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The landed endowment of the Anglo-Saxon minster at Hanbury (Worcs.)

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ABSTRACT

Many of the minsters founded and generously endowed in the first century and a half of Anglo-Saxon christianity were evidently failing as efficient managers of their estates by the late eighth century, if we judge by the actions of the bishops in whose dioceses they sat. In the diocese of Worcester bishops can be seen transferring the administration of the lands of such minsters to the cathedral community, and then seeking ratification from the Mercian kings whose direct ancestors or royal predecessors had often been involved in the original acts of foundation. When ninth-century kings were acutely short of land, they alleviated the problem by engineering forced loans of the lands concerned from the see of Worcester. These processes are well exemplified in the history of the minster at Hanbury (Worcs.) and its landed endowment, for which particularly good contemporary evidence survives.

On even the most conservative estimate there were at least thirty minsters in existence in the diocese of Worcester by 800.[1] This number is significantly increased if we accept that other minsters existed then which do not figure in seventh- and eighth-century charters, but for which later sources contain substantive circumstantial evidence indicative of their similarly early foundation; and there may have been yet others for which little or no such evidence survives.[2] A few of these early minsters were refounded in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries in accordance with the rule of St Benedict, becoming in most cases the abbeys which figure prominently in Domesday Book among the tenants-in-chief of William I.[3] A few others, while not undergoing refoundation and therefore having secular, not

[1] P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800* (Cambridge, 1990), map on pp. xiv–xv. There are very few foundation charters for minsters in the diocese of Worcester, but there are many which grant additional lands to already well established minsters.

[2] Such as Hawkesbury (Gloucs.): M. Hare, 'Wulfstan and the Church of Hawkesbury', *St Wulfstan and his World*, ed. J. S. Barrow and N. P. Brooks (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 151–66; and Coventry (Warwicks.): S. Bassett, *Anglo-Saxon Coventry and its Churches* (Dugdale Soc. Occasional Papers, no. 41, 2001). Also see J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), n. 162 on p. 115.

[3] C. Cubitt, 'The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England', *EME* 6 (1997), 77–94; J. Barrow, 'Wulfstan and Worcester: Bishop and Clergy in the Early Eleventh Century',

monastic, communities, were also rich and powerful establishments in the late eleventh century.[4] By contrast, a majority of the diocese's minsters of early foundation, and perhaps a large majority, were in an impoverished state, materially and it seems also spiritually, by the tenth century; and as new, lesser churches were set up around them, especially from *c.* 950 onwards, they sank in status, in assets, and in the extents of their parishes until by *c.* 1200 most of them had become not much more than first among equals in the parochial organization of their locality.[5]

The question to be addressed here is of what happened to the lands of these less successful minsters in the late Anglo-Saxon period. We can be confident that they survived as churches in use, that they still had a community of clerics of whom some were ordained as priests, and that they exercised a significant pastoral role among the local population, whether it was one which they had had since their foundation or one which was newly assigned to them in the tenth century. The fate of their lands is in most cases much harder to see; but we must try to do so, because by examining the territorial losses suffered by early minsters (albeit only temporarily in a few cases), we shall learn more about the mechanisms of ecclesiastical land management in and after the ninth century, and about the role of bishops in particular in protecting, exploiting and, when necessary, recovering the territorial assets of the minsters in their dioceses.

Among all these early minsters was one at Hanbury in north-eastern Worcestershire, about eight miles north-east of Worcester. It is of especial interest because – thanks to its extensive investigation by Christopher Dyer and by others encouraged by him – we know much more about the landscape within which it and its nearest lands were situated than is usually the case.[6] We also have a charter concerning it, issued in 836 by the Mercian king Wiglaf, which, rarely, has survived in a contemporary manuscript, and which portrays

Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 141–59, at pp. 147–54; Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 350–4.

[4] E.g. Cirencester: *Domesday Book: 15, Gloucestershire*, ed. J. S. Moore (Chichester, 1982); B. Evans, 'The Collegiate Church at Cirencester: a Critical Examination of the Historical Evidence', *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Cirencester*, ed. A. McWhirr (BAR, British ser. 30, 1976), pp. 46–60 (which does not, however, view this church as a minster of probably early foundation); Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, n. 99 on p. 448.

[5] C. N. L. Brooke, 'Rural Ecclesiastical Institutions in England: the Search for their Origins', *SettSpol*, 28, pt 2 (Spoleto, 1982), 685–711; E. Cambridge and D. Rollason, 'The Pastoral Organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church: a Review of the "Minster Hypothesis"', *EME* 4 (1995), 87–104; J. Blair, 'Ecclesiastical Organization and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England', *EME* 4 (1995), 193–212; D. Rollason, 'Monasteries and Society in Early Medieval Northumbria', *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain*, ed. B. Thompson (Stamford, 1999), pp. 59–74; Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*.

[6] C. Dyer, *Hanbury: Settlement and Society in a Woodland Landscape* (Leicester, 1991).

the church at a time when the processes can be seen to have begun which led to its eventual loss of most, perhaps all, of its lands.[7]

+ Regnum Dei querendum est super universa lucra terrena Paulo testante apostolo quae enim videntur temporalia sunt. Sed que non videntur aeterna sunt quid prodest homini totum mundum lucrare si anima ejus detrimentum patietur.

Quapropter ego Uuiglaf rex Merciorum cum meis episcopis et ducibus et magistratibus illut monasterium in Heanbyrg in circuitu cum silva ad eam pertinentem et cum campis et pratis 7 cum omnibus utenssilibus et cum putheis salis et fornacibus plumbis 7 villis et omnia illuc pertinentia in cælestem culmen generaliter per totum gentem Merciorum et pro absolutione criminum nostrorum liberaliter liberamus a modicis et a magnis causis a notis et ignotis praeter vallis et pontes constructionem.

Factum est haec donatio in Craeft anno dominicae incarnationis . dcccº . xxxº . viº, indictione vero . xiiiiº regni autem nostri a Deo concessi . viiº . pro redemptione animae meae placabile atque dilectabile mente praedicta loca liberabo cum universis casallis que ipsis locis universis sunt subditi ho'c' modo per aevum liberabo a pastu regis 7 principum 7 ab omni constructione regalis ville et a difficultate illa quam nos saxonice faestingmenn . dicimus haec omnia mente concedo spontaneo. Scitote ergo vos qui hanc labens regnum post me obtineatis quare hoc munus 7 hanc libertatem scripsi 7 scribere precipi quia in Deum meum desidero et in ejus ineffabilem misericordiam confido ut dominus noster Jhesus Christus meas iniquitates quas per ignorantiam feci Deus delere faciat. Credo per hoc bonum a cunctis me emundare dignetur quia scriptum est peccatum ibi emenda ubi nascitur modo posteros meos per gloriosum 7 per mirabile nomen domini nostri Jhesu Christi humiliter supplico ut elemosinam quam in altitudinem caeli culminis in manus domini datam habeo communiter pro me 7 pro totum gentem Merciorum tam benigniter stare demittetis 7 multiplicare dignemini.

+ Ego **Uuiglaf** rex Merciorum . + **Cyneðryþ** regina . + **Ceolnoð** archiepiscopus . + **Cyneferð** episcopus . + **Raeþhun** episcopus . + **Eaduulf** episcopus . + **Heaberht** 'episcopus' . + **Eaduulf** episcopus . + **Alhstan** episcopus . + **Beormod** episcopus . + **Husa** episcopus . + **Cunda** episcopus . + **Ceolberht** episcopus . + **Cynred** episcopus . + **Eanmund** abbas . + **Uueohtred** abbas . + **Beornhelm** abbas . + Ego **Sigred** dux hanc donationem signo crucis Christi confirmavi[8] . + **Mucoel** dux . + **Tiduulf** dux . + **Aeþelhard** dux . + **Cyneberht** dux . + **Aeþeluulf** dux . + **Alhhelm** dux . + **Humberht** dux . + **Aelfstan** dux . + **Mucoel** dux . + **Wicga** . + **Aldred** . + **Aldberht** . + **Aelfred**

[7] P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography*, R. Hist. Soc. Guides and Handbooks 8 (London, 1968), no. [hereafter S] 190. The transcript set out here closely follows, but is not identical to, W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, 3 vols. (London, 1885–93), no. [hereafter B] 416.

[8] This attestation, which is in a different hand, is evidently a contemporary addition.

