GREAT MALVERN PRIORY

Benedictine priory of St Mary and St Michael; dependent on Westminster abbey before 1132

County of Worcestershire: Diocese of Worcester
Founded ? 1085 × 1095 or later

Antiquaries have written a good deal about the church of Great Malvern, but the early history of the priory is not well attested and not well understood. Late sources have been trusted and forged charters taken at their word, with the result that the origin of the church has been dated to the days of Edward the Confessor alongside a foundation date in 1085 drawn from a late chronicle. A focus on the early evidence suggests that the priory emerged, probably during Henry I’s time, from a group of hermits who had been living in Malvern forest for a decade or more. By the time of King Henry’s death, it was a dependency of Westminster abbey, but how or when this came about is uncertain.

William of Malmesbury provides the first glimpse. In his *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, IV § 145, written in 1125, it is said that a man named Aldwin, made a monk by Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, led an eremitical life in the great wood of Malvern; deserted by his first companion, Guy, but encouraged by Bishop Wulfstan, he remained and was joined by another and a third, until he had gathered as many as thirty
companions (‘ad tricenarium numerum’).\textsuperscript{1} Wulfstan was bishop from 1062 to 1095, which sets the outer limits for dating these beginnings. The name of Aldwin’s companion is Norman, as Freeman observed, *Norman Conquest*, iv. 379, which points to a period after the Conquest. In the same book William says that the monasterium of Malvern had grown up in his own time, ‘nostris diebus’ (§ 158), a passage that was absorbed with minimal change by the local chronicler John of Worcester.\textsuperscript{2} William is more allusive in his *Vita S. Wulfstani*, II 2, written at the request of Prior Warin of Worcester, probably a little later than *Gesta pontificum*. The monk Aldwin, seeking to establish a monastic community (‘congregationem religionis’) at Malvern, was on the point of giving up and went to Bishop Wulfstan as ‘father of the diocese’ to tell him; Wulfstan intimated divine foresight that the religious life would flourish there, and Aldwin persisted, ‘sicut hodieque uidetur’. By the time William was writing the priory church was a grand building, whose massive six-bay arcades survive in the nave.\textsuperscript{3} From

\* The advice of Dr David Parsons on Welsh and Shropshire place-names, Dr Ann Williams on Earl Odda and Worcestershire Domesday, and Professor Malcolm Thurlby on the dating of the primary building is gratefully acknowledged.\textsuperscript{1} This passage properly serves as the foundation of the account of Great Malvern priory in T. R. Nash, *Collections for the history of Worcestershire* (London, 1781–2), ii. 121 (repeated without citation, VCH Worcs, ii. 317n). I use italics to show what he adds to it: ‘William of Malmesbury said that before the Conquest it was a wilderness thick set with trees, in the midst of which some monks who aspired to greater perfection retired from the priory of Worcester and became hermits. The enthusiasm spread so fast, that their number increased to three hundred, when forming themselves into a society they agreed to live according to the order of St Benedict and elected Alwin one of their company to be superior. Thus was the monastery founded about the year 1083, with the consent and approbation of saint Wolstan, bishop of Worcester’. The date 1083 is imported from Leland (as quoted by Dugdale), the number a misunderstanding of the Latin, and the rest interpretation.\textsuperscript{2} John of Worcester, iii. 78–83. The passage from *Gesta pontificum* is added by John in the margin of his own text, Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 157, p. 360. In the few words about Malvern (p. 80), John’s only change to William’s text is to replace ‘nostris diebus’ with ‘nostris temporibus’. (McGurk notes ‘temporibus’ in a copy of William’s own text written too late to have been the one used by John.)\textsuperscript{3} N. Pevsner, *Worcestershire*, Buildings of England (1968), 158–9, mentions that work ‘may have been begun before the Conquest but 1085 is more likely’; the dates are from written sources that may mislead, but he clearly states, ‘the style of the nave speaks for a date about 1120’; the new edition (2007), 447, is less clear, saying founded in 1085 and ‘perhaps completed c. 1120’. An earlier date, c. 1095–1100, is proposed on the basis of style by C. Wilson, ‘Abbot Serlo’s church at Gloucester (1089–1100): its place in romanesque architecture’, in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Gloucester and Tewkesbury*, British Archaeological Association (1985), 52–83 (at p. 68). Work would
William’s account one would presume that Great Malvern priory had grown under the patronage of the bishops of Worcester.

William does not specify his sources, but he certainly had good contacts at Worcester, and he had talked with Prior Walcher of Malvern. Walcher, a Lotharingian according to his epitaph, is first attested as prior in 1120, in the heading to his astronomical treatise *De dracone*. In this context John of Worcester provides an interesting reflection of contact between Malvern and Worcester. Under the year 1133 he appears to have drawn on Walcher’s *De dracone*; one copy of this, now Bodl. MS Auct. F. 1. 9 (SC 4137) (s. xii\textsuperscript{2/4}), fols. 96r–99r, is from Worcester, and John’s hand appears elsewhere in the volume. Walcher was already in England no later than 1091, it appears, but, since he travelled to Italy in that year, it seems very unlikely that he was living as a hermit in the woods of Malvern. When he arrived at the priory is unknown.

Prior Walcher died on 1 October 1135, as the inscription on his grave-cover used to show. His successor Prior Richard entered into a

have started at the east end, but the church is not so large that it need have gone on for many years. The cost surely required a patron, and the main stylistic parallels are local, Worcester, Tewkesbury, and Gloucester. Professor M. F. Thurlby advises me that the latest stylistic feature at Great Malvern is the chevron ornament on the west face of the arch between the south nave aisle and the south transept is best compared with work at Dymock (Glos) and Hampton Bishop (Herefs); he suggests that this rules out a building date before 1100 but is broadly acceptable for the first quarter of the century.

\footnote{Gesta regum Anglorum, III § 293, retells a story told him by Walcher about events at the monastery of Fulda, ‘not more than fifteen years ago’.

\footnote{McGurk, *John of Worcester*, vol. iii, pp. xl, 210n; John uses this manuscript again under 1138 and 1140 (ib. 258–61, 284–5).

\footnote{In introducing lunar tables in the same manuscript as *De dracone*, at fols. 86r–96r, an unnamed writer relates how he had observed an eclipse of the moon in Italy in 1091; after this, he says, ‘reuersus itaque in Angliam’, he asked if anyone had observed the eclipse there, and ‘quidam frater’ had and revealed that it occurred at a different hour. It was inferred by C. H. Haskins that the writer was Walcher and, although the date of writing was 1108 × 1112, he must have been in England before these observations were made in Italy (‘The introduction of Arabic science into England’, *EHR* 30 (1915), 56–69, repr. in his *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science* (Cambridge, MA, 1924), 113–29, at pp. 113–17). His being in England does not necessarily mean at Malvern.

\footnote{The grave-cover was recut, apparently in the 1890s, when the mason followed the reading printed by William Thomas in 1725, which omits an *x* from *mcxxv*, giving the year in error as 1125. Ample testimony from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries confirms the date 1135. For example, the epitaph was printed in *Monasticon*, iii. 442, from a transcript by the antiquary William Cole (1714–1782), dated 23 June 1746, now BL MS Add. 5811, fol. 131r, and from Nash, *Worcestershire*, ii. 124, 133, both giving 1135 as the year. James Nott, *Some of the Antiquities of “Moche Maluerne”* (Great Malvern) (Malvern, 1885), 27–8, mentions, ‘the tombstone of Prior Walcher, with its
confraternity agreement with Worcester cathedral priory: this names Bishop Simon and Prior Warin, from which a date may be derived after the election of Prior Richard and before the death of Prior Warin c. 1141. It says nothing about a dependent relationship, nor does it indicate that Malvern was not independent.

