

## Hemming (fl. c.1095)

Benedictine monk, chronicler and pioneer archivist. Though nothing is known of his family or station, Hemming's name suggests that he was of Anglo-Scandinavian stock, and he was a member and sometime sub-prior of the community of St Mary's in Worcester. By his time St Mary's had become a monastic cathedral foundation, an arrangement almost unique to England, which, it has been suggested, may have owed something to Bede's recommendation in his 'Letter to Ecgbert'.

From the eleventh century, the increase in administrative documents led to an appreciation of the need to store, identify and preserve records. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, seems to have taken a role in this reform, and the first use of the word 'archive' (Latin, *archiva*) in its modern sense seems to date from a letter written by him in the 1080s. However, at Worcester, it was the reforming St Wulfstan (c.1008-1095), the last Anglo-Saxon English bishop, who seems to have encouraged Hemming, to organise the priory and capitular documentation.

The result was the first known English cartulary, basically a collection of title deeds copied into register for security and ease of access. This document, bound with another earlier one, is now in the British Library (Cotton MS Tiberius A.xiii), and Hemming also includes a Latin life of St Wulfstan and narrative material about Worcester and the cathedral chapter in his document, possibly drawing on local documentation relating to the Domesday Survey since lost.

Hemming was the first to refer to records collected for the Domesday Book as *carta* or *cartula*. He is also recorded to have placed a new lock on the cathedral document chest, and to have caused damaged and worn documents to be repaired. The precise purpose of Hemming's cartulary has been debated, but it seems reasonable to conclude that a major factor was the need to safeguard the property rights of the community, partly by describing damage and loss caused at previous times. His concerns are thus very similar to those of the modern archivist, and are reflective of the continuing mission of the archivist in identifying, collecting and preserving documents for administrative purposes.