. + **Hwithyse** . + **Werenberht** . + **Wulfred** . + **Wiglaf** . + **Eanuulf** . + **Alhmund** . + **Berhtuulf** . + **Ecghard** .

+ Ðes friodom waes bigeten aet **Wiglafe** cyninge mid ðaem tuentigum hida aet Iddes hale end ðaes londes friodom aet Haeccaham mid ðy ten hida londe aet Felda bi Weoduman , end **Mucele Esninge** ðaet ten hida lond aet Croglea , hæbbæn heora dæg 7 æfter heora dæge agefe mon ðæt land into dære halgan stowe Weogurnacestre.

Endorsements in contemporary hands:
Px ðis is Heanbirige friodom se waes bigeten mid ðy londe aet Iddeshale 7 aet Heanbyrig ten hida ðaes londes 7 aet Felda ten hida on Beansetum
7 biscop gesalde **Sigrede** aldormenn sex hund scillinga on golde
7 **Mucele** aldormenn ten hida lond æt Crog lea
in another hand: **Wiglaf** cinig

+ The kingdom of God ought to be sought above the entire riches of the world, the Apostle testifying, 'For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' 'What does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?'

Wherefore I, Wiglaf, king of the Mercians, with my bishops and ealdormen and magistrates, liberally free to the celestial height for the whole race of the Mercians in common and for the absolution of our sins, the minster at Hanbury, complete with the woodland belonging to it and with fields and meadows, and with all appurtenances, and with salt-pits and lead-furnaces, and vills and all things belonging thereto, from small and from great causes, specified and unspecified, except the construction of ramparts and bridges.

This donation was made at Croft, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 836, the fourteenth indiction, and in the seventh year of our reign granted by God. For the redemption of my soul, with a willing and agreeable mind, I will free the aforesaid places, with all settlements which are subject to all those places, in this way for ever; I will free them from entertainment of king and ealdormen, and from all building of the royal residence, and from that burden which we call in Saxon *faestingmen*. All these things I concede with a willing mind. Know, therefore, you who may obtain this fleeting kingdom after me, why I have written and ordered to be written this gift and this privilege; because I desire of my God and trust in his ineffable mercy that our Lord Jesus Christ may cause to be deleted my sins which I committed through ignorance. I believe that he may deign to cleanse me from all, through this good deed, because it is written: 'Amend sin where it was committed.' Now I humbly beseech my successors by the glorious and wonderful name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you will graciously allow the charitable gift to stand which I have given into the height of the summit of the heavens into the hand of the Lord for myself and for the whole race of the Mercians in common, and condescend to add to it.

+ I, Wiglaf, king of the Mercians. + Cynethryth, queen. + Ceolnoth, archbishop. + Cyneferth, bishop. + Hrethhun, bishop. + Eadwulf, bishop. + Heahberht, bishop. + Eadwulf, bishop. + Ealhstan, bishop. + Beornmod, bishop. + Husa, bishop. + Cunda, bishop. + Ceolberht, bishop. + Cynered, bishop. + Eanmund, abbot. + Wihtred, abbot. + Beornhelm, abbot. + I, Sigered, ealdorman, have confirmed this donation with the sign of Christ's cross. + Mucel, ealdorman. + Tidwulf, ealdorman. + Æthelheard, ealdorman. + Cyneberht, ealdorman. + Æthelwulf, ealdorman. + Ealhhelm, ealdorman. + Hunberht, ealdorman. + Ælfstan, ealdorman. + Mucel, ealdorman. + Wicga. + Ealdred. + Ealdberht. + Alfred. + Hwithyse. + Wearnberht. + Wulfred. + Wiglaf. + Eanwulf. + Ealhmund. + Brihtwulf. + Ecgheard.

+ This privilege was obtained from King Wiglaf with the 20 hides at *Iddes hale*, and the privilege of the land at *Hæccaham* with the 10 hides of land at *Felda* by the *Weoduma*, and to Mucel, son of Esne, the 10 hides of land at Crowle. They are to have them for their lifetime, and after their lifetime the land is to be given back into the holy foundation at Worcester.

This is the privilege of Hanbury which was obtained with the land at *Iddeshale* and 10 hides of land at Hanbury, and 10 hides at *Felda* in *Beansetum*.
And the bishop gave to ealdorman Sigered 600 shillings in gold.
And to ealdorman Mucel 10 hides of land at Crowle.
King Wiglaf.[9]

This charter is a most informative document, not just about the Hanbury minster and its estate, but arguably also about what was occurring by the ninth century at many other churches of early foundation in the west midlands and elsewhere. In particular, it allows us a detailed insight into what was likely to happen to a minster's lands when its community's administrative expertise lapsed, and when it looked as if it was therefore no longer capable of managing its own landed endowment.

WIGLAF'S CHARTER IN RESPECT OF THE LANDS OF THE HANBURY MINSTER

Wiglaf's grant is of a privilege (that is, an immunity), which frees the Hanbury minster and its lands 'from small and from great causes, specified and unspecified, except the building of ramparts and bridges'.[10] Most of those who held booked land in the Mercian kingdom were subject to a wide range of renders, levied in amounts determined by the quantity of land being held, such as (in this case) housing and feeding the king and his ealdormen whenever necessary,

[9] This translation is based on D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents: Vol. I, c.500–1042*, 2nd ed. (London, 1979), pp. 518–19 (no. 85), but with my modifications.

[10] 'a modicis et a magnis causis notis et ignotis praeter vallis et pontes constructionem': B 416 (at p. 581).

sending teams of peasants to do building-work at the nearest royal manor as required, and finding board and lodging on demand for the king's officials known as *fæstingmen*.[11] Who, however, was the recipient of this immunity? If we were to take the document at face value, the answer would be the Hanbury minster itself, and this is certainly how most historians have understood the statement in the second paragraph, 'I, Wiglaf, . . . liberally free the minster at Hanbury, together with the woodland belonging to it and with the fields and meadows, and with all appurtenances, and with salt-pits and lead furnaces, and the vills and everything belonging thereto, from small and from great causes . . .'[12] Peter Sawyer read it in this way, as does Susan Kelly.[13] Patrick Wormald too thought that the grant's recipients were the members of Hanbury's minster community.[14] Dorothy Whitelock, however, was more guarded, or perhaps only more precise, describing it as, 'Grant by Wiglaf of a privilege for the lands of the monastery of Hanbury'; and in her editorial comments she managed to avoid referring to a specific recipient.[15]

One can easily see why historians have read the text as providing evidence that the clerics at Hanbury's minster were still running their own affairs in the early ninth century; but it is arguable that they were wrong and that a similar error may have been made about the meaning of a number of other late-eighth- and ninth-century Mercian royal grants involving the lands of early minsters. If so, the implications are considerable for the later Anglo-Saxon history of many of the west midlands churches which had been set up by *c.* 750 at the latest. In this regard, two things about this text are odd. One is the second of the four Old English endorsements,[16] one of three relating to what had to be paid as

[11] *fæstingmen* appear to have been officials with the right to claim board and lodging while on royal business: Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, n. 1 on p. 515. On the etymology of the word, see J. Barrow, 'Friends and Friendship in Anglo-Saxon Charters', *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. J. Haseldine (Stroud, 1999), pp. 106–23, at p. 110; P. R. Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England* (Ithaca, NY, London, 2003), p. 26, n. 83. I owe these references to Julia Barrow.

[12] 'ego Uuiglaf . . . illut monasterium in Heanbyrg in circuitu cum silva ad eam pertinentem et cum campis et pratis 7 cum omnibus utenssilibus et cum putheis salis et fornacibus plumbis 7 villis et omnia illuc pertinentia . . . liberaliter liberamus a modicis et a magnis causis . . .'

[13] 'Wiglaf, king of Mercia, to the minster at Hanbury, Worcs.; grant of privileges': Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, p. 119; http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=charter&id=190.

[14] 'In 836 Wiglaf gave the minster at Hanbury immunity from feeding the king, his officers and his messengers . . .': J. Campbell, E. John and P. Wormald, *The Anglo-Saxons* (Oxford, 1982), p. 138.

[15] '[The charter] gives a full list of the privileges of an estate and shows that the local ealdormen had to be compensated when a comprehensive privilege was granted': Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, p. 518.