It is nowhere apparent how or when this Benedictine community at Malvern became associated with Westminster abbey. The earliest evidence touching the subject is a letter concerning Benedict, who had left the priory at Malvern, going first to Worcester and from there to Westminster. The letter was printed by Mason, Westminster Abbey Charters, 116–17 (no. 248A). Sent by Abbot Herbert of Westminster and Prior Edwy, it addresses Prior Warin of Worcester and the precentor Uhtred; it is datable therefore after Warin became prior (not before 1124) and before Uhtred died on 2 April 1132 after forty years as precentor (John of Worcester, iii. 206–9). Benedict is referred to as ‘istum fratrem nostrum et monachum’, as if he were a monk of Westminster, but he is sent back to Worcester, ‘ad uos a quibus ad nos uenit’, with the request that he be kindly treated, ‘donec ego ipse ad prouinciam ueniam’; if it
had been good for him, the abbot says, he would have kept him at Westminster, ‘sicut fratrem nostrum ecclesie nostre professum’, but he is sent back to finish work on a missal that he had begun at Worcester, with the expectation after that of his returning to Malvern. There is a problem in reading the text. Benedict is commended to the prior of Worcester, ‘donec causa[m] eius egressionis a fratribus u[est]ris Maluernie plenius per uos sciamus’: Mason’s reading makes the abbot say that the brethren of Malvern are ‘your brethren’, as if Benedict were a Westminster monk living in a community of Worcester monks at Malvern, and he is coming to find out through Prior Warin what the other monks of Malvern have to say. It is often difficult to be sure of the reading in such cases, but better sense is achieved by reading ‘a fratribus n[ost]ris Maluernie plenius per nos sciamus’, ‘until we learn more fully for ourselves from our own monks of Malvern the reason of his going’. Benedict had left Malvern for Worcester, from where he had gone home to Westminster and explained his reasons to the abbot and prior; he was sent back to Worcester, where he would finish the missal (hence, we presume, inclusion of the precentor in the letter), and his return to Malvern is envisaged. The abbot has heard Benedict’s explanation, but he intends to come to Worcestershire himself to learn about what has happened from the other monks at Malvern. Visits to the abbey’s huge estate centred on the manor of Pershore in the county were probably not unusual: Prior Osbert is known to have been at Pershore abbey in August 1136. Apart from the uncertainties between n and u, this story reveals that Malvern was dependent on Westminster without suggesting any bad relations with the cathedral priory at Worcester.

The muniments of Westminster abbey have preserved an original chirograph whereby Abbot Herbert and his monks granted at farm ‘fratribus et monachis nostris de Maluernia manerium nostrum de Powica’ (Powick, Worcs), to be held ‘quamdiu obedientes fuerint et subiecti sue matri ecclesie’ (WAM xlix; Mason, Westminster Abbey Charters, 113, no. 243); the farm was set at £24 to be paid quarterly. Powick was a substantial manor with a yield of £20 in 1086 (DB, i. 174d; Worcs § 8. 10a), so we must suppose that its yield had increased, if the priory was not to lose money. We shall see mention of new assarts in the

---

10 J. A. Robinson, ‘A sketch of Osbert’s career’, in E. W. Williamson, The Letters of Osbert of Clare (Oxford, 1929), 1–20, at p. 15, inferred from Osbert’s mention (Ep. 12) of meeting Bishop Simon at Pershore abbey, at a time when the abbey was ‘orphaned’, that they were both present for the funeral of Abbot Guy who died 5 August 1136 (John of Worcester, iii. 222).
charters. Herbert was abbot from 1121 until his death on 3 September 1136 × 1138, and the deed cannot be more narrowly dated. The scribe has been identified as one who wrote other documents in the late 1130s, including forgeries drafted by Prior Osbert (P. Chaplais, ‘The original charters of Herbert and Gervase, abbots of Westminster (1121–1157)’, in A Medieval Miscellany for Doris Mary Stenton, Pipe Roll Society new ser. 36 (1962), 89–110). There is nothing particularly suspect here, but it is a very unusual transaction between an abbey and a dependent priory.

In 1156, by which date Prior Richard may have been succeeded by Prior Roger Malebranche, the monks of Malvern sought and obtained a privilege from Pope Adrian IV, but Abbot Gervase of Westminster protested, and the privilege was cancelled and replaced, as we learn from a letter drafted by John of Salisbury in the name of Archbishop Theobald (John of Salisbury, Ep. 45). The pope wrote to Abbot Gervase acknowledging that Malvern had been subject to Westminster as a cell, ‘pleno iure ab initio’ (Holtzmann, i. 320, no. 68; Mason, 83, no. 164). Pope Adrian also sealed a privilege that named as the first of the abbey’s dependencies ‘cellam de Maluernia, que sita est in terra beati Petri Westmonasterii cum omni obedientia et subiectione’ (ib. 325–8, no. 70; Mason, 84, no. 166). Malvern itself was certainly not part of the abbey’s great Worcestershire estate centred on Pershore; Powick and Longdon were its two large manors west of Severn, but Malvern lay between them. Yet by this date it had become a privileged dependency.11 If it had been so ‘ab initio’, since the beginning, it is surely odd that William of Malmesbury should have tied it so closely to Wulfstan and Worcester.

11 A Westminster cartulary has preserved an agreement between Prior Thomas and Abbot William, datable 1216 × 1222, which reserves to the monks of Malvern the right to elect their prior and send him to Westminster to tender his obedience to the abbot (Monasticon, iii. 449a). This lies behind Robinson’s statement, Gilbert Crispin, 34, ‘The prior of Great Malvern was elected by his brethren on the spot and was then sent up to Westminster to receive the abbot’s confirmation’ [explicitly attested in 1267 and 1341, Heads, ii. 105–6, though a footnote there shows the monks’ asking the abbot to make a choice at an indeterminate date]; he adds interpretative comment, ‘and the loyalty of the priory to the abbey was largely due to a desire to escape the jurisdiction of the bishop of Worcester’. In 1267, Heads cites Bishop Giffard’s register as saying that the priory had been conferred on Prior William by Bishop Walter de Cantilupe before he was elected by the monks and sent to the abbot; the chronology is incorrect, for Bishop Walter died some eleven months before Prior Thomas’s resignation caused the vacancy, leaving one to think that the register’s statement may be tendentious. In 1242, however, we find that the convent applied to the bishop to examine and confirm the newly elected prior, and the bishop’s resulting act was copied at Westminster (EEA 13 Worcester 1218–1268, 68, no. 75).
Later evidence has long influenced historians. A brief statement about the history of the priory was included in the register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard in connexion with a dispute over Prior William Ledbury, which had set the bishop at odds with the abbey in 1282–3. The statement was printed by Nash, *Collections for the history of Worcestershire*, ii. 121, and summarized in English by J. W. Willis Bund, *Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard*, Worcs Historical Society (1898–1902), 178. This says that Aldwin had begun to live at Malvern in King Edward’s time; the earl of Gloucester, named Hudde, had given to Aldwin the land where the priory stands together with the wood as far as Baldyate, where the hermit gathered monks to himself. Aldwin, ‘absque conniuentia diocesani et fundatoris’, made his community subject to the abbot of Westminster. In 1285 the prior of Great Malvern described his priory as a cell of Westminster abbey and proffered a charter of Henry III in favour of the abbey, dated 20 March 1265 (*PQW*, 255). In 1319, in pleas before the king at York, the prior, without regard to the facts of history, explained that the hermits were at Malvern before the Conquest, on the foundation of Urse d’Abetot (known as a despoiler of churches, who came to England only in or after 1066), and that it was the abbot of Westminster who, with the consent of Urse d’Abetot, placed there a prior and monks and gave them the three manors of Newland, Woodsfield, and Powick (*Dugdale*, ii. 876; *Monasticon*, iii. 441a, 447a). The plea goes on to mention the gift by Osbert fitz Pons of the manor of Longney (Glos) as well as two other gifts of lands included in the charters below, saying that King Henry I had ratified these donations and had himself given £10 of land at Baldehalle, Malvern, Northwood, and Fulford. The plea draws on the second charter, with added interpretation, leading Nash also to say that the priory’s greatest benefactor was King Henry I. This notion of a large royal gift is unsupported.

J. A. Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin* (Cambridge, 1911), 33–4, wrote, ‘It is not easy to determine the origin of the priory of Great Malvern, or the date of its first connexion with Westminster’, but he followed an uncritical notice in VCH *Worcs*, ii. 137, which ignored the evidence of William of Malmesbury and was instead lead by two documents printed by Dugdale and re-edited below, which are forgeries. R. R. Darlington, despite his editing both William of Malmesbury and the Worcester cartulary, was swayed by their reliance on the forgeries both in his notes

---

12 Many documents concerning this dispute were printed by W. Thomas, *Antiquitats prioratus Maioris Maluerne* (London, 1725).

