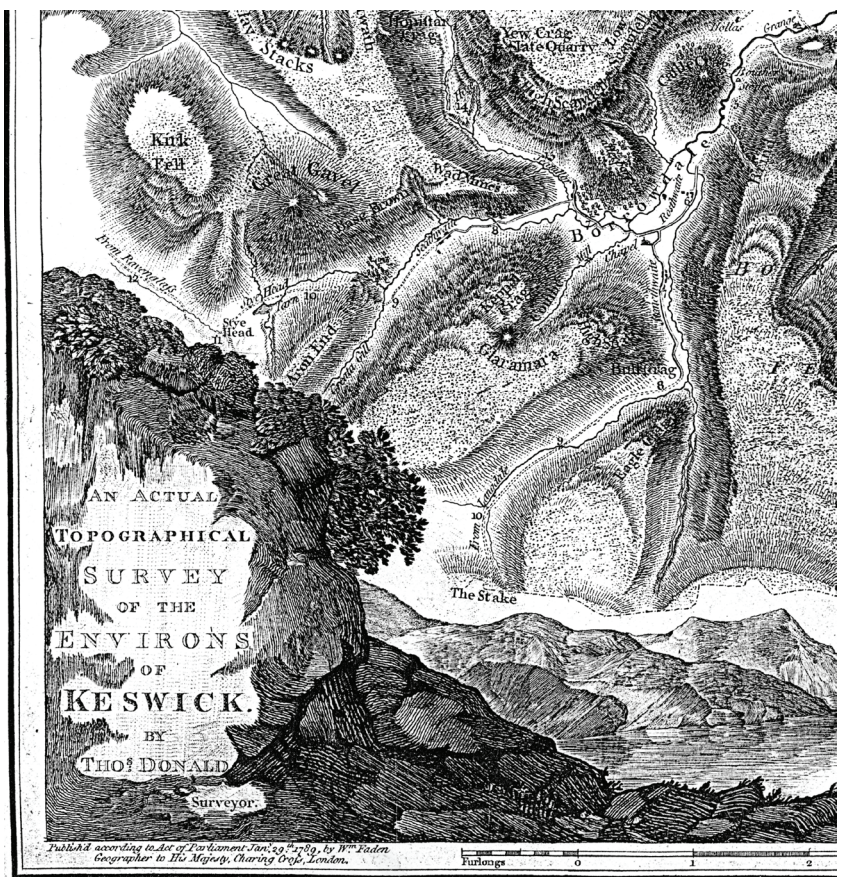
I do have some caveats about the maps included (or not), and some detail is incorrect or lacking. The very first map which is the so-called 'Anglo-Saxon' map of the world dated by Shannon as c.1050. He claims that one word on the map (in Scotland) was the first map to name Cumbria, but the word on the map is 'Camri' which probably best relates to 'Cymru', a term naming the ancient British people, including those in northern England and southern Scotland (as well as those in Wales of course). So the book's '1,000 years' subtitle does not hold water; in fact the word 'Cumberia' does not appear until Shannon's 7th map (by Lawrence Nowell) dated 1564.

Shannon's second map does show much detail of what is now Cumbria; this is the Gough Map dated by Shannon as c.1410. But Shannon has clearly not seen Nick Millea's book

The Gough Map, the earliest road map of Great Britain? first published by the Bodleian Library in 2007. Millea suggested that this map was probably first drawn as early as 1280, but that we now have a later copy which can be dated to between 1355 and 1366, certainly not to c.1410. So if we take this to be the first map to show any detail of Cumbria Shannon's subtitle might more correctly be about '665 years of maps'.

It would have been good to have included one of Robert Morden's county maps of 1695, which were based on those by Saxton surveyed 120 years earlier. But Morden added roads to those maps, partly based on the roads depicted in Ogilby's Britannia (Shannon's Map 20).

In the second half of the 18th century came the newly surveyed county maps, partly encouraged by grants offered by the Society of Arts. These maps are important in that they show the first generation of turnpikes, as well as detail of towns, industry and the names of subscribers. [Shannon deals with Jefferys' Westmorland (1770), Yates' Lancashire (1786) and Greenwood's Cumberland (1823)]. His Map 36 is Donald's map of Cumberland (1774), about which he writes 'this is no tourist map', but he does not go on to say that Donald produced a reduced and revised version of the map titled Environs of Keswick in 1789, clearly aimed at the tourist trade. It covered the area from Dunmail Raise to Cockermouth and from Threlkeld to Buttermere; Donald had added more names of fells with much stronger hill shading and removed some of the subscribers' names. The cartouche and the area around Borrowdale are shown in the extract below. Shannon also doesn't add that, like Saxton



before him, Donald went on to survey maps of local estates (several of which are in Carlisle Record Office).

Perhaps Shannon's greatest omission is that of the larger scale Ordnance Survey maps. The 6-inch maps are included (Map 54). However, the 1:2500 (25-inch) are mentioned only as part of the Battle of the Scales on page 225, but neither they nor the even larger scale town plans are included. Thank goodness for Alan Godfrey's reprints of many of these maps. A final minor point is that Richard Oliver's Ordnance Survey Maps is referenced as published in 1993 – it was seriously updated in 2013.

Paul Hindle