[16] These were written, in hands which are contemporary with the main body of the text, on the outside of the charter, once it had been folded up, so as to give additional information about

the price of gaining the immunity. The first and third endorsements show that a total of fifty hides of land (see below) was being handed over to Wiglaf and to one of his ealdormen;[17] and the second one says, 'And the bishop gave to ealdorman Sigered 600 shillings in gold', which was a very large sum.[18] Why, however, should the bishop of Worcester have had to give so much to another of the king's ealdormen? Since the record of this payment comes between the other two endorsements concerning land, the money was clearly part of the cost of the immunity. The bishop, then, was evidently one of the main parties to the transaction. This is strongly reinforced by the third endorsement, which has him, not the Hanbury minster, as the current possessor of the land at Crowle.[19] This would make no sense if the minster's community was the intended beneficiary of Wiglaf's charter.

The other odd feature of the charter's text is the last sentence of the Old English statement which follows the witness list: 'They are to have them [*sc.* the named manors] for their lifetime, and after their lifetime the land is to be given back [*or* 'given as due'] to the holy foundation at Worcester.'[20] One of two equally legitimate readings of *agefe mon* is 'given back' in the sense of 'returned', 'restored', which is equivalent in meaning to the Latin verbs *reddere*, *restituere*; the other one is 'given as due', equivalent to Latin *tradere*, *exsolvere*.[21] In either case *agefe mon* suggests that the land concerned belonged to the Hanbury minster, but that at the time of the grant it was under the control, not of the minster itself, but of the bishop of Worcester and the cathedral community. This explains the bishop's very costly involvement in the transaction, and means that the recipients – and eventual beneficiaries – of Wiglaf's charter were the bishop and the Worcester community. This also plainly implies that the clerics of the Hanbury minster were no longer thought capable of successfully managing their own lands.

One objection to this interpretation of the charter's meaning might reasonably be that the sentence which begins 'They are to have them for their lifetime'

the transaction and to act, no doubt, as *aides mémoires* for the future recovery of the lands concerned.

[17] 'Þx ðis is Heanbirige friodom se waes bigeten mid ðy londe aet Iddeshale 7 aet Heanbyrig ten hida ðaes londes 7 aet felda ten hida on Beansetum' and '7 Mucele aldormenn ten hida lond æt crog lea'.

[18] '7 biscop gesalde Sigrede aldormenn sex hund scillinga on golde'. Nicholas Brooks suggests (pers. comm.) that it was the purchase price of 600 oxen.

[19] The third endorsement assumes the same subject noun and verb as those of the second one, hence '7 [biscop gesalde] Mucele aldormenn ten hida lond æt crog lea.'

[20] 'hæbbæn heora dæg 7 æfter heora dæge agefe mon ðæt land into dære halgan stowe Weogurnacestre.'

[21] I am most grateful to Philippa Semper for her advice on how 'agefe mon ðæt land into . . .' should be understood.

appears to be written in a tenth-century hand.[22] This means that a Worcester scribe tried, perhaps as late as a century or more after 836, to make it look as if it had always been Wiglaf's intention that he and ealdorman Mucel should have the lands concerned for their own lifetimes, but that their heirs should not succeed to them. The reason for the addition is easy to grasp, however: some at least of the leased lands still cannot have been handed back. Complaints about leased land becoming permanent possessions of the families of the original lessees are common in Domesday Book and elsewhere.[23]

Another objection might be based on an argument that in 836 these Hanbury lands were still being held by the minster's community, and that only at an unknown later date did Worcester take control of them – or even decide to pretend that it had a right to do so. What counts decisively against such lines of argument, however, is that we have an original manuscript of the charter of 836, in which is recorded the bishop of Worcester's hugely expensive involvement in gaining the immunity. There can be no doubt, then, that the bishop and his community at Worcester were the recipients of Wiglaf's charter, not the Hanbury minster. In partial corroboration of this, Domesday Book records Worcester as holding fourteen hides at Hanbury in 1086 (including the church, which continued to be served by its ordained clerics and to act as the parochial mother-church for a large area around it). At the same time it was also holding five hides at Crowle, one of the other places named in the 836 charter.[24] It appears, then, that the church of Worcester eventually did succeed in getting back at least some of the lands which had been leased to laymen in 836 for a single lifetime as payment for the immunity, but which may not yet have been returned to it by the tenth century.

If this interpretation of Wiglaf's charter is correct, why, how and when did Worcester acquire Hanbury's lands? There may be some evidence of the cathedral's having had control of them before the end of the eighth century. In 804 Æthelric, son of Æthelmund, had his intended bequests of land formally recorded; these included eleven hides at Bromsgrove and Feckenham which were to go to Wærferth and then, after his death, be returned (*reddat*) to

[22] 'In one instance a later scribe (?10th-century) has tampered with the text to suggest that the grant of land to the king and Ealdorman Mucel was in fact a life-lease on the estates, with reversion to Worcester': http://www.anglo-saxons.net/hwaet/?do=get&type=charter&id=190.

[23] For the diocese of Worcester, primarily the text known as Hemming's 'Codicellus possessionum': *Hemingi Chartularium Ecclesiae Wigorniensis*, ed. T. Hearne, 2 vols. with continuous pagination (Oxford, 1723) I, pp. 248–86; *Domesday Book: 16, Worcestershire*, ed. F. Thorn and C. Thorn (Chichester, 1982), Appendix V ('Worcester G').

[24] *Domesday Book seu Liber Censualis Willelmi Primi Regis Angliae*, ed. A. Farley, 2 vols. (London, 1783), fol. 174a; *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,78, 2,79.

the church of Worcester.[25] This implies that the land was being held on lease from the latter, and whatever the amount of the Feckenham portion, it is very likely to have belonged to the Hanbury minster's estate.[26] Worcester's archive held records of many other instances of its taking control of the lands of the diocese's less successful minsters. One of these was Wootton Wawen, which the Hwiccian king Æthelric had founded in Æthelbald's reign, probably in the early to mid-730s.[27] By 844 its lands were being held by Worcester, as also were those of Wootton Wawen's near neighbour, the rather older minster at Stratford-upon-Avon.[28] Similarly, Worcester's many late Anglo-Saxon leases and the folios of Domesday Book show that it had gathered up a large amount of the lands of early minsters in its diocese, and in many cases ownership of the churches themselves. They include fairly well documented ones such as those at Westbury-on-Trym, Bibury, Withington and Bishop's Cleeve (Gloucs.), and Fladbury, Inkberrow, Bredon, Ripple, Blockley and Tredington (Worcs.), as well as other, less well known ones.[29]

In sum, Worcester was evidently muscling in on the many administratively feeble minsters in its diocese as early as the late eighth and early ninth centuries, taking over direct control of their lands. We cannot tell if this policy was primarily determined by episcopal greed and opportunism, or by fears about the likely consequences of the evident incompetence of a minster's community. In the latter case the bishop may have reckoned that, if he did not move quickly, a minster's lands might soon be irrevocably lost – either subsumed by local aristocrats into their family lands, or else perhaps seized by a Mercian king on the grounds that the lands had originally been royal and that if the minster to which

[25] S 1187: 'Iterum dabo Wærferðe xi manentium Bremes grefan 7 Feccanhom ut habeat suum diem et postea reddat ad Wigorna cestre'; Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, p. 513.

[26] See below, p. 93.

[27] S 94.

[28] W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols. in 8 (London, 1817–30) I, p. 608; S 198. For Stratford's minster, see also S 1252 (of 699 × 717), which in its use of the term 'in jus æcclesiasticum' in respect of land at Stratford may show that there was already a minster there; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 161–2.