These two charters in the name of King Henry I, long treated as authentic, refer to gifts made by Abbot Gilbert of Westminster, that is Gilbert Crispin, monk of Bec, who became abbot around 1085 and who died on 6 December 1117. Seisin in assarts at Woodsfield and Limberrow was delivered by two monks of the abbey, Hugh and Warner. Robinson recognized Warner as the monk mentioned as ‘quidam senior ex apostolico ouili Westmonasterii Warnerus nomine’, who was present at Ely in 1106 at the translation of the bodies of the saints (*Liber Eliensis*, II 147). This seniority led him to guess that the gift was made early in Gilbert’s time as abbot. It happens that the foundation date of Great Malvern priory is stated as 1085—the year in which Gilbert became abbot—in a chronicle from Worcester, written about 1300, in which Aldwin has become ‘Alwius’, but this source has no authority. The first of these charters refers to the gift of land at Baldehalle by William I, and it may be noted that the very late witness, John Leland, *Collectanea*, i. 62, reports the date of foundation as 18 William I, i.e. 1083–4. The second of the charters makes Edward the Confessor the donor of this small parcel of land, adding that King William consented to it. Edward, of course, was the refounder of Westminster. Both charters are forgeries, the first not before the middle of the twelfth century, the second perhaps from the thirteenth century. The first shows Gilbert Crispin as a donor before 1117, the other has pushed back the foundation of the priory to King Edward’s time. The Worcester statement in 1282 has fallen in with this story and named Earl Hudde as patron, that is Earl Odda, who died in 1056, six years before Wulfstan became bishop. He died in the monastic habit at Pershore and was remembered for his piety (*AASchr* (D), s.a. 1056; John of Worcester, ii. 580). Odda’s name would have been known at Westminster, for he had held the great estates of Pershore and Deerhurst that King Edward gave to the abbey.13

13 *Annales Monastici*, iv. 373. This is one of two entries added in the Worcester annals in BL MS Cotton Caligula A. x, copied c. 1303 from Winchester annals represented by BL MS Cotton Vespasian E. iv, which was written about twenty years earlier. Consecutive additions date the beginning of building-work on the priory at Worcester to 1084 and the foundation of Great Malvern ‘per Alwium monachum’ to 1085.

In the deed of confraternity at Worcester Aldwin the founder is named as if still alive alongside Prior Richard, who succeeded Prior Walcher in 1135 (Clt. Worcester, 158, no. 300). Indeed, Aldwin, ‘fundator Maluernie’, is said to have died in 1140 (Matthew Paris, Chronica maiora, ii. 174, source untraced). The implausibility of an active lifespan from before 1066 to 1140 has occasioned doubts (Darlington, Clt. Worcester, 158n; Heads, i. 90). If one follows only William of Malmesbury, however, Aldwin’s community of hermits had begun before Wulfstan died in 1095 and developed into a priory by the time William was writing in 1125. The notion that there were monks at Malvern in the time of Edward the Confessor is almost certainly a fiction. Whether it can have existed in William I’s time may be debated, but there is no evidence that monks at Great Malvern held lands at the time of the Domesday survey.

The absence of Malvern as whole from the Worcester folios of Great Domesday Book may be a clue to the origins of the priory. The existence of Malvern Chase as forest is a fact recognized by the survey, but its extent is not visibly entered in the book. The king’s main assets in the shire were the salt-wells of Droitwich and the supporting woods of Bromsgrove. The main landholders in the county were the monastic churches of Worcester with 300 hides, Pershore and Evesham, each with about 100 hides, and, with 200 hides, King Edward’s newly endowed abbey of Westminster. Between the Severn and the ridge of the Malvern hills in 1066 lay the Westminster estates of Powick and Longdon, separated by the bishop of Worcester’s lands of Upton and Ripple, 25 hides, with some woodland ‘in Malferna’, from which the bishop had honey and venison, but in 1086, ‘modo est in foresta’ (DB, i. 173b; Worcs § 2. 31). In other entries it is said at Queenhill (Worcs), ‘Silua est foris m(anerium) missa’, and at Eldersfield, ‘Haec extra m(anerium) est missa’ (DB, i. 180d; Herefs §§ 1. 45, 46), that is, they ceased to be manorial and were added to the forest. Malvern Chase was managed from Hanley Castle (between Upton and Malvern), which is entered in the Herefordshire folios in Domesday Book, fol. 180d, § 1. 42, under a

Pershore it may be that the 300 hides belonging to it were divided between king and earl in the early eleventh century in the same ratio as the later division between the 200 hides held by Westminster and the 100 hides given by Odda to Pershore abbey. Odda, however, certainly held Longdon, which belongs to the larger division. It is likely, therefore, that Odda was at some point granted the whole, giving 100 hides to Pershore, while the remainder reverted to the king on Odda’s death and was given by King Edward to Westminster as happened at Deerhurst.
heading that refers to Gloucestershire. J. H. Round, VCH Worcs, ii. 270–71, inferred that the forest was created by Earl William fitz Osbern before 1071. Domesday Book mentions that Earl William put two foresters outside his manors of Hanley and Bushley ‘to keep the woods’ (DB, i. 180d; Herefs § 1. 44), so he had held Hanley. Round inferred that it was the earl who gave the church of Hanley to the Norman abbey of Lire with the tithe of Malvern Chase, excluding venison, ‘ecclesiam de Hanleia cum appendicis suis et decimam foreste Maluernie preter uenationem’ (H2/1579, 1580, for Lire abbey, 1154 × 1158). So too he gave to Lire the tithe of Queenhill (Worcs), a little further south, as mentioned in Domesday Book (DB, i. 180d; Herefs § 1. 45), but in 1086 both Hanley and Queenhill were in the king’s hands after the forfeiture of Earl Roger fitz William in 1075. In Hanley Castle, a uillanus at Baldehalle paid two ora to the king’s manor. And at Baldehalle King William is said to have given one virgate to the monks of Malvern, according to our first charter (§1 below). Malvern lies in the forest but it was almost certainly on the land of the bishop, to the north of which lay the abbot of Westminster’s large manor of Powick. This is the territorial context in which the monastic community emerged. In defence of the legends it may be said that, if the earl after the Conquest controlled the area of the forest, then Earl Odda may have controlled it before, but in his time Westminster abbey held no land in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

What light do the royal charters shed on these matters? The two charters in the name of Henry I date themselves, in the second case explicitly, to 1127. If a true date, this would place their testimony after that of William of Malmesbury but most likely before Abbot Herbert conveyed Powick to the priory. So far as dating is possible, the gifts confirmed appear to date for the most part from the 1120s. The resources represented by these gifts do not amount to much, yet beginning with a supposedly earlier royal gift suggests an intention to confirm all the priory’s lands acquired since the foundation. It is a wide scatter of small gifts, but there is no major patron here. Apart from the royal virgate at Baldehalle, the gifts comprise one hide in Worcestershire and one in Staffordshire (§1 § 3), two shillings of land in Shropshire (§ 2), some land in Herefordshire (§ 6), several Welsh churches and tithes that would in time prove very valuable (§§ 5, 7, and 10), as well as the church of Eastleach Martin (Glos) (§ 5), two assarts near the priory (§ 4), a fishery on the lower Severn (§ 8), a virgate in Worcestershire (§ 9). The facts of the charter appear plausible, even if the words and script do not. What is
lacking is the core estate at Great Malvern, stated as four carucates in 
1291 (Taxatio, 228a), and in 1535 producing £70 (Monasticon, iii. 451), 
rather more than than the £44 from the valuable manor of Powick. The
second charter remedies this, beginning with the site at Malvern, whose
extent is not mentioned, and subjoining the virgate at Baldehalle and
unspecified assarts in the forest. If it were true that the site of the church
and the core estate were given by the king, at whatever date, one would
wonder why it was not from the start treated as a royal foundation. No
prior is named in the charters, but it would be possible to suppose that
Aldwin may have remained simply as ‘fundator’ with Walcher as the
first prior already in 1120 and alive until 1135, succeeded by Richard. In
this period, and presumably before the letter about Benedict, the priory
received from Abbot Herbert the fee farm of Powick (whose church of St
Peter was the decanal church). The terms were not necessarily very
beneficial, but the abbey was a major force in the area. The manor of
Powick occupied almost the whole area between Malvern and Worcester.
Given the likely date when the first of our charters was drafted, its lack
of clarity about the relationship between Malvern and Westminster is
puzzling. Westminster is not referred to as the mother house, but Abbot
Gilbert is mentioned as donor in relation to two gifts, both rather small,
two assarts near Malvern and a virgate at Castlemorton (§§ 2, 9).
Powick is not mentioned. The date of drafting is probably in the second
half of the twelfth century, when Malvern was certainly dependent on
Westminster, so why is this not referred to? Is there in this forgery a
glimpse of the priory as it was in 1127, still independent? The grant of
Powick may have sealed dependency. Chronology, however, is elusive.
To put our data into a sequence: the first patron was Bishop Wulfstan
before 1095, Westminster was a benefactor in a small way before 1117,
but by 1125 William of Malmesbury saw no reason to mention any link
between the priory and the abbey; we may have a charter reflecting the
endowment of the priory in 1127, which gives no hint of dependency, yet
no later than 1132 the letter about Benedict shows the monks of Malvern
already linked to Westminster. The grant of Powick cannot be dated
precisely in relation to these other facts. If the priory had begun in
association with Worcester, it had joined Westminster already while
Aldwin and Prior Walcher were alive. If it had been Abbot Gilbert’s
enterprise from the start—something difficult to see in the context of
tenures—the evidence coming from the community gives a very poor
picture.
The archive as a whole is badly preserved. Of the two forged charters printed here, the first survives as a putative original written in the second half of the twelfth century, now among the muniments at Madresfield, only three miles from Great Malvern. There is also one original deed of Richard fitz Pons from the early part of the century, now among the select charters collected by Lord Frederick Campbell (1729–1816), BL MS LFC Ch. xviii. 11 (see {1} § 5). The early records of Malvern are not represented in the rich store of documents at Westminster.

