

*The Pershore Flores Historiarum: An Unrecognised Chronicle from the Period of Reform and Rebellion in England, 1258–65**

HISTORIANS of the period of reform and rebellion in England between 1258 and 1265 make extensive use of a chronicle called the *Flores Historiarum*.¹ This is not surprising, because the *Flores* covers the revolution of 1258, the baronial regime of 1258–60, the king's recovery of power in 1261, the civil war of 1263, the battle of Lewes in 1264, and the rule of Simon de Montfort down to his defeat and death at the battle of Evesham in 1265. In the earliest surviving text of the *Flores*, which belongs to Chetham's Library in Manchester, the account of these revolutionary years is part of a longer section of the chronicle which begins in the year 1249. From that point, until the battle of Evesham in 1265, the text is unified, and distinguished from what comes before and after, by the way in which capital letters at the beginning of sections are decorated and, in particular, by the decoration given to the letter 'A' in the 'Anno' at the beginning of each year.² The text is also unified, and set apart, by being written, save for a short section at the start, in the same thirteenth-century hand and having very much the appearance of a fair copy.³ Historians who have studied the chronicle have nearly all assumed that this part of the *Flores* was copied at St Albans Abbey from the work of Matthew Paris and his continuator.⁴ This article will suggest something very different. Far from being exclusively a product of St Albans, major parts of the *Flores* in these years were actually composed at Pershore Abbey in Worcestershire. This makes the extensive local content of the chronicle, hitherto unnoticed, both more explicable

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1. For discussion of the *Flores*, see [*Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani.*] *H[istoria] A[nglorum]*, ed. F. Madden, Rolls Series, xlv (3 vols., 1866–9), vol. i, pp. xix–xxviii; *F[lores] H[istoriarum]*, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls Series, xcv (3 vols., 1890), vol. i, pp. i–li; V.H. Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris* (Glasgow, 1944), pp. 31–4, 45–6; R. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 37–41, 92–109; and A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c.550–c.1307* (London, 1974), pp. 357, 367, 377–8, 417–20.

2. Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 6712, fos. 200v–239/241 (some of the folios have two numbers). I am most grateful to Chetham's Library for allowing me to inspect the MS on several occasions. In addition, Fergus Wilde of the Library was kind enough to send me images of the 1249–65 section of the chronicle. In the printed edition, the section in question runs from *FH*, ii. 361, n. 1, to *FH*, iii. 6, n. 4, although the change of hand at p. 6, n. 4 is not remarked upon.

3. The single hand commences with 'Comes Ricardus...' in 1250 (*FH*, ii. 364 and n. 2) and ends with '...de Segrave' in 1265 (*FH*, iii. 6, n. 4). See Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 101.

4. Of the authorities cited in n. 1 above, only Gransden, as we will see, questioned whether the whole of the 1249–65 section of the *Flores* came from St Albans.

and more believable. It is also very relevant to the remarkably balanced account which the chronicle provides of the Montfortian period of reform and rebellion. The content and manuscript of the chronicle, we will argue, show that this account was written while Montfort was still at the height of his power. The *Flores* thus stands with the great poem ‘The Song of Lewes’ as offering an absolutely contemporary picture of the Montfortian movement, before its destruction at the battle of Evesham.⁵ Whereas, however, the ‘Song’ gives Montfort passionate and unqualified support, the picture provided in the *Flores* is far more nuanced. On the one hand, the *Flores* is hostile to aliens and strongly supports Montfort’s cause; on the other, it also sympathises with the predicament of the king, lauds the energy and courage of the queen, admires the valour of their son, the Lord Edward, and laments the division and destruction of the civil war. In all this, it may reflect the views of the abbot of Pershore, Eleurius, a monk from Fécamp in Normandy and a sometime official of King Henry III. Not everyone at Pershore was satisfied with the resulting chronicle, and, as we will see, the account of the battle of Lewes was later doctored to give it a more Montfortian twist. The Pershore *Flores* thus reveals the very different ways in which contemporaries could view this revolutionary period in English history.

The Chetham manuscript of the *Flores Historiarum* is the ultimate source for most of the later copies of the chronicle, and forms the basis for H.R. Luard’s edition for the Rolls Series.⁶ From its opening, with the creation, down to the year 1249, it is certainly a work of Matthew Paris, being based largely but not exclusively on his *Chronica Majora*.⁷ Between 1241 and 1249, the text is written in Paris’s own hand.⁸

5. *The Song of Lewes*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1890).