[29] *Gloucestershire*, ed. Moore, 3,1, 3,4, 3,5; *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,15, 2,16, 2,22, 2,31, 2,38, 2,45. The less well known ones are so in the sense of being churches for which the evidence of early minster status is largely or wholly circumstantial, such as Longdon, Cleeve Prior and Hartlebury: *ibid.* 2,47, 2,76, 2,82. For other discussions of bishops systematically taking over control of minsters and adding their lands to their own sees' endowments, see N. P. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (Leicester, 1984), ch. 9; I. N. Wood, 'Anglo-Saxon Otley: an Archiepiscopal Estate and its Crosses in a Northumbrian Context', *NH* 23 (1987), 20–38, at 36–7; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 169–72; W. M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: the Church of Durham, 1071–1153* (Woodbridge, 1998), esp. pp. 13–16; F. Tinti, 'The "Costs" of Pastoral Care: Church Dues in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. *eadem*, CSASE (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 27–51, at pp. 45–9.

one of his early predecessors had granted them was no longer putting them to good use, the king himself could certainly do so. There is plenty of evidence that by the early ninth century the Mercian kings were bitterly regretting these predecessors' great generosity to the Church when acting in the first flush of christian zeal, and that, as the early Carolingian kings did when similarly short of land, they were greedily eyeing up what the Church had.[30] In 816 the synod of Chelsea tried its best to give English bishops greater powers, or greater confidence, to be pro-active whenever they saw a minster in their diocese which looked administratively incompetent and thus likely to be unable to prevent its lands passing irretrievably into laymen's hands.[31] What we see the late-eighth- and early-ninth-century bishops of Worcester doing is implementing this policy on the ground.[32]

This is undoubtedly the light in which we should view Wiglaf's Hanbury charter of 836. Patrick Wormald suggested that its provisions 'could imply that the Mercian kings were running short of land'. For instance, a charter of Wiglaf's successor Beorhtwulf, issued in 840, compensated Worcester in respect of church lands which he had taken hold of and handed over to his own men.[33] There is also the well known charter of 849 in which the bishop, Ealhhun, agreed to let Beorhtwulf have a long lease on a large amount of Worcester's land on condition that in future the king should be 'a firmer friend of the bishop and his community' and stop stealing from them.[34] Wormald decided that it was not 'possible to be certain what these transactions mean', but he suggested – and he was surely right – that charters like these show that in and after the 830s the Mercian kings lacked the land and other resources which they needed to pay their senior officials.[35] Consequently, they 'borrowed' land from the Church. This becomes even clearer in the light of the re-interpretation of the Hanbury charter being offered here. If the lands which were being passed

[30] P. Fouracre, 'Frankish Gaul to 814', *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume II c.700–c.900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 85–109, at pp. 91–2; J. L. Nelson, 'Kingship and Royal Government', *ibid.*, pp. 383–430, at pp. 388–92.

[31] Brooks, *Early History*, pp. 175–6; C. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, c.650–c.850* (London, 1995), pp. 194–7.

[32] Other Mercian bishops may have been doing the same thing (we know that some of the southern English bishops were), but we lack evidence from other midlands dioceses of the sort which comes from Worcester. Nonetheless, there is no shortage of examples in Domesday Book of manors being held in 1066 by, say, the bishop of Lichfield which included churches which had almost certainly originated as early minsters, e.g. Eccleshall and Harborne: *Domesday Book: 24, Staffordshire*, ed. A. Hawkins and A. Rumble (Chichester, 1976), 2,10, 2,22. For a probable example in the diocese of Hereford see S 1270 (to which Julia Barrow kindly drew my attention).

[33] Campbell, John and Wormald, *The Anglo-Saxons*, p. 139; S 192.

[34] S 1272.

[35] Campbell, John and Wormald, *The Anglo-Saxons*, p. 139.

to Wiglaf himself and to one of his ealdormen were already under Worcester's control, even though nominally they still belonged to Hanbury's minster, we may view Wiglaf's grant in a new light. It was certainly not the act of charity which historians have suggested that it was, when they envisaged Wiglaf as having wanted to help a minster community by giving it an immunity from payment of almost all public tax burdens, and, at the same time, as having to face the fact that 'the local ealdormen had to be compensated when a comprehensive immunity was granted'.[36]

On the contrary, Wiglaf was imposing a forced loan on the church of Worcester. The deal was that Worcester would hand over to him the lands of the Hanbury minster, which the bishop and his community now controlled. Wiglaf badly needed these lands to pay his officials, both the two who are named in the document and no doubt other unnamed ones to whom he may have passed on pieces of Hanbury's lands as payment for their services. He was also very short of ready cash, and so the bishop had to 'lend' him 600 shillings too, which was to be given to ealdorman Sigered. In return, Wiglaf promised that the church of Worcester would get the Hanbury lands back one day, and that when it did, it would be able to exploit them free of almost all the public tax burdens to which most land in the kingdom was subject. That was the deal. For Worcester it was a matter of what it hoped would be only a short-term loss, compensated for by a long-term gain.

THE LOCATION OF THE LANDS OF THE HANBURY MINSTER

In support of this argument and to see how well the bishops of Worcester fared in retaining its interests at Hanbury, it is critical to identify clearly the location and extent of the lands which were being 'lent' to the king and one of his ealdorman. The Old English statement which follows the witness list describes these lands as follows: 'This privilege was obtained from King Wiglaf with the twenty hides at *Iddes hale*, and the privilege of the land at *Hæccaham* with the ten hides of land at *Felda* by the *Weoduma*, and to Mucel, son of Esne, the ten hides of land at Crowle.'[37] The endorsements refer not only to these forty hides of land but to a further ten hides at Hanbury itself: 'This is the privilege of Hanbury which was obtained with the land at *Iddeshale*', that is, twenty hides, 'and ten hides of land at Hanbury, and ten hides at *Felda* in *Beansetum*. And the bishop gave to ealdorman Sigered 600 shillings in gold. And to ealdorman Mucel [he gave] ten hides of land at Crowle.'[38] Some of these names have

[36] Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, p. 518.

[37] 'Ðes friodom waes bigeten aet Wiglafe cyninge mid ðaem tuentigum hida aet Iddes hale end ðaes londes friodom aet Haeccaham mid ðy ten hida londe aet felda bi weoduman , end Mucele Esninge ðaet ten hida lond aet Croglea.'

[38] See above, nn. 18–19.

no immediately recognizable modern form. The only two which do are Crowle [*æt crog lea*], an ecclesiastical parish to the south-south-west of Hanbury, and Hanbury itself [*æt Heanbyrig*].

Of the obscure names one of the less difficult to sort out is [*on*] *Beansetum*, arguably derived from *beansæte*, '[land of] the people of the *bean halh*', with *bean halh* meaning 'sheltered land where beans grow'. This understanding of the lost element of *beansæte* is firmly based on the existence of three distinct survivals of the name Beanhall (*bean halh*) in Feckenham and Hanbury, the best known of which is in Feckenham (Fig. 1).[39] In the late medieval period Beanhall was an obscure sub-manor of which the exact extent is unknown, but which lay in the south-western part of Feckenham parish where the three farms, Upper, Middle and Lower Beanhall, are found today. But there were also two areas of Beanhall names in Hanbury parish in the early nineteenth century. First, there were three adjacent fields of that name near the southern end of the parish in the area which was known as Broughton in the later medieval period;[40] and, secondly, there were two large adjacent fields in the west of the parish, lying at a distance of about three and a half miles north-west of the Beanhall area of Feckenham.[41] It looks, then, as if the area known as *beansæte* in its original form was once far larger than the late medieval sub-manor of that name in Feckenham. Given that Hanbury's own name was coined in respect of a fortification on Church Hill,[42] probably an iron-age hillfort, and was then applied to the minster complex which was set up within it before at length becoming the name of a substantial area beyond Church Hill which formed the core of the

[39] For *sæte*, 'inhabitants', and *beansetum*, 'the inhabitants of Beanhall': A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, 2 pts, EPNS XXV–XXVI (Cambridge, 1987) II, p. 94. For such names in Worcestershire, see M. Gelling, 'The Place-Name Volumes for Worcestershire and Warwickshire: a New Look', *Field and Forest: a Historical Geography of Warwickshire and Worcestershire*, ed. T. R. Slater and P. J. Jarvis (Norwich, 1982), pp. 59–78, at pp. 70–1. For Beanhall (in Feckenham): A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Worcestershire*, EPNS IV (Cambridge, 1927), p. 318; but neither of the Beanhall clusters in Hanbury is noticed in *ibid.*

[40] Hanbury tithe map: Worcestershire Record Office [hereafter WRO], BA 1572, x760/314, and apportionment: WRO r760/314.1: fields 1071 (Big Beanhall), 1072 (Beanhall Meadow), and 1073 (Little Beanhall). They lay a little under half a mile to the south-east of Temple Broughton Farm.

[41] WRO r760/314.1, fields 644 ('Lease Field or Beanhall') and 660 ('Beanall'). Other adjacent fields were also called Lease Field in the early nineteenth century, a name derived from Laace Field, one of Hanbury's medieval open fields: Dyer, *Hanbury*, pp. 32, 43. The occurrence of the name Beanhall here arguably represents the survival of a pre-open field name.