On one subject the forgery is curiously silent. The location in the wood of Malvern was certainly within Malvern Chase, so that one may well expect the king to be involved in the creation of the priory, which cannot but have encroached on the forest. There are, for example, acts for Tewkesbury (0000, Regesta 1413) and for Gloucester (0000, Regesta 1658) warning the forester not to interfere with the interests granted to the abbeys. The one virgate at Baldehalle may represent a royal gift to support the new community, whether given by King William or a later king. Yet if Malvern had been founded by the king, it would have been an abbey, but it was always a priory. Our best guess is to suppose that Aldwin’s monks settled on land provided by Bishop Wulfstan, land long held by his church though by this date under forest law. It was claimed that King William I consented, which is possible at a date near the end of his life. It was a poor priory, but the patronage of its rich neighbour, beginning in the time of Abbot Gilbert, would later, apparently c. 1130, come to outweigh any ties with Worcester cathedral. This appears to have happened amicably. The Worcester confraternity with Aldwin and Prior Richard says nothing about Westminster. Only in the 1150s is there any sign that the monks of Malvern would have preferred independence. The first surviving charter is incomplete in saying nothing about the site of the priory and imperfect in its drafting, but it does not necessarily present a false picture of the priory in 1127. If an authentic model supplied the address and witnesses, one can only wonder why it was decided to replace it with a forgery that fails to represent the realities of its own time.

00 Purported charter confirming gifts by King William I, Guy fitz Helgot, Abbot Gilbert of Westminster, and others
ORIGINAL: Madresfield Court (Worcs), Elmley Foundation, Box F1/viii (Bishop 561), 285 × 280 mm, including a narrow sealing-tongue, 20 mm, torn [A]. Bishop assigned the writing to his Scribe xi. Dr Webber comments: ‘I can understand why Bishop attributed it to Scribe xi, but on palaeographical evidence it cannot be what it purports to be. The anachronisms that suggest a date no earlier than the second half of the 12th century, and probably the final quarter, are littera notabilior E with a doubled stroke, which is most unusual before the 1160s, and the littera notabilior R, with a tall, narrow lobe (the right-hand compartment formed with an almost straight stroke, parallel to the shaft), and with a nearly horizontal limb, a combination of features that is uncommon before the late 12th century. In most other respects the hand is astonishingly close to that of Scribe xi, nor does it have the appearance of a deliberate imitation. I would not rule out the possibility that it is the same scribe whose hand had stayed much the same throughout his adult life, but who had adopted a few more recent conventions. The alternative is that it is an exceptionally good imitation.’

FACSIMILE: BL Facs 64 k (photograph, 1893); Worcester RO (photograph).

ENDORSEMENT: ‘Vniuersalis carta Henrici Reg(is) seni (sic)’ (13th cent.), ‘Exhibit’ per test’m examinat’ (late medieval).


PRINTED: Dugdale, i. 365–6, repr. Monasticon, iii. 447–48 (no. ii) [from B]; W. Thomas, Antiquitates prioratus Majoris Maluerne (London, 1725), Chartae originales, 182–4 [from Dugdale].

CALENDAR: Farrer 524; Regesta 1490.

H(enricus) rex Angl(orum) archiepiscopis episcopis abbatibus uicecomitibus et baronibus et omnibus fidelibus suis francis et angl(is) et walensibus totius Anglię et Wallię salutem. Sciatis me concessisse deo et ecclesie sanctę Marię de Maluerna et monachis ibidem deo seruientibus . [1] unam uirgatam terrę de Baldehala . et omnia que super terram sunt . pro animę meę et parentum meorum salute, sicut pater meus Will(elmu)s rex eam eis dedit et concessit pro remedio animę suę. Et illi IIII solidi qui inde de redditu acciebantur antequam monachi eam habeabant, ponantur in talea a mea, et ipsi inde sint quieti, sicut pater meus eis concessit. [2] Et concedo eis et dono illas duas solidatas terrę, id est Achiseia(m) que pertinet ad Stottesduna(m), unde Wido filius Helgoti solebat reddere II solidos per annum de firma. Et concedo eam eis quietam de illis II solidis et de omnibus aliis seruiciis pro salute animę meę. [3] Et concedo eis duas hidas terrę omnino quietas de
geldis omnibus et omnibus aliis querelis et scotis, quarum una est in Wirecestrescir’ et altera in Statfordescir’ apud Quata(m).
filius Will(elm)i dedit et concessit et sicut Rotb(ertus) comes Gloec’ de cuius feodo ecclesia illa est concessit. Et uolo et firmiter precipio ut ipsi ea omnia sicut predicta sunt, ita bene teneant et in pace et quiete et honorifice, sicut domini superius enumerati eas eis concesserunt et dederunt. Testibus Ric(ardo) episcopo Herefordie et Bernardo episcopo de Sancto Dauid et Simone episcopo Wigornië et Will(elm)o camerario de Tancardiuilla et Brientio filio comitis et Will(elm)o de Albineio pincerna et Milton(e) Gloec’str’ et Adam de Port et Pagano filio Ioh(ann)is et Gaufr(ido) filio Pag(ani) et Rog(er)o de Candos et Walt(er)o de Bello Campo. Apud Herefordiam.