6. The various copies are listed and described by Luard in *FH*, vol. i, pp. xxxiv–xliii. There is a second version of the *Flores*, which differs in significant ways from the Chetham manuscript. The earliest copy of this, which dates from around 1300, belongs to Eton College. Luard’s edition notes differences between the Chetham manuscript and the Eton and other versions.

7. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 37–41. The *Chronica Majora* is printed in [*Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani,*] *C[hronica] M[ajora]*, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls Series, lvii (7 vols., 1872–83).

8. *HA*, vol. i, p. xxii; Vaughan, ‘The Handwriting of Matthew Paris’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, i (1953), pp. 376–94, at pp. 389 and 390. The text down to the accession of King John has illuminations of the coronations of the English kings; that of Edward the Confessor, as befitted a work intended for Westminster, being larger than the others. These illuminations are not in the style of Matthew Paris. These and other differences from the St Albans’ *oeuvre* have led Nigel Morgan to suggest that the volume down to 1241 was a Westminster production by London scribes and artists, using a text supplied by Matthew Paris. The volume was then returned to St Albans, probably in 1256 (Morgan dates the illuminations to between 1250 and 1255) so that Paris could add in the portion between 1241 and 1249. See N. Morgan, ‘Matthew Paris, St Albans, London, the Leaves of the “Life of St Thomas Becket”’, *The Burlington Magazine*, cxxx (1988), pp. 85–96, especially pp. 94–5 and n. 41, and J. Alexander and P. Binski, eds., *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, (London, 1987), p. 348, no. 346. Vaughan, by contrast, thought that the artist of the coronation scenes ‘must have worked in close collaboration with Matthew’ for the manuscript ‘was certainly produced under Matthew’s supervision’: *Matthew Paris*, pp. 224–5, and see p. 100. Morgan does not discuss when or where the 1249–65 text of the *Flores* was composed and his ideas (which, as he says, are not developed in any detail) impinge only marginally on the arguments of this paper.

References to Westminster Abbey in the section down to 1249 suggest that Paris intended the manuscript for Westminster, and the abbey's ownership is indeed proclaimed in a medieval hand on many of the leaves.⁹ Most commentators agree, however, largely on grounds of content, that it was only following the account of the battle of Evesham in 1265 that the chronicle was actually taken over by Westminster. It was then continued there until its conclusion in the 1320s.¹⁰

Up to and into 1249, then, the Chetham *Flores* is a work of Matthew Paris. After the account of the battle of Evesham in 1265, it is a work of Westminster. The problem is to understand the nature and provenance of the intervening portion. This part of the *Flores* runs to around 140 pages of printed text in the Rolls Series edition.¹¹ Although it must have been written out on individual quires, which were only subsequently bound in with the pre-existing *Flores*, the size of the folios and the arrangement of the text shows that this was intended from the start. Indeed, the very first part of the new work, with its characteristic decoration, is on the same folio as the last part of Paris's text, the one forming the right hand column on folio 200v and the other the left. The resulting text between 1249 and 1265 is, however, a remarkable and diverse assemblage, as the following analysis shows.¹²

1. The text for the last part of 1249 and the first part of 1250 was written by a scribe who was copying an abridged version of Paris's *Chronica Majora*. Luard's edition indicates that nearly all the text comes from Paris, but does not show that a great deal has been left out.¹³
2. In the course of 1250, copying from the abridged text of the *Chronica Majora* ceases and a new scribe takes over. This is the scribe who continues the work all the way through till the battle of Evesham in 1265. From 1250 until 1255, he was copying out Matthew Paris's *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*, a work which Paris had himself largely abridged from his *Chronica Majora* and *Historia Anglorum*.¹⁴ In the printed edition of the Chetham manuscript

9. *HA*, vol. i, p. xxiv and n. 2.

10. *HA*, vol. i, p. xxiv and n. 3. For the later *Flores*, see A. Gransden, 'The Continuations of the *Flores Historiarum* from 1265 to 1307', in her *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 245–66.