[42] *Heanburh*, *Heanbyr(i)g*, *Heanbirige*, '(at the) high fortified place': Mawer and Stenton, *Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 321. Christopher Dyer and I first drew attention to the probable existence of a univallate hillfort on Church Hill in 1980**:** S. R. Bassett and C. C. Dyer, 'Hanbury: Documentary and Field-Survey (SO 9664)', *West Midlands Archaeol.* 23 (1980), 88–91, at 88; Dyer, *Hanbury*, p. 14.

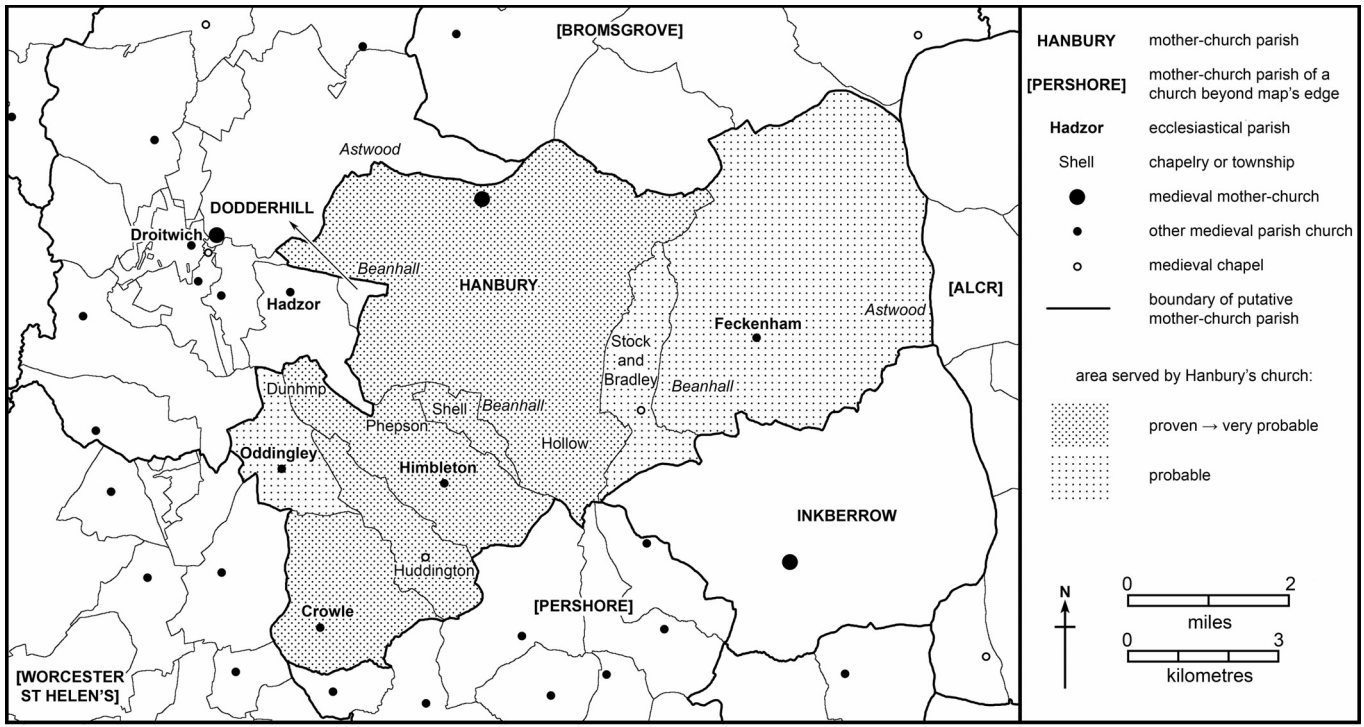

Fig. 1 The putative mother-church parish of the minster at Hanbury, with adjacent mother-church parishes also shown. Ecclesiastical parishes, chapelries and townships are depicted at their late eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century extent. Abbreviations are used for the following: Alcester's mother-church parish (ALCR); Dunhampstead (Dunhmp).

minster's lands, it is likely that *beansæte* was once the name of the district within which this core land was situated. By the late Anglo-Saxon period the district had evidently been divided up among a number of separate manors, only one of which retained the original name, although there were two separate survivals of it elsewhere.[43]

Felda occurs in both the Old English gloss and the first endorsement, where the land in question is said to be '*æt Felda . . . on Beansetum*' and '*æt Felda bi Weoduman*'.[44] OE *feld*, meaning 'open country, arable land', is not an element which is found in any surviving place-name of the Hanbury area; but given the reliable evidence of widespread cultivation there in the Roman period and afterwards,[45] the coining of a name in *feld* would be fully consistent with local conditions when Old English was first spoken in the district. The difficult name *Weoduma* has also left no trace. The likeliest explanation is that it represents a scribal error, with *weoduna* being the correct form, in which case *bi Weodunan* means 'by the heathen-temple hill'.[46] The element *dun* is found in Dunhampstead (in Himbleton parish), but other hills in the district could also qualify as a *dun*. Notwithstanding these difficulties of identification, the reference to *on Beansetum* makes it probable that the ten-hide manor *æt Felda* included a substantial part of Hanbury's and/or Feckenham's ecclesiastical parish.

[43] Two other local examples of early district names which dropped out of regular use are *Stoppingas*, known only from an early-eighth-century charter (S 94); and *Husmeræ*, which is found in two eighth-century charters (S 89, S 1411), and which survives today only in the name of a private residence, Ismere House (in the parish of Churchill, Worcs.).

[44] M. Gelling and A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford, 2000), pp. 269–79.

[45] Dyer, *Hanbury*, pp. 15–18, for archaeological evidence of Romano-British manuring. In addition, my unpublished analysis of the relationship between the field boundaries of Hanbury, Hadzor, Witton St Peter, Droitwich St Andrew's and Salwarpe and the known early Roman military roads which radiate out from Droitwich suggests the survival into the nineteenth century of substantial portions of the area's Romano-British agricultural landscape. For the context: S. Bassett. 'How the West was Won: the Anglo-Saxon Takeover of the West Midlands', *ASSAH* 11 (2000), 107–18, at 109–10.

[46] I am most grateful to Duncan Probert for the following comment: 'It seems best to assume that it is indeed *dun*, which is a weak feminine noun and, as such, takes *-an* as its case-ending in the singular accusative, genitive and dative as well as in the plural nominative and accusative. Since *bi* is normally used as a preposition with the dative, it is safe to presume that *bi Weoduman* is in the dative singular.' An examination of the published facsimile of the manuscript suggests that the scribe may initially have written the letter *n* but then at once have changed his mind and added a third minim so as to convert it into *m*: *Facsimiles of Ancient Charters in the British Museum*, ed. E. A. Bond, 4 vols. (London, 1873–8) II, no. 24, illustrating London British Library, Cotton Aug. II. 9 (Worcester, s. ix[1]). If so, it may have been because *weoduma*, a known form of the word *wituma/weotuma*, 'dowry' (J. Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. and enlarged T. N. Toller (Oxford, 1892–8), p. 1258), initially, and perhaps instinctively, seemed to him more likely to be right than *weoduna*. If *weoduna* is the correct form, it adds another *weoh* name to the corpus: Smith, *Place-Name Elements* II, pp. 264–5 (*wig*, *weoh*).

Hæccaham may be a mis-spelling of Feckenham.[47] A majority of the earliest recorded spellings of Feckenham's name have weak forms of the personal name which is the place-name's first element; and so it is possible that a scribe who did not know the area misheard the name and mistakenly gave it an initial *h*.[48] Such errors caused by mishearing or misreading names might well remain unnoticed, especially in a statement which, as an informal gloss on the text of the charter, was written a little later and was presumably not subject to sufficiently rigorous scrutiny, and which additionally appears to be at fault by mentioning only forty of the fifty hides of land which were being handed over to the king and ealdorman Mucel. With *Hæccaham* almost certainly having the same generic as Feckenham, OE *hamm*, it is not unlikely that it does indeed represent the latter name.[49]

The lost name *Iddes hale* has usually been identified as Shifnal, a large parish near Telford in mid Shropshire. This is because the earliest known form of Shifnal's name is *Iteshale*,[50] and nowhere else in the west midlands has a name like it. However, there are several good reasons for rejecting this identification. In the first place, the spelling of the name in Wiglaf's charter is not consistent with the recorded forms of Shifnal's alternative name (for example, *Iteshale* in Domesday Book), hardly any of which contain -dd-.[51] Secondly, Shifnal is about thirty miles from Hanbury – much further than we find even the most distantly detached land of any other early minster in the west midlands, even where the land concerned was a far-off piece of woodland or marginal pasture. A final reason for dismissing the identification of *Iddes hale* with Shifnal is that the latter's church was itself probably an early minster, and one moreover which lay in the diocese of Lichfield, whereas Hanbury was in the diocese of Worcester. It is far likelier, then, that it represents the now lost name of a substantial piece of land in the Hanbury area.[52]

[47] Some scholars, however, have suggested that it was an alternative name for Hanbury: e.g. H. P. R. Finberg, *Early Charters of the West Midlands* (2nd ed., Leicester, 1972), p. 101; Dyer, *Hanbury*, p. 20.