\[1\] tallia B  \[2\] ita | written with suspension mark as if itam A

Henry king of the English to archbishops bishops abbots sheriffs and barons and all his sworn men French and English and Welsh of all England and Wales greeting. [1] Know that I have granted to God and the church of St Mary of Malvern and to the monks serving God there one virgate of land in Baldehala and everything upon the land for the salvation of my soul and my parents’, just as my father King William gave and granted it to them for the remedy of his soul. And the four shillings which used to be received as render from it before the monks had it shall be put in my tally and they shall be quit thereof as my father granted to them. [2] And I grant to them and give those two shillings of land, that is Achiseia, which belongs to Stottesdon, whereof Guy fitz Helgod used to render two shillings per year in farm. And I grant it to them quit of those two shillings and of all other services for the salvation of my soul. [3] And I grant to them two hides of land altogether quit of all gelds and all other plaints and scots, one of which is in Worcestershire and the other in Staffordshire at Quatt. [4] And I grant to them those lands of Woodsfield and of Limberrow, those new assarts, just as Gilbert abbot of Westminster by common consent of the chapter of the church granted and gave them and just as Hugh and Warner, monks, perambulated them and delivered them to the foresaid monks on behalf of their abbot. [5] And I grant them the church of the castle of Richard fitz Pons of Cantref Bychan and two carucates of that land and all the tithes of Richard from all his rents of that land, and the church of [East]leach [Martin] and one hide and a virgate of land in the same vill and the tithe of Richard from the same vill, and the tithe of the demesne of Richard from land in Straddle that is called Becchen, just as the foresaid Richard and Matilda his wife and Simon his son gave and granted to them for the redemption of his soul. [6] And I grant to them the land of Hatfield which they exchanged with Roger de Chandos in return for his land in Straddle, with my consent, so that they shall hold it in alms of me in chief, as free and quit of all secular service as they used to hold it, excepting this alone, that they shall render thereof my gelds which they used not to render of their land in Straddle. [7] And I grant them the land of Llanspyddid with all that pertains to it, and some land in Chilieni, and the church of Aberyscir with all tithes and other things that pertain, and the church of Merthyr Cynog with all tithes and other things that pertain, just as Miles
of Gloucester gave and granted them to them. [8] And I grant them a fishery on the Severn which pertains to the land of Longney together with the men who keep it and their land, just as Osbert fitz Pons gave and granted it to them. [9] And I grant them the virgate of land in Moreton which Landric of Clifford restored to Gilbert abbot of Westminster which Gilbert gave to the monks of Malvern, just as Abbot Gilbert, with the common consent of the chapter, gave and granted it to them. [10] And I grant them the church of St German of Lanrieger, just as Robert fitz William gave and granted it and as Earl Robert of Gloucester granted to whose fee that church belongs. And I will and firmly command that they shall hold well and in peace and quietly and honourably all as foresaid just as the lords above listed gave and granted them to them. Witness Richard bishop of Hereford and Bernard bishop of St Davids and Simon bishop of Worcester and William the chamberlain of Tancarville and Brian fitz Count and William d’Aubigny pincerna and Miles of Gloucester and Adam de Port and Pain fitz John and Geoffrey fitz Pain and Roger de Chandos and Walter de Beauchamp. At Hereford.

DATE: On the basis of the witness list, which appears authentic, after Bishop Simon of Worcester returned to England following Easter (29 March) 1125 (John of Worcester, iii. 158–9), and therefore after the king returned from Normandy, 11 September 1126; before the death of Richard de Capella, bishop of Hereford, 15 August 1127.

ADDRESS: General address including Wales.

WITNESS: Richard bishop of Hereford, Bernard bishop of St Davids, Simon bishop of Worcester, William de Tancarville, chamberlain, Brian fitz Count, William d’Aubigny pincerna, Miles of Gloucester, Adam de Port, Pain fitz John, Geoffrey fitz Pain, Roger de Chandos, Walter de Beauchamp. There is a very similar witness list at Hereford in 000 for Llanthony priory, which is datable to 1127.

PLACE: Hereford.

CONTEXT: The charter is a forgery with a respectable witness list. It explicitly confirms gifts of land and churches in several counties and in Wales. As discussed in the headnote, it appears, for whatever reason, to omit the core of the estate at Malvern.

[1] The name ‘Baldehalle’ occurs in DB, i. 180d; Herefs § 1. 42, as part of the king’s manor of Hanley Castle, for which another entry appears at fol. 163c; Glos § 1. 34; Hanley Castle is located within the bounds of Worcestershire between Malvern and the Severn. A small royal donation is given pride of place. Mention of just one virgate is difficult to relate to the four shillings (the geld payable on two hides), credited at the Exchequer, which are not visible in the pipe roll. ‘Baldehalle’ is clearly one of the foundation gifts, which the monks wished to attribute to William I here and to Edward the Confessor in the second charter. It has been referred to as a lost manor with a chapel in the parish of Guarlford, a little to the west of Great Malvern (VCH Worcs, iv. 132–3).

[2], [3] These clauses are merged in the second charter, taking Guy fitz Helgod as the donor in both cases. The connexion with Stottesdon in Shropshire tempts one to look to Helgod, the eponym of Castle Holgate, now Holdgate, Salop (’Castrum Helgoti in Scalopescrya’, Regesta 1050), who was a tenant of Earl Roger in the county in 1086. This was the conjecture made by Eyton, Shropshire, iii. 174. (A less likely suggestion is made in Domesday People, 247, that Guy’s father was Helgod, tenant of Robert of Stafford in 1086.) The place Achiseia appears in a more English spelling in the second charter, § 6: ‘Dono etiam eis terram de Northw’ ad sartand’ inter Hauekesbroc et
Lindrigisiche ab Henedwye in Sabrinam, quiete et libere imperpetuum possidendam, et ex altera parte Sabrine dono eis duas solidatas terre, id est Hakiesheia, cum quadam parte silue que pertinuit ad Stottesd’ per terminos illos quos Fulco uicecomes perambulare fecit, qui eos inde per preceptum meum seisuit’. Northwood, in Wribbenhall (Worcs), is on the east bank of the river (though the three minor names associated with it in the second charter have not been traced); Achiseia or Hakiesheia lies on the west bank opposite. The latter can be identified with Dowles, a detached part of Stottesdon, which was transferred to Worcestershire as recently as 1895 (PN Worcs, 47). ‘Dowlys et Northwood’, Shropshire, still belonged to the priory in 1535 (Monasticon, iii. 452). The detached location demanded the explanation ‘ que pertinet ad Stottesden’. The perambulation by Fulk the sheriff is chronologically plausible: he was sheriff of Shropshire already in 1102, serving Richard de Belmeis, and still in 1121 and beyond. Whether the king would issue a writ to order livery of seisin for Guy’s gift may be doubted. Guy’s land in Worcestershire has not been identified. Quatt (Salop) was entered in Domesday Book as three hides in the fee of Earl Roger of Shrewsbury in Warwickshire (DB, i. 239b; Warks § 12. 8). When his brother Earl Robert of Shrewsbury was forfeit in 1102, the fee reverted to the king, and King Henry was supposed by Eyton to have divided Quatt between three sons of Helgod. He identified the danegeld exemption of the monks of Malvern in Warwickshire, PR 31 Henry I, 108, 2s for one hide, as relating to this hide at Quatt. Quatt Malvern remained a distinct vill. Eyton also found Guy fitz Helgot as witness to a deed of Herbert fitz Helgot of Castle Holgate concerning half a hide at Dudmaston, between Quatford and Quatt Malvern (Shropshire, iii. 185–6). He took Herbert for our Guy’s elder brother, dating the deed c. 1130, and supposed it to be the oldest to survive from Shropshire, but his lithograph shows handwriting from the thirteenth century, and the persons may belong to a later generation. (In his time the deed was in the possession of W. Wolryche Whitmore, Esq., of Dudmaston, but it is no longer among the family papers in the Shropshire Archives (2292).) It is possible that the unidentified Achiseia in Stottesdon and the unnamed hide in Worcestershire had a similar descent.

[4] Woodsfield (PN Worcs, 226), as it now is, lies in the parish of Powick and was therefore presumably an assart on the abbey’s land. The name Limberrow survived only in the name of a row of cottages on the 1:10000 map (PN Worcs, 215). It lies in the ancient parish of Great Malvern, and its territorial connexion with the abbey is obscure, but again one presumes it was part of Powick. Were these two assarts really given by Abbot Gilbert, who died in December 1117, years before Abbot Herbert conveyed the whole manor of Powick to the priory, as referred to in the headnote?