11. *FH*, ii, 361–505 and *FH*, iii, 1–6. There are two sizes of type, a larger font being used for the passages not copied from known St Albans' manuscripts. A few pages in the printed edition are from versions other than the Chetham manuscript.

12. For analyses which differ in part from that offered here, see Luard in *FH*, vol. i, pp. xl–xli and Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 101–2.

13. *FH*, ii, 361, n. 4, to 364, n. 2. There is a very noticeable change of ink and pen from 'et bigis...' on p. 363. Vaughan (*Matthew Paris*, p. 101) thought that a second scribe had taken over here, but I think the hand is in fact the same.

14. Printed by Madden in *HA*, iii, 159–348, with the section copied in the *Flores* starting at p. 312, n. 1. See Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 113–14. Madden collated his text with that found in the *FH*. The differences between the two suggest that the scribe of the *FH* version was not copying Madden's text (British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D vi), most of which was written in Paris's own hand.

in the Rolls Series, this section runs to forty-eight pages of small type.¹⁵

3. With the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum* at an end, the scribe now copied out, as his principal material for 1256, the lengthy sentence of excommunication promulgated in 1253 against violators of Magna Carta—although, bizarrely, he had already copied this out correctly under 1253 as part of the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*.¹⁶
4. For the remaining passages from 1256 and the accounts of 1257 and 1258, which run to just over six pages of large type in the printed edition, the scribe was now copying material which did not come directly from St Albans. While the text seems to show knowledge of the *Chronica Majora*'s content, its language is independent. Luard's edition is misleading here. It marks out in small type passages as being copied verbatim from the *Chronica Majora*, whereas direct comparison shows that this was not the case.¹⁷ The *Flores* in these years also differs from St Albans' work in other ways. Down to 1256, in accordance with all St Albans' practice, the *Flores* begins the year at Christmas. Between 1256 and 1258, by contrast, it follows the common custom of beginning the year on the feast of the Annunciation, that is, on 25 March. The *Flores* thus has the election of the king's brother, Richard of Cornwall, as king of Germany taking place on the day after Christmas Day in 1256, whereas the *Chronica Majora*, beginning the year at Christmas, puts the election at the start of 1257.¹⁸ The *Flores* likewise starts its 1257 with events at Easter (8 April) and its 1258 with events 'after Easter' (24 March).¹⁹ Finally, in the *Flores*' account of 1258, the last entry for the year is Richard of Cornwall's return to England 'around the purification' (2 February), which was the feast of the purification in 1259.²⁰ Moreover, although the *Flores* seems to have been influenced by the content of the *Chronica Majora*, as Luard's edition indicates, there is also information completely independent of it—for example, about the flooding of the Severn in 1258, and the appointment in the same year of twenty-four men to reform the realm.²¹ In fact, as we will see, this section of the *Flores*, between 1256 and 1258, almost certainly

15. *FH*, ii. 364–412. The original text of the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum* ends abruptly in mid-sentence (*HA*, iii. 348) and the copy in the *Flores* does the same: *FH*, ii. 412.

16. *FH*, ii. 412–14, 384–5.

17. *FH*, ii. 414–19. The letter from Richard of Cornwall about his German exploits may have been copied from Paris's book of documents (his *Liber Additamentorum*), although, if so, it was highly abridged: *FH*, ii. 415–16; *CM*, vi. 366–70.

18. *FH*, ii. 414; *CM*, v. 601.

19. In the case of 1257, this seems to have been achieved by transposing to Easter, and thus to the start of 1257, a parliament which Paris had placed at the start of his 1257 and therefore at the previous Christmas: *FH*, ii. 415, 417; *CM*, v. 601.

20. *FH*, ii. 419.

21. *FH*, ii. 417–19.

came from Pershore Abbey and has much in common with later sections of the *Flores* which, we will argue, are likewise of Pershore provenance.