[48] None of the earliest known spellings, which include Domesday Book's *Fec*(*c*)*heham*, predates the eleventh century: Mawer and Stenton, *Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 317.

[49] No more than two instances of names in *hām* are known in the west midlands (Birmingham, Pattingham), and therefore the generic of *Hæccaham* is almost certainly *hamm*. For meanings of *hamm*, 'land hemmed in by water or marsh; river meadow; cultivated plot on the edge of woodland or moor': Gelling and Cole, *Landscape of Place-Names*, p. 46; and specifically for Feckenham: *ibid.* p. 52.

[50] M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Shropshire*, I, EPNS LXII/LXIII (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 263–4.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] 'The *Iddeshale* of the charter is probably a lost place in Wo[rcestershire]': *ibid.* p. 264. An extensive search undertaken by the members of three extramural classes held at Hanbury under Christopher Dyer's tuition failed to find any surviving instance of it in the medieval records of Hanbury: Dyer, *Hanbury*, p. 5, and pers. comm.

In short, it appears that the entire fifty hides of land mentioned in Wiglaf's charter may have lain within a few miles of the Hanbury minster, although other, independent evidence is needed to strengthen this tentative conclusion and give it a clearer topographical meaning.

THE HANBURY MINSTER'S MOTHER-CHURCH PARISH

Hanbury's church of St Mary the Virgin once had a far larger parish than it served in the early nineteenth century.[53] This deduction is based partly on the substantial amount of evidence by which the extents of the adjoining medieval mother-church parishes can be worked out, and which accordingly, by exclusion, defines the maximum possible extent of Hanbury's own (Fig. 1). To the west was the one belonging to St Augustine's, Dodderhill, with an eastern boundary which can be reliably established, except in respect of Hadzor.[54] To the north was Bromsgrove's mother-church parish, and to the east was Alcester's.[55] Inkberrow was undoubtedly an early minster, but it had a conspicuously small parish in comparison with those of its neighbours.[56] By contrast, Pershore and Worcester St Helen's had huge mother-church parishes with in both cases an outer limit which can be firmly determined.[57] The greatest area over which Hanbury's church may have exercised matronal control is thus well defined; but within this area the sorts of evidence which allow the original extents of the neighbouring mother-church parishes to be rediscovered are in conspicuously short supply. Only for the former manor of Shell, which has belonged to the ecclesiastical parish of Himbleton for many

[53] The full extent of its ecclesiastical parish was first mapped in 1838: WRO r760/314 (tithe map).

[54] S. Bassett, 'Sitting above the Salt: the Origins of the Borough of Droitwich', *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling*, ed. O. Padel and D. Parsons (Stamford, 2008), pp. 3–27, at pp. 6–17. The case for seeing Hadzor as a part of Dodderhill's mother-church parish is thin and wholly circumstantial: *ibid*., pp. 16–17; and I now consider the possibility that it was originally in Hanbury's, not Dodderhill's, to be much stronger than I did when writing about the latter mother-church parish in *ibid*. Also see below, n. 79.

[55] I have written up the evidence for the extent of Bromsgrove's mother-church parish but have not yet published it. For Alcester's: S. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (Leicester, 1996), pp. 147–73, at pp. 161–3.

[56] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 96, 191–4. No ecclesiastical parish adjacent to Inkberrow's was formed out of it. Like Ombersley's, for example, it had a much smaller original parish than most other mother-churches of the region did, and it kept all of it under its direct control.

[57] For Pershore: C. J. Bond, 'Church and Parish in Norman Worcestershire', *Minsters and Parish Churches: the Local Church in Transition 950–1200*, ed. J. Blair (Oxford, 1988), pp. 119–58, at pp. 133, 135. For that of St Helen's: S. Bassett, 'Churches in Worcester before and after the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', *AntJ* 69 (1990), 225-56, at 232–7.

centuries, is there explicit evidence that it was originally subject to Hanbury's church, as it was until at least the early fifteenth century.[58] In all other cases the discovery of Hanbury's mother-church parish relies on circumstantial evidence alone.

Feckenham's putative membership of it exemplifies this difficulty well. There was a church on the manor in 1086, and the fact that Earl William of Hereford granted it, its land and its tithes to the Norman abbey of Lyre before 1086 shows that it was a well endowed church which is likely to have originated as a minster.[59] Its parish is hardly smaller than Inkberow's, and the possibility exists that it too originated independently. However, it is likelier that it was founded as a parochial chapel, set up by the Hanbury minster's priests (or the bishop) to deliver pastoral care to the easternmost part of the latter's large mother-church parish.[60] The key indicator of Feckenham's early association with Hanbury is the existence of separate clusters of the name Beanhall in the two ecclesiastical parishes,[61] representing discrete survivals of the name of a territory to which both Hanbury and Feckenham once belonged.

There may also be a second link between them. Domesday Book reports that in 1086 Urse held half a hide of land in the manor of Hanbury as Worcester's tenant, and in a late-twelfth-century copy of an Evesham Abbey document, compiled no later than 1108, which summarizes parts of the Domesday folios for Worcestershire, the land concerned is identified as *Estwde*, that is, Astwood.[62] This has usually been identified without explanation as Astwood in Dodderhill parish,[63] but for no better reason, it seems, than its geographical proximity to Hanbury; however, an area of Feckenham is also called Astwood. Both Astwoods were late medieval sub-manors, and nothing known about the descent of either of them rules it out as Urse's half-a-hide holding.[64] The name Astwood obviously identifies the woodland as lying to

[58] In and after the late thirteenth century, and until the early fifteenth as a minimum, the chapel of Shell was annexed to Hanbury: Victoria County Histories [hereafter VCH], *Worcestershire*, III, ed. J. W. W. Bund (London, 1913), p. 397; *Register of Thomas de Cobham, Bishop of Worcester, 1317–27*, ed. E. H. Pearce, Worcestershire Hist. Soc. (London, 1930), n. 3 on p. 244. 'It was probably after the destruction of the chapel at Shell that a chapel in the church of Himbleton was assigned to the use of the inhabitants of Shell': VCH, *Worcs.*, III, p. 397.

[59] C. Guéry, *Histoire de L'Abbaye de Lyre* (Evreux, 1917), p. 159; Dugdale, *Monasticon*, VI, p. 1092.

[60] A telling sign of its having had this status is Domesday Book's record of a priest on the manor: *Domesday Book: 17, Herefordshire*, ed. F. Thorn and C. Thorn (Chichester, 1983), 1,40.

[61] See above, pp. 88, 90.

[62] *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 27,9 n. and Appendix IV ('Evesham C').

[63] E.g. Mawer and Stenton, *Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 281; *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,79 n.

[64] VCH, *Worcs.*, III, p. 64 (Astwood in Dodderhill), and pp. 115–16 (Astwood in Feckenham).

the east of the place from which it was controlled; and while it alone cannot be used as evidence to identify the Hanbury minster as being that place, the Astwood in Feckenham does lie to the east of it, whereas the one in Dodderhill lies to the west within the area of the royal demesne manor of Wychbold. It is much likelier, therefore, that of the two Astwoods it is the Feckenham one which Domesday Book recorded as a part of the manor of Hanbury.[65] If this is correct, it is further evidence of an early territorial association between Hanbury and Feckenham.