[5] Cantref Bychan was given to Richard fitz Pons by King Henry, according to Brut y Tywysogion, and his castle in the district was at Llandovery (Carms), where Richard’s man was Maredudd ap Rhudderch (Brut y Tywysogion, s.a. 1113, corrected to 1116, ed. Jones, 40). Richard was a benefactor of Llanthony Prima (0000, Regesta 1681). Gerald of Wales has a story of scandalous monks from Malvern at their cell near the castle in Cantref Bychan (Speculum ecclesiae II 32). The church of Leccen can be identified with Eastleach Martin (Glos), where Drogo fitz Pons and Walter fitz Pons had ten hides in 1086 (DB, i. 168d; Glos §§ 54. 2; 55. 1). The exact relationship between them and Richard fitz Pons is not attested. The deed of Richard fitz Pons and his wife Matilda has survived among Lord Frederick Campbell’s charters, a choice selection of indeterminate origin given to the British Museum in 1814, BL MS LFC Ch. xviii. 11, and was printed in the Monasticon, iii. 448–9 (no. iv); it conveys the church of
Eastleach with five virgates of land to the church of St Mary and St Michael of Malvern and the monks there serving God along with the tithes of his demesne and his court of the vill. With it, MS LFC Ch. xviii. 11* is a confirmation by Bishop Simon at the request of Prior R(ichard), datable 1139 × 1141, at the dedication of the church of St Michael and St Martin, Eastleach Martin (Patterson, *Original Acta*, 43–4, no. 53; *EEA 33 Worcester 1062–1185*, 41–2, no. 56). The name *Estradel* refers to the Golden Valley (Bannister, *Herefordshire*, 179); *Becchen* is presumably the place that appears as *Becce, Becha* in the Golden Valley in *Domesday Book* (*DB*, i. 187a; Herefs § 25. 4; *Herefordshire Domesday*, 67). Richard’s gift may be roughly dated from a comparison between his deed in this context and another relating to the manor of Eastleach, attested by Miles of Gloucester, after 1126 (Round, *Ancient Charters*, 20–23, no. 12, from PRO DL36/1).

[6] Hatfield, Herefs, was listed at five hides in 1086 as part of the royal estate of Leominster (*DB*, i. 180b; Herefs § 1. 11); its tenant was Hugh l’Asne, who held other manors in the county. His fee, named from the castle of Snodhill, near Peterchurch (Herefs), in the Golden Valley, passed to Robert de Chandos (d. 1120), founder of the priory of Goldcliff (Monm) (0000, *Regesta* 1014). Roger is Robert’s son and successor. The Balliol Domesday copy, *Herefordshire Domesday*, 11, has a marginal note against Hatfield, ‘monachorum Maluerne’ (and see comments, ib. 84–5). It remained part of the abbey’s estate until the Dissolution, when the abbey also had land in Peterchurch itself. The name *Strada* here, ‘in ualle de Strade’ in the second charter, is evidently a corrupt form of *Estradel*, found in Latin as (e.g.) *Vallis Stradelie*, where the monks had land by gift of Richard fitz Pons (see § 5) The gift was not made before Roger inherited in 1120. He is one of the witnesses to the first charter.

[7] The first and last place-names in this clause are Llanspyddid and Merthyr Cynog, Brecknockshire, in territory formerly held by Bernard de Neufmarché which had passed by marriage into the control of Miles of Gloucester only in or after 1121 (0000, *Regesta* 1280 for Miles of Gloucester). T. Jones, A *History of Brecknockshire* (London, 1805–9), ii, 192, 709, has this information from Dugdale. When the *Valor* was taken in 1535, the spiritualities of Merthyr Cynog and Llanspyddid were the largest single element in the income of the priory, £73 2s 4d, and the monks had a house, Mynachty, in Merthyr Cynog (Jones, *Brecknockshire*, ii. 186). *Bereschi* is a bad transcription, lacking first and last letters, of Aberescri, now Aberyscir; Jones, *Brecknockshire*, ii. 207, followed by Lewis’s *Wales*, s.n., names ‘Hugh Surdwal’ as tenant of ‘Bernard Newmarch’ here. A motte where the Yscir enters the Usk probably dates from this period (P. M. Remfrey, *Castles of Breconshire* (Little Logaston, Herefs, 1998), 99–101). Proximity is the only basis for associating *Cheleni* with the river Cileni, which enters the Usk a few miles upstream from Aberyscir; the property implied is not identified.

[8] Longney (Glos), held by an Englishman in 1066 and 1086, had subsequently been granted to Osbert fitz Pons (VCH Glos, x. 200). Osbert gave a fishery here to Pershore abbey along with the reversion of the church (Warner & Ellis, *Facsimiles*, no. 5); this gift is very roughly datable c. 1115. The monks of Great Malvern are here said to have had a fishery and the land of the fishermen, but in due course they would receive and retain the whole manor of Longney (*Valor*, iii. 238). [2] below says that the gift was made in King Henry’s presence at Winchester. This cannot be dated. Ste/654, however, instructs the shire of Gloucester that Longney and a half-fishery belonged of right to Pershore abbey, by gift of Osbert fitz Pons, and that Pershore was seised of them at the time of King Henry’s death. It appears that Osbert’s gifts had created confusion. In
Edward I’s time the prior recognized that the abbot had six tenants in Longney (PQW, 255b).

[9] Although Moreton-in-Marsh (Glos) and nearby Bourton-on-the-Hill formed part of the large Westminster estate originally dependent on the minster at Deerhurst (DB, i. 166b; § 19. 2), it is likely that this virgate belonged to Morton, later Castlemorton, in the manor of Longdon, which, like Powick, was a part of the abbot of Westminster’s Pershore estate lying west of the river Severn. As with § 4 above, one is expected to believe that the gift was made no later than 1117. Landric of Clifford is presumably a local man, associated with Clifford (Herefs), rather than someone connected with the abbey. The wording of the clause is peculiarly clumsy.

[10] Entered in Patterson, Earldom of Gloucester, 172 (no. 239), only on the basis of the present document. The Welsh lands of the earl of Gloucester lay in Glamorgan, but Welsh dedications to St German (Garmon in Welsh) tend to be in north Wales, so this is a church that may have implications for the distribution of early Welsh dedications, if it could only be located. The form Lanrieragh is corrupt; a best guess in Glamorgan may be Llanfarach (parish of Llantrisant), but Llanfarach has no church.

AUTHENTICITY: Apart from the address and witnesses, which are correct, the drafting has little in common with the work of a royal scribe. The dispositive words do not agree with the usual formulation of the king’s confirming grants by others, the parcels clauses show too much detail for royal drafting, and the Quare uolo clause is a thin imitation, though its unusual wording, ‘sicut domini superius numerati eas eis concesserunt et dederunt’ is a creative generalization, interesting for its use of the word ‘domini’. The script, as noted above, although closely similar to the hand of Scribe xi, contains anachronistic elements more typical of the late twelfth century. One may wonder whether the script of an authentic original was imitated. If the drafting belongs to the late twelfth century, however, the question must arise as to what other sources it used and whether they are honestly represented. The gift of Baldehalle by King William appears doubtful but cannot be contradicted. For the other clauses there may have been deeds available like one extant deed of Richard fitz Pons. Considering the context set out in the headnote, it is impossible to be certain whether the gifts said to have been made by Abbot Gilbert were so made.

2 Purported charter confirming gifts by King Edward and King William I, Guy fitz Helgot, Abbot Gilbert of Westminster, and others