5. In 1259 the nature of the *Flores* changes again. The scribe, having copied a text which ran the year from March to March, had already got into 1259 under his 1258. Now, however, he started 1259 all over again by copying out an abbreviated version of Paris's *Chronica Majora* from its own start of 1259 at Christmas, that is, the Christmas of 1258. He did this even though it meant telling the story of the return to England of Richard of Cornwall twice over. The scribe continued with this abbreviated version of the *Chronica Majora*, which takes up just over six pages of small type in the printed edition, until its termination, with that of the *Chronica Majora* itself, in May 1259.²²
6. With the *Chronica Majora* ended (with Paris's death), the scribe now copied out for the rest of 1259, for 1260 and the first part of 1261 the continuation of the *Chronica Majora* carried on at St Albans by Paris's successor, a continuation which was probably written very soon after the events it describes. The *Flores* preserves the earliest text of this fine history, which runs to forty-five printed pages in the Rolls Series edition.²³
7. Madden, Luard, Galbraith and Vaughan all assumed that the St Albans' continuation of the *Chronica Majora*, as preserved in the *Flores*, went on down to the point in 1265 when the text transferred to Westminster Abbey.²⁴ In fact, it is almost certain that the continuation ended in 1261, and that the rest of the *Flores* down to the battle of Evesham in 1265 was composed at Pershore.

The point at which the continuation ceases can be identified with relative precision. It comes after the events of June 1261, when Henry III went to Winchester, dismissed the baronially imposed officials and then hurried back to the Tower of London.²⁵ Having narrated these events, a major change overtakes the appearance and content of the chronicle.

- i. The material from 1259 to 1261, copied from Paris and his continuator, is broken up into no less than ninety-one chapters. These have headings in red ink, which run the length of the line, or part of the line, before continuing down the margin, sometimes taking a bite out of the text. All this is typical of St Albans'

22. *FH*, ii. 419–26.

23. *FH*, ii. 426–71.

24. *HA*, vol. i, p. xxiii and n. 2; *FH*, vol. i, pp. xl–xli; Galbraith, *The St. Albans Chronicle*, pp. xxviii–xix; Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 101–2. Vaughan claimed that the scribe who wrote the *Flores* between 1250 and 1265 was 'the last who wrote at St. Albans', but I suspect the St Albans' provenance of the hand was simply deduced from the belief that the continuation down to 1265 was written at St Albans.

25. *FH*, ii. 470–2.

work, and suggests that the scribe was copying directly from its manuscripts. The last of these headings comes immediately after the account of the king's *démarche* at Winchester.²⁶ Thereafter, in the whole of the manuscript down to the battle of Evesham, there are only five chapter headings in the text, which thus gains the appearance of a continuous narrative. As a substitute for the loss of the headings, however, the scribe has added in red, sometimes within a blue lined border, marginal glosses on the material, with much the same content as the old headings. Unfortunately this is obscured in Luard's edition, where the marginal glosses are printed as though they are headings in the text.²⁷ A natural explanation for this change in the appearance of the manuscript is that the St Albans' material, divided into chapters, has come to an end, and the scribe is now copying a text from a different source, which lacks such chapter headings.

- ii. It also becomes clear that the chronicle has now abandoned the St Albans' custom of starting the year at Christmas and has reverted to the 1256–58 practice of beginning it in March. The end of the year 1261 and the start of the next is too vague to detect when the changeover was, but thereafter the March start is very clear. Thus Henry III's publication of the 'Provisions of Oxford', in what was January 1263, is placed under 1262, while 1263 begins 'after Easter' (1 April) with the Lord Edward's expedition to Wales.²⁸ Likewise, the Mise of Amiens of January 1264 is placed under 1263, and 1264 begins in mid-Lent, which in 1264 came after 25 March.²⁹ Christmas 1264 and the subsequent parliament at London 'in Lent' 1265 is placed under 1264.³⁰ Finally, 1265 starts with Montfort's quarrel with Gilbert de Clare, which, while it had begun earlier, became a determining factor after 25 March.³¹
- iii. Whereas the St Albans' material for 1259 and 1260, again in typical Parisian fashion, has end-of-year summaries, there is no end-of-year summary in 1261 or in any subsequent year. Also, while the 1259–61 portion by Paris's continuator refers to documents copied into Paris's book of documents, his *Liber Additamentorum*, we have reference later in 1261 to documents copied into the end of the *Flores* volume itself.³² The implication is that the

26. The last of the old-style headings is that proclaiming the election of the abbot of Milton to the bishopric of Winchester, but it looks as though there was one more, later removed by an erasure, on the king's absolution from his oath by the pope: *FH*, ii. 470–1, 471, n. 2–2; Chetham's Library, MS 6712, fo. 229.