Sandwiched between Hanbury and Feckenham is Stock and Bradley, which mirrors the area of the late medieval manor of Bradley. In 1086 Bradley was part of the great episcopal manor of Fladbury (which represents another instance of Worcester's taking control of the lands of a 'failing' minster), and was served by Fladbury's church until its creation as an independent parish in 1862.[66] Bradley, 'broad wood', was a substantial area of woodland which extended south into Inkberrow, and perhaps also into Dormston (in Pershore's mother-church parish), and which had been shared out among a number of nearby minsters.[67] It is unknown if its attachment to the manor of Fladbury, a minster which stood beside the Avon and was therefore poorly endowed with woodland, was the result of an early royal grant of which we know nothing or, alternatively, was not effected until after Worcester had control of the Hanbury minster's lands. However, the long, thin parish of Stock and Bradley has a southern boundary which is continuous with Feckenham's and, for a short distance, with Hanbury's, and also a western one which is extended northwards by the north-western part of Feckenham's boundary. There can be no doubt that it was once an integral part of the Beanhall territory to which Hanbury and Feckenham appear to have belonged.

To the south-west of Hanbury the four ecclesiastical parishes of Himbleton, Huddington, Oddingley and Crowle have a territorial integrity in terms of their shared outline which is matched by their history of tenurial and parochial inter-relationships. Late Anglo-Saxon boundary statements show that the land-unit called *Hymeltun* once covered a larger area than the ecclesiastical parish of Himbleton (which itself contained the Domesday manors of Himbleton

[65] There is no charter evidence of Hanbury's or Worcester's acquisition of Astwood, which suggests that it had been part of the manor of Hanbury for a long time by 1086. Had it originally belonged to the royal manor of Wychbold but then been handed over to the Hanbury minster, its name – which would have made sense in its original context but not in its new one – is very likely to have been changed. Woodland (*silva*) is mentioned in Wiglaf's charter of 836 (S 190): above, p. 79.

[66] *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,20; VCH, *Worcs.*, III, p. 363 (for the parish).

[67] E.g. S 95, a charter of Æthelbald, issued in 723 × 77 to Cyneburg, who was probably abbess of the minster at Inkberrow, concerning six hides of land at *Bradanlæh*: Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, p. 238. Some at least of this land was later claimed by Bishop Hathored of Worcester: S 1430, S 1260.

and Phepson and most of a small estate at Dunhamstead which is mentioned, unnamed, in Domesday Book), also including as it did the whole of Huddington.[68] Another boundary statement shows that Himbleton and Phepson – *Fepsetnatun* in 956, 'estate of the *Fepsæte*' – were interchangeable names.[69] Phepson, then, appears to have been an early district name like *Beansæte*. It was being used to identify a substantial area of land in 956 and again in 1086, but the two areas, although significantly overlapping ones, were undoubtedly of different extents at these dates.[70]

Other evidence intensifies the picture of significantly overlapping names and associations in this area. Although Huddington lay in *Hymeltun* in the late Anglo-Saxon period, it was being served by the early thirteenth century by Crowle's church, not by Himbleton's.[71] This parochial association is unlikely to have arisen from its tenurial history, however. By 1232 the Hospital of St Wulfstan in Worcester held the advowson of Crowle's church and a substantial amount of land there; and it also held land in Huddington but not, it seems, the advowson of its church. This suggests that St Wulfstan's gained control of Huddington's church by virtue of its having already been subject to the church of Crowle.[72] If

[68] For the boundary statements: S 219, S 1373, S 1593. For their solution: D. Hooke, *Worcestershire Anglo-Saxon Charter-Bounds* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 129–34, 293–7, 389–92. *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,70 (Himbleton), 2,77 (Phepson), 2,68 and n. (Hallow). For pre-Conquest Dunhampstead, which also partly lay in the parish of Oddingley: S 174; Dugdale, *Monasticon*, I, p. 609.

[69] S 633. Hooke, *Charter-Bounds*, pp. 167–9; 'the boundary clause refers to many of the landmarks of S 219 and describes the same estate with fewer landmarks': *ibid.* p. 168. For early forms of the name: EPNS, *Worcs.*, pp. 137–8, and for discussion of it: Gelling, 'Place-Name Volumes for Worcestershire and Warwickshire', pp. 70–1, where it is suggested (*contra* Mawer and Stenton, *Place-Names of Worcestershire*, p. 138) that the name is not associated with the people of the district in Middle Anglia which Bede names as *in Feppingum*, but is probably derived from a local compound place-name such as **Fepfeld* or **Fepleah* (*ibid.* p. 71).

[70] S 633; *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,77.

[71] T. Habington, *A Survey of Worcestershire*, ed. J. Amphlett, Worcestershire Hist. Soc., 2 pts (Oxford, 1895–9) I, p. 290. The monk Hemming reported that Huddington was being served by Worcester St Helen's at the end of the eleventh century (*Hemingi Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, II, p. 427), but this is uncorroborated by any other source and he may have been mistaken: Bassett, 'Churches in Worcester', p. 235. However, also see below, pp. 96–7.

[72] VCH, *Worcs.*, III, pp. 332, 334, 409, 412; *Calendar of Charter Rolls 1226–57* (London, 1903), pp. 172–3; *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai IV circa AD 1291* (London, 1802), pp. 218, 231, 239b. For the hospital's early history: N. Baker and R. Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 215–17, 323. If it were to be discovered that the hospital had also held land in Huddington, the advowson of its church might have been granted as well, which would allow for the possibility that St Wulfstan's had itself made it subject to Crowle's church (which it also held). This, however, is an improbable scenario. 'The facts that the church of Huddington is not mentioned in the valuation of the possessions of St Wulfstan's Hospital made in 1535, and that no presentations to it have been found, confirm the opinion that it was a chapelry of Crowle': VCH, *Worcs.* III, p. 412.

this is so, the latter may also have served the rest of the *Hymeltun* area, in which case, like Feckenham's church, it arguably originated as a parochial chapel. Yet another link between Crowle and the *Hymeltun* area is that in 1086 one of the two five-hide land-units into which Crowle was then divided was a berewick of the Worcester monks' demesne manor of Phepson.[73] This, however, may have been an association fairly recently forged for the monks' administrative convenience and is perhaps not representative of any much older territorial link between them.

Oddingley appears to 'belong' with Crowle, Himbleton and Huddington on the grounds of the topographical unity which the four areas display, and it also shared the manor of Dunhampstead with Himbleton parish – although this may reflect a relatively late extension westwards of the manor across their common boundary.[74] It was served by Worcester St Helen's in the late Middle Ages but had almost certainly been 'captured' from the same mother-church parish as contained Crowle and its other neighbours. Oddingley and Huddington[75] were both members of the important episcopal manor of Northwick, which had always been served by Worcester St Helen's. This manorial association undoubtedly facilitated the latter's extension of its pastoral control over these two small land-units which were situated just over the border of its huge ancient parish.[76]

Nothing which is known about the churches at Himbleton, Huddington, Oddingley, Phepson and Dunhampstead suggests that any of them was of other than manorial origin.[77] Only Crowle's had pastoral responsibility for a substantial area; however, it was certainly not a mother-church in its own right – it exhibits none of the attributes of one[78] – and even in the unlikely situation of its control of the chapel at Huddington having been initiated by St Wulfstan's Hospital, it must itself have had a mother-church. There is no independent

[73] *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,77, 2,78.

[74] A statement of the boundary of a one-hide holding at Dunhamstead is attached to a grant of 814: S 174. Della Hooke's solution of it shows the land as being entirely contained within the area of Himbleton's ecclesiastical parish: *Charter-Bounds*, pp. 105–7.

[75] Huddington is another church with a possible association with Worcester St Helen's, albeit one of which there is only a single record: see above, nn. 70–1.

[76] *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,48, 2,56–57; Bassett, 'Churches in Worcester', pp. 232–7. The earliest evidence of the existence of Oddingley's church is a presentation of 1300: *Register of Bishop Geoffrey Giffard*, ed. J. W. W. Bund, Worcestershire Hist. Soc. (Worcester, 1902), p. 528; and of that of Huddington's is Hemming's reference to it at the end of the eleventh century: *Hemingi Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, II, p. 427.

[77] Phepson and Dunhampstead both appear to have had a chapel by the thirteenth century, with the latter's having a graveyard: VCH, *Worcs.* III, p. 397. Neither, however, survived into recent centuries, let alone achieved parochial independence.

[78] Not even to the extent of having a priest recorded as being on the manor in 1086: *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,78, 19,14.

Table 1: Minimum hidage assessments in 1086 of lands in the putative mother-church parish of Hanbury.