CHANCERY ENROLMENTS: Charter Roll 14 Edward II, C52/107, mem. 4, no. 12, inspeximus for the prior and convent of [Great] Malvern, dated 1 March 1320 (CalCh, iii. 434) [B]; Patent Roll 50 Edward III, C66/294, mem. 15, inspeximus for the prior and convent of Great Malvern, dated 19 June 1376 (CalPat 1374–1377, 282) [C, from inspeximus of 14 Edward II]; Confirmation Roll 4 Henry VIII, pt 1, C56/47, mem. 12, no. 9, inspeximus for the prior and convent of Great Malvern, dated 10 July 1512 [from inspeximus of 14 Edward II].
H(enricus) dei gratia rex Anglor(um) et dux Normann(orum)
archiepiscopis episcopis abbatibus comitibus uicecomitibus
omnibusque baronibus et ministris suis francis et anglis totius
Anglie salutem. Sciatis communiter me non tantum
modernitatis uerum etiam antecessorum meorum et posteritatis
mee utilitati prouidentem. In nomine sancte et individuae
Trinitatis, ob honorem et amorem gloriose uirginis Marie
genitricis dei ecclesiam Maluernie ipsius nomine dedicatam et
monachorum habitacioni deputatam cum omnibus ad illam
pertinentibus pro redempzione anime mei et pro animabus
patris et matris et fratris mei et pro successorum meorum
salute, in regie potestatis mee manutenemento et defensione
suscepisse. [1] In primis itaque locum ipsum in quo prefata
ecclesia constructa est cum terris et possessionibus ab
antecessoribus meis regibus, bone uidelicet memorie rege
Edwardo et Willelmo patre meo uel etiam a meipso sibi
collatis, sicut in omnipotentis dei et beate uirginis obsequio,
pro remissione peccatorum meorum, pro pace regni et
stabilitate indesinenter occupatum manere desidero, ita enim
ab omni seculari seruicio cunctis temporibus liberum et
quietum clamo et firmiter esse precipio. Assarta denique que a
fratribus eiusdem monasterii uel eorum sumptu in foresta
Maluernie licentia patris mei uel mea facta sunt, cum una
uirgata terre in Baldeh(alle), de feudo de Hanley quam rex
Edwardus dedit, sicut pater meus rex W(illelmus) concessit
libera esse precipio, et de IIII\textsuperscript{r} solidis qui de predicta uirgata
ad scaccarium reddebantur antequam monachi eam haberent,
ipsos imperpetuum quietos esse concedo. [2] Nouam quoque
terram cum Wrdesf\textsuperscript{a} et Limberg sitam inter Poiwicam\textsuperscript{b} et
Bald\textsuperscript{c}, sicut Walterus de Glouc’ et alii barones mei ex parte
mea et Gisleb(ertus) abbas Westmonast(erii) et conuentus per
Hugonem et Warnerium monachos suos ex parte sua prenominatis fratribus liberaluerunt et dederunt, ab omni seculari servicio liberam esse concedo et confirmo. [3] Huic eciam regali munificentie auctum dono, uillam scilicet de Langen’ sitam in Glouc(ester)sire, cum ecclesia et cunctis pertinentiis suis, quam Osbertus filius Poncii predictis fratribus apud Winton(iam) in presentia mea dedit, sed ut eam futuris honorabilius et securius possiderent, in manu mea illam sicut quam non parentum successione, sed patris mei gratuito dono habuerat, ab omni sui uel heredum suorum reclamatione solutam et quietam reddidit, et ego eam prefato monasterio et eiusdem loci fratribus manu propria dedi, et in perpetuam elemosinam regia auctoritate confirmaui, ut ipsam de cetero cum omni libertate et quietudine securis servicii de me et successoribus meis in capite teneant. Hoc autem determinate obseruandum constituo, ut nec abbas Westm(onasterii), nec quelibet alia persona securis uel ecclesiastica, de hoc beneficio nostro ius uel potestatem habeat aliud statuendi, uel illud ad alium locum transferendi. [4] Dono insuper eis duas hidas terre quas Wido filius Holgodi in manu mea reddidit, quarum una est in Wyrec(ester)sire, et altera in Staffordesire, nomine Quata\textsuperscript{d}, quietas omnino de omnibus geldis et omnibus alii querelis et scotis, predicto modo de me et successoribus meis in capite tenend(as). [5] Concedo quoque eis et confirmo uillam de Fuleford sitam in Staffordesire, quietam et liberam ab omni securis servicii, sicut unquam eam tempore patris et fratris mei melius tenuerunt. [6] Dono etiam eis terram de Northw’ ad sartand(um) inter Hauekesbroc et Lindrigische ab Henedweye\textsuperscript{e} in Sabrinam, quiete et libere imperpetuum possidendam, et ex altera parte Sabrine dono eis duas solidatas terre, id est Hakiesheia, cum quadam parte silue que pertinuit ad Stottesd’ per terminos illos quos Fulco uicecomes perambulare fecit, qui eos inde per preceptum meum seisiuit, et de illis duobus solidis et de omnibus aliis serviciis eam
liberam esse concedo. [7] Dono quoque eis et confirmo uillam de Hatfeld sitam in Herefortesire cum suis pertinentiis, quam concessu meo excambiauerunt Rogero de Chandos pro terra quam prius dederam illis in ualle de Strade, in liberam elemosinam de me et successoribus meis in capite tenendam. Volo igitur et firmiter precipio quatinus prenominati fratres terras omnes prescriptas cum suis pertinentiis, sicut dominacam elemosinam meam puram et liberam, bene et in pace et honorifice, cum libertatibus que sake, socne, tol, et theam et infangenetheof nominantur, perpetualiter teneant, quia eas ab omni regia consuetudine et ab omni collectione census que geld uel denegeld seu scot angl(ice) uocatur, ab omnibus placitis et querelis et sciris et hundredis et auxiliis uicecomitum et ab omnibus rebus et occasionibus et ab omni castelli seu quocumque opere seruili\textsuperscript{f} uel etiam seruicio seculari, quietas imperpetuum clambo, et liberas esse concedo. Et ne aliquis super hoc eis uim uel uiolentiam uel injuriuam aliquam inferat uel inferre presumat, potestate regia defendo. Contestor itaque omnes heredes meos et reges omnes qui post me in Angl(ia) regnaturi sunt, per tremendum iudicium dei, ut hanc meam et illorum elemosinam manuteneant et defendant ut deus regnum ipsorum gubernet et adaugeat, pacificet et defendat, et ipsi post temporale regnum habere mereantur eternum.\textsuperscript{f} Quicumque autem eam infrungerint uel infringere temptauerint seu diminuerint nisi factum suum digna satisfactione correxerint, in presenti, fame et clade pereant, et cum Iuda traditore domini partem habeant in futuro. Ego H(enricus) dei gratia Anglorum rex hanc donationis mee cartam signo sancte crucis confirmaui. Facta est autem anno uerbi incarnati MCXXVII\textsuperscript{g}, indictione V, Wintonie.

Signum + regis Henr(ici)
Signum + regine Adelicie
Signum + Rogeri episcopi Sar’
Signum + Bernardi episcopi de Sancto Dauid
Signum + Gaufridi cancellarii
Signum + Willelmi de Tancaru(illa)
Signum + Pag(ani) filii Iohannis
Signum + Milonis de Glocestria.

\[a\] Wyndesf’ B Windess’ C \[b\] Porwicam BC \[c\] Blad’ B Baldi C \[d\] Quarta BC
\[e\] inter Hauekebroke et Lindrigisiche ab Heneduneia C
\[f\] near identical wording in 0000, Regesta 489, Ste/929, and H2/2807
\[g\] MCXXVIII DE

ABSTRACT FOR FOREST PROCEEDINGS: Cartae Antiquae Roll II, C52/33, mem. 9, no. 29, mid 13th cent.; Chancery Miscellanea, C47/12/8 (formerly Cartae Antiquae Roll NN, C52/37), a roll of excerpts from charters made for Ralph de Hengham in connexion with the perambulation of forests, 1298; Roll of transcripts and excerpts relating to the forest, 28 Edward I, E32/256, mem. 7d. The relationship between the copies is not established. It appears that the two clauses relating to assarts have been excerpted in the mid-thirteenth century and the abstract recopied at a later date. The inclusion of words not found in the charter as enrolled in 1320 raises the question whether there was another version of the forgery or whether the additional wording arose only in the context of excerpting for the purpose of forest proceedings.