27. Luard prints later notes in the margin as marginal italics.

28. *FH*, ii. 477–8.

29. *FH*, ii. 486, 488.

30. *FH*, ii. 504–5.

31. *FH*, iii. 1; J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 327–31.

32. *FH*, ii. 434 and n. 3, 437 and n. 3, 473–4 and n. 1. The documents copied at the end of the *Flores* are no longer there.

- chronicle is now being composed at a house where the *Liber Additamentorum* is not available. A more careful editor or scribe would have deleted the reference to the *Liber Additamentorum* in the 1259–61 portion, since it was meaningless outside St Albans, and indeed it is marked ‘vacat’ in the Chetham manuscript with the result that it does not appear in subsequent versions.³³
- iv. St Albans itself figures conspicuously in the accounts of 1259 and 1260.³⁴ It then disappears altogether, apart from a bare reference under 1263 to the death of Abbot John and his succession by ‘Roger’, linked to a similar notice about the abbatial succession at Gloucester. The baronial parliament summoned to St Albans in August 1261 is strikingly absent.³⁵ Meanwhile, as we will see, there is a strong focus on a completely different geographical area.
- v. Finally, there is a hesitant and tentative feel to the content of the *Flores* at the point where, as we suggest, the St Albans’ material ceases and that from another house begins. The new portion starts with a recapitulation, as though the new author felt the need to get into his stride: ‘in the same year a great discord arose between King Henry and his barons...’.³⁶ There then follows a section about a council ‘after Easter’ held by Archbishop Boniface, a council of which an account had already been given in the portion copied from Paris’s continuator.³⁷

Antonia Gransden, who noticed the end of the annual summaries and the cessation of references to St Albans, wondered whether it was at this point in 1261, rather than later in 1265, that Westminster took over the chronicle.³⁸ Quite apart from the question of content, discussed below, this seems at odds with the way that the hand and decoration of the manuscript changes not in 1261 but in 1265. A different but related view is found in Vaughan, who suggested that the whole section from 1249 was written out by a St Albans’ scribe, ‘instructed to bring the manuscript up to date ready for its dispatch to Westminster’.³⁹ Another view still might be that it was Westminster itself which copied out the materials to bring the *Flores* up to date. The problem with all these

33. *FH*, ii. 434 and n. 2.

34. *FH*, ii. 431–2, 459–60.

35. *FH*, ii. 478; *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258–1267*, ed. R.F. Treharne and I.J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973), pp. 246–9.

36. *FH*, ii. 471. The ‘Anno’ at the start of the recapitulation begins a new line with the ‘A’ being decorated: Chetham’s Library, MS 6712, fo. 229. For further recapitulations later in the year, see pp. 473, 474. Despite the fact that it might have had an old-style heading, I also wonder whether the previous passage about the absolution in May of the king from his oath is part of the new work, since it is essentially a recapitulation and out of sequence chronologically.

37. *FH*, ii. 468–9, 471–2.

38. Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 377–8 and nn. 167 and 168, and pp. 417–21. Gransden confined her speculation to n. 168 and in her discussion treated the 1259–65 portion as a whole and as coming from St Albans.

39. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 101.

hypotheses is that the *Flores* from 1249 to 1265 is almost completely bereft of references to Westminster.⁴⁰ This is in sharp contrast both to the text down to 1249, which was clearly intended for the abbey, and to the text after the battle of Evesham in 1265, which was certainly written there. Indeed, so little did the chronicle between 1249 and 1265 meet Westminster's requirements that the abbey had to delete a politically unacceptable passage about the battle of Lewes, and make a series of additions recording matters of interest to the house.⁴¹ Another telling fact is that the scribe, when copying out the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*, actually missed out references to both Westminster and St Albans. The *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*, under 1250, tells how the abbots of Westminster, St Albans and Waltham asked for the prayers of the Dominican general chapter. The Chetham *Flores* only refers to the abbot of Waltham.⁴² This omission was not one likely to have been made by someone writing at either Westminster or St Albans.