DB reference	*land-unit*	*hides*
Worcs.[a] 2,79	Hanbury	14
Worcs. 2,78	Crowle	5
Worcs. 19,14	Crowle	5
Herefs. 1,40	Feckenham	10
Herefs. 1,41	Hollow[b]	3
Worcs. 2,20	Bradley	1
Worcs. 2,77	Phepson[c]	5
Worcs. 18,3	Shell	1
Worcs. 2,57	Huddington	1
Worcs. 2,56	Oddingley	1
Worcs. 2,70	Himbleton[d]	½
Worcs. 2,68	Dunhamstead[e]	1
		47½

Notes:

[a] The references given as 'Worcs.' are to entries in F. Thorn and C. Thorn, *Domesday Book. 16, Worcestershire* (1982); and those given as 'Herefs.' are to entries in F. Thorn and C. Thorn, *Domesday Book. 17, Herefordshire* (1983).

[b] Hollow is represented now by the three Hollowfields Farms and in the later medieval period by *Holeway*. It 'was attached to Feckenham, until it was granted to Bordesley Abbey in about 1140' (Dyer, *Hanbury*, p. 8), doubtless as a result of it and Feckenham having both been in the king's hands in 1086 and its subsequently becoming attached to the latter for administrative convenience. However, Domesday Book's name for the place is etymologically different from Hollow (*Holewei* in the Worcestershire folios: *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, X2), being recorded as *Haloede* in the Herefordshire ones (*Herefordshire*, ed. Thorn & Thorn, 1,41 and n.), 'which is a different name, etymology not ascertained . . . but both refer to the same place' (*ibid*., 1,41 n.). *Haloede* may be a copyist's error for *Haloewe*, as a result of the OE letter wynn being misread as a thorn.

[c] There was a sixth hide which did not pay tax.

[d] Out of a total of three and a half hides (the combined assessment of Himbleton and Spetchey). A lease dated 967 refers to a three-hide manor at Spetchley: S 1315 – hence the assignment of only half a hide to Himbleton in the table.

[e] A member of the manor of Hallow: *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,68 and n.

evidence of that church's identity, but nothing so much as hints that it was Worcester St Helen's or Pershore, the two minsters whose matronal influence demonstrably reached as far as the boundary of Crowle. Therefore, although there is no direct evidence that Hanbury's church was the mother-church of Crowle, the likelihood that it was is very strong, given the impeccable testimony of Wiglaf's charter that Crowle was part of the Hanbury minster's landed endowment by the early ninth century.

It appears, then, that the full extent of Hanbury's putative mother-church parish can be rediscovered,[79] if with much less confidence than is normally the case in the area of the medieval diocese of Worcester. It is notable that the total of fifty hides mentioned in Wiglaf's charter finds close correspondence with the forty-seven and a half hides (at least) recorded in 1086 for the reconstructed mother-church parish (Table 1).

An even closer 'fit' to the fifty hides in the 836 charter might be achieved by the inclusion of the two-hide manor of Hadzor, which now creates a suspicious indentation in the western boundary of the putative mother-parish of Hanbury (see Fig. 1), which suggests that it, too, might have been a part of it.[80] However, this is unnecessary: the total is already close enough to fifty hides to be considered a significant correlation, and in any case *ad hoc* adjustments made to hidages (for example, the freeing of some church land from its liability to tax), and other unknown factors may have affected the assessment total between 836 and 1086.

CONCLUSION

This attempt to identify the specific locations of the various land-units totalling fifty hides which Wiglaf took from the church of Worcester in 836 has had mixed fortunes. It has shown that there are good grounds for accepting that they all lay in a compact area which by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period comprised the mother-church parish of Hanbury's minster. Identifying the ten hides at Crowle poses no problem since two manors assessed at five hides each were recorded there in 1086, and there is no reason to doubt that they were coterminous with the ecclesiastical parish at its early-nineteenth-century extent. The three other land-units – one of twenty hides and two of ten hides each – cannot be similarly identified, but the clues to their whereabouts offered by their names point to locations in Hanbury itself, in Feckenham (which was a ten-hide manor in 1086), and in the area of the ecclesiastical parishes of Himbleton, Huddington and Oddingley.[81] No amount of ingenuity, it seems,

[79] It is possible that Hadzor, too, was part of it. There is no evidence to suggest the identity of Hadzor's mother-church, but its situation, sandwiched as it is between the mother-church parishes of St Augustine's, Dodderhill and Hanbury, means that it must have belonged to one or other of them. The balance may be tipped in Hanbury's favour by the fact that Hadzor is adjoined on three sides by manors which have been shown here to have been in its mother-church parish. Such 'wrapping around' ought not to be used as independent evidence of a matronal relationship; but given that there are many instances where incontrovertible evidence exists of a mother-church's pastoral responsibility for a manor which is similarly surrounded, it can be reliably viewed as a significant indicator of the likelihood that such a relationship existed.

[80] See above, n. 79.

[81] Christopher Dyer has suggested that *Iddes hale* may have been 'an old name for part of Himbleton': *Hanbury*, p. 20.

can shuffle the Domesday land-units of this area to form ten- and twenty-hide groups which are convincingly equivalent to the land-units of 836; but this is unsurprising in view of the episodes of territorial fragmentation and re-amalgamation which occurred there in the 250 years following the granting of Wiglaf's charter.

Enough has been achieved, however, to enable us to trace something of the history of the land-units concerned up to 1086 and, as a result, to discover how far the church of Worcester was able to keep the Hanbury minster's lands available for ecclesiastical use, despite the danger of permanent loss posed by the enforced loan of 836. Nothing is heard of Feckenham until Domesday Book reports that it and Hollow were in the hands of royal officials on the eve of the Conquest and in the king's own possession in 1086; nor is there any evidence to show that Shell was ever again held by Worcester. But all the rest of the land was restored to it sooner or later, and by 1086 it seems to have been securely in the church's possession. Some of it we see being returned to Worcester,[82] some we first meet when Worcester made a fresh grant of it, and some we hear nothing of until Domesday Book shows it in its hands once more.[83]

The church of Worcester was not so successful elsewhere in holding on to the lands which it acquired in the late eighth and ninth centuries by its policy of getting control of the estates of 'failing' minster communities in the diocese. Hemming's long list of what Worcester had allegedly lost in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut testifies to its vulnerability to secular appropriation of its lands, both then and in earlier centuries;[84] and examples abound of other losses which arguably resulted from its own mismanagement. But in Hanbury's case the outcome was by and large a favourable one. Even though the details elude us, the broad picture sketched out here reveals Worcester's long and messy but not unsuccessful struggle to ensure that it could at length enjoy its immunity – what Wiglaf shamelessly eulogised as his 'charitable gift . . . which I have given into the height of the summit of the heavens into the hand of

[82] In a charter of 840 × 848, which has spurious elements but could have an authentic basis, the Mercian king Beorhtwulf granted five hides at Crowle to Worcester, free of all secular dues: S 205. Five hides at Himbleton were granted to Æthelwulf by Æthelred, 'lord of the Mercians', in 884, and in 896 Eared and his wife Tunthryth allegedly restored it and Dunhampstead to Worcester: S 219; Dugdale, *Monasticon*, I, p. 609. In 956 King Eadwy granted Worcester a five-hide manor at Phepson (but this is probably the same as the one at Himbleton which had been restored in 896): S 633.

[83] Bishop Oswald leased one hide 'æt Hymeltune' to his *cniht* Wulfgeat *c.* 977, which the associated boundary clause shows to be Huddington. There is nothing, however, to show when the bishop's manor of Fladbury gained its one hide at Bradley, nor when Oddingley was restored: *Worcestershire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn, 2,20, 2,56.

[84] *Hemingi Chartularium*, ed. Hearne, pp. 248–86

the Lord for myself and for the whole race of the Mercians in common'.[85] To achieve this outcome Worcester first needed to regain the lands in question, and it appears that it largely managed to do so.[86]

[85] 'elemosinam quam in altitudinem caeli culminis in manus domini datam habeo communiter pro me 7 pro totum gentem Merciorum . . .'

[86] An earlier version of this paper was given to the University of Birmingham's Medieval History Research Seminar in May 2005. I am most grateful for the comments received then, and also for the advice and assistance given to me during the preparation of the present version by Julia Barrow, Nicholas Brooks, Christopher Dyer, Simon Keynes, John Langdon, Duncan Probert (who also prepared the map), and Philippa Semper.