Henry by God’s grace king of the English and duke of the Normans to archbishops bishops earls sheriffs and all his barons and officials French and English of all England greeting. Know in common that I, taking thought not just for the need of the present but also of my ancestors and of my posterity, for the redemption of my soul and the souls of my father and mother and brother and for the salvation of my successors, in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity, for the honour and love of the glorious virgin Mary mother of God, have received into the maintenance and protection of my royal power the church of Malvern, dedicated in her name and assigned for a habitation of monks together with everything pertaining to it. [1] First therefore I desire that the place where the church is constructed with lands and possessions conferred on it by my royal ancestors, namely by King Edward of good memory and by my father William and also by me, shall remain in uninterrupted occupation, for the remission of
my sins and for the peace and stability of the realm, just as in the service of almighty
God and of the blessed virgin, so I quitclaim and command that it is free for all time
from all secular service. And the assarts which have been made in the forest of Malvern
by the brethren of the same monastery or at their cost by my father’s licence or my own,
together with a virgate of land in Baldehalle, which King Edward gave of the fee of
Hanley, just as my father King William granted, I command to be free, and I grant that
the four shillings which used to be paid from the foresaid virgate to the Exchequer
before the monks had it shall be forever quit. [2] Also Newland lying between Powick
and Baldehalle together with Woodsfield and Limberrow, just as Walter of Gloucester
and others of my barons on my part and Gilbert abbot of Westminster and the convent
through their monks Hugh and Warner on their part delivered and gave it to the
forenamed brethren, I grant and confirm that it is free of all secular service. [3] Also I
give an increase to this royal generosity, namely the vill of Longney, situated in
Gloucestershire, with the church and all its pertinents, which Osbert fitz Pons gave to
the foresaid brethren in my presence at Winchester: in order that they should possess it
more honourably and securely in the future, he restored it into my hand, free and quit
of all claim from him and his heirs, just as he had received it, not by inheritance from
his forebears but by the free gift of my father, and I have given it by my own hand to the
foresaid monastery and the brethren of that place and I have confirmed it by royal
authority as perpetual alms, so that they shall hereafter hold it in chief of me and of my
successors with all freedom and acquittance of secular service. And I establish
expressly that this shall be observed, that in the case of this our gift neither the abbot of
Westminster nor any other person, lay or religious, shall have any right or power of
deciding other or of transferring it to any other place. [4] In addition I give the two
hides of land which Guy fitz Helgod restored in my hand, one of which is in
Worcestershire, the other in Staffordshire, namely Quatt, quit of all gelds and all other
plaints and scots, to hold in chief of me and of my successors in the foresaid manner.
[5] Also I grant to them and confirm the vill of Fulford, situated in Staffordshire, quit
and free of all secular service, just as ever they well held it in my father’s time or my
brother’s. [6] I give them also the land of Northwood to make assarts between
Haukesbroc and Lindrigisiche from Henedweye to the river Severn, to possess forever
quietly and freely, and on the other side of the Severn I give them two shillings of land,
namely Hakiesheia, together with a part of the wood that pertains to Stottesdon by
those bounds which Fulk the sheriff caused to be perambulated, who seised them
thereof by my command, and I grant that it is free of those two shillings and all
other services. [7] Also I give and confirm to them the vill of Hatfield situated in
Herefordshire with its pertinents, which, with my consent, they conveyed in exchange to
Roger de Chandos in return for land that I had given to them in the Straddle valley, in
free alms to hold in chief of me and my successors. Therefore I will and firmly
command that the forenamed brethren shall perpetually hold all the forewritten lands
with their pertinents as my lordly alms, pure and free, well and in peace and
honourably with the liberties that are called sake and soke, toll and team and
infangthief, because I quitclaim them forever and grant them to be free of all royal
custom and of all collection of tax, which is called in England geld or danegeld or scot,
of all pleas and plaints and shires and hundreds and sheriffs’ aids and of all things and
occasions and of all castle or any other servile work or also secular service. And by
royal power I forbid that anyone shall hereafter bring or presume to bring any force or
violence or injury. And therefore I adjure all my heirs and all kings who will rule after
me in England, by the fearful judgement of God, that they shall maintain and defend this my alms and theirs, so that God shall govern and increase their realm and shall be its peace and defence, and so that they themselves shall deserve to have after a temporal realm an eternal one. Whoever infringe or try to infringe it, or diminish it, shall, unless the put matters right with just recompense, perish of hunger and slaughter in this world and in the next share the fate of Judas who betrayed our Lord. I Henry by God’s grace have confirmed this charter of my donation with the sign of the holy cross. This was done in the year of the Incarnate Word 1127 in the fifth indiction at Winchester.

Sign + of King Henry
Sign + of Queen Adeliza
Sign + of Bishop Roger of Salisbury
Sign + of Bishop Bernard of St Davids
Sign + of Geoffrey the chancellor
Sign + of William de Tancarville
Sign + of Pain fitz John
Sign + Miles of Gloucester

DATE: Dated 1127 at Winchester, though the witnesses might have come from {1}, which was dated at Hereford. Farrer associates this act with 0000, Regesta 1485, for Gloucester abbey, with some of the same witnesses, dated, in one copy of William of Malmesbury’s Gesta regum Anglorum, V § 398 (ed. Mynors, i. 830), at Winchester, 1127, and probably at Whitsuntide, 22 May 1127. Where the forger would have found the year is not apparent. The abstract in forest proceedings gives the year as 1128, which is an error; the indictment is given as V, which is correct for 1127.

ADDRESS: General address.

WITNESS: The king and queen, Bishop Roger of Salisbury, Bishop Bernard of St Davids, Geoffrey Rufus, chancellor, William de Tancarville, chamberlain, Pain fitz John, and Miles of Gloucester.

PLACE: Winchester.

CONTEXT: This is a conspicuous forgery, which served to confirm in elaborate terms gifts made to the priory at an early date. It shows in its wording the influence of other forgeries made for Westminster itself; some that survive as originals in the Westminster archive may point to a date in the thirteenth century. None the less, this document appears to have been based on the first forgery (see Authenticity), whose archival descent was at Great Malvern rather than at Westminster. It elaborates a good deal on its source, but it also omits all the property in Wales ({1} §§ 5, 7, and 10, and this despite the apparent value of the Welsh churches); it also omits the church of Eastleach (§ 5) and the land at Castlemorton (§ 9). Wherever it seeks to represent a gift as made by King Henry, it is enhancing on the first forgery, in which the king only consents to others’ gifts.

[1] A wordy claim that the site of the priory was given by King Edward, regarded as founder of Westminster abbey. For the virgate named Baldehalle see {1} § 1.

[2] See {1} § 4. The wording of § 3 below, referring to royal munificence, makes it appear that § 3 was meant to follow § 1. The intrusive § 2 does not involve a royal gift. The circumstantial detail involving Walter as sheriff of Gloucester and other barons on behalf of the king alongside the abbey’s representatives is difficult to interpret. How would the second forger from Westminster know this? The fact that Hanley Castle was
connected with Gloucestershire in 1086 may offer an explanation, but could a forger in the thirteenth century have known that? Was there really a writ ordering the sheriff to assist in the livery of seisin?

[3] See {1} § 8. It is now stated that the vill of Longney had been given, not merely a fishery.


[5] Fulford, Staffs, was one virgate (though with land for two ploughs), held by King William in 1086 (DB, i. 246d; Staffs § 1. 40). The wording here, ‘as my father and my brother held it’, without adding himself afterwards, may, if taken from an authentic act, imply a gift by William II or by Henry I. One would expect a royal gift to be treated more prominently even in a forgery.

[6] See {1} §§ 2, 3. The three minor names, both English, have not been located.

[7] See {1} § 6. The revised wording introduces the first person, as if the king were the donor of the land exchanged with Roger de Chandos.

AUTHENTICITY: Manifestly a forgery, with much elaboration. It was probably based directly on {1} with added information such as might well be known to a draftsman at the priory and with added stipulations such as a creative forger might wish to include. This may be inferred from any comparison. Take, for example, this clause:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earlier text</th>
<th>Expanded text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Et concedo eis duas hidas terre omnia quietas de geldis omnibus et omnibus alis que relis et scotis, quarum una est in Wirecestrescir’ et altera in Staffordescir’ apud Quatam.</td>
<td>Dono insuper eis duas hidas terre quas Wido filius Holgodia in manu mea reddidit, quarum una est in Wyrecestersire, et altera in Staffordesire, nomine Quata, quietas omnino de omnibus geldis et omnibus alis que relis et scotis, predicto modo de me et successoribus mei in capite tenend’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Everything has been taken over, including the anomalous formulation that includes querelae ‘plaints’ along with gelds and scots, surely the product of bad drafting by the earlier forger. The reviser has correctly linked § 3 to § 2, and he has added the notion that the donor restored his land to the king, so that the king could make the gift to the monks and the monks could hold in chief of the Crown, a procedure elaborated in greater detail in the previous clause. There is clear evidence to suggest that the drafting was done at Westminster abbey. Two passages are shown in italics in the text above. The anathema is worded very much like that found in a series of forgeries for Westminster in the names of William I (W1/290), Henry I (Regesta 489), Stephen (Ste/929), and Henry II (H2/2807), though it is not in the direct line. Apart from the charter of William I, they also share with this the wording on exemption from gelds, attendance at courts, and other services for Westminster; in another act in William I’s name (W1/293), a forgery drafted by Prior Osbert de Clare, we find a prototype for the wording on geld (though it goes back ultimately to an authentic writ of 1086, W1/326, ‘ab omni mea consuetudine et censu pecuniæ quæ geld uocatur anglicæ’).