Rather than being a work of Westminster or St Albans, I will now suggest that the *Flores* between 1261 and 1265, as earlier between 1256 and 1258, was composed at Pershore Abbey. These two portions of the *Flores* share very noticeable characteristics, which set them apart from the adjoining St Albans' material. Thus they both start the year in March; they both use the unusual word 'consul' for earl;⁴³ and they both refer—again, unusually—to Henry III as 'our king, *rex noster*'.⁴⁴ Both portions also show a striking interest in Pershore and its abbot. As far as the indexes go, Pershore Abbey hardly features either in the *Flores* down to 1255 or in Paris's *Chronica Majora*, *Historia Anglorum* and *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*.⁴⁵ Then, suddenly, in the *Flores*, under 1256, we hear how Henry, prior of Evesham, was enthroned as its abbot by the abbot of Pershore. Having next noted the election of Richard of Cornwall as king of Germany, the *Flores* goes on to say that Eleurius,

40. Under 1249 the chronicle does record Henry III giving a stone with the impression of Christ's foot to Westminster Abbey, but this may have been out of general interest. Under 1250, Henry's celebration of the feast of Edward the Confessor at Westminster is conspicuously omitted: *FH*, ii. 361–2; *CM*, v. 94.

41. *FH*, ii. 497, n. 5. Notes were added, in the margin, about the abbatial succession in 1258 and, over erasures, about the burial in the abbey of royal children: *FH*, ii. 374, n. 2, 418, n. 5, 439, n. 4, 443, nn. 2–2, 474, nn. 4–3, and see 432, n. 2 and 471, nn. 2–2. For comment on the burials, see M. Howell, 'The Children of King Henry III and Eleanor of Provence', in P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, eds., *Thirteenth Century England IV* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 59–61. The deletion about the battle of Lewes had been made by the time the Bodleian *Flores* (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Laud 572) was copied from the Chetham manuscript, which was soon after 1296. The Westminster additions were made later.

42. *FH*, ii. 366, n. 4.

43. *FH*, ii. 418 (in 1258) and, in the second portion, 482, 485, 497, 502; *FH*, iii. 1–3.

44. *FH*, ii. 414, 419 (in 1256–8), 472, 475, 481. At p. 414, 'regis nostri' is not copied from the *Chronica Majora* as Luard appears to indicate; see *CM*, v. 574. Another word which appears in both halves is 'Teutonicus': *FH*, ii. 414, 477. Despite Luard's use of small type at 477, the word does not appear in the *Chronica Majora*, v. 601.

45. The *Chronica Majora*, in a passage copied by the *Flores*, refers to the dedication of the church of Pershore in a list of other churches dedicated in 1239: *CM*, iii. 638; *FH*, ii. 235.

abbot of Pershore, was made a baron of the exchequer at the start of Lent, that is, Lent 1257.⁴⁶ This record of the appointment of a baron of the exchequer, as opposed to a treasurer, is, I think, unique in thirteenth-century historical writing. Moving on to the later portion of the *Flores*, it records under 1264 the voluntary resignation of Eleurius as abbot of Pershore, due to ill health, and the canonical succession of Henry (Henry de Bideford) in his place.⁴⁷ It also records how a force, mustered by the Marcher barons to help rescue the Lord Edward and the king of Germany from Wallingford castle, got as far as Pershore before it turned back. All of this Pershore-related information is found in no other source.⁴⁸

The 1256–8 and 1261–5 sections of the *Flores* also show a remarkable knowledge of events in the vicinity of Pershore. Thus the annal for 1258 has a long section (absent in Paris) about a great flood of the Severn between Shrewsbury and Bristol. Pershore is roughly midway between the two places and only six miles from the river, on which it had a weir destroyed by a flood in 1240, whereafter the monks fished there from boats.⁴⁹ The annal for 1261 recounts the opposition to the justices in eyre at Gloucester and Worcester (respectively nineteen and eight miles away)⁵⁰ and then, at great length, describes how a storm damaged the tower of Evesham abbey (seven miles away).⁵¹ The 1262 annals record the earl of Gloucester's burial at Tewkesbury (nine miles away);⁵² those for 1263 recount events at Bristol, Worcester and at Gloucester (the last in great detail);⁵³ those for 1264 cover Montfort's campaign after Lewes against the Marcher barons (including the breaking of the bridge at Worcester),⁵⁴ while those for 1265 give a full account of the war in south Wales and the battle of Evesham.⁵⁵

There is, finally, a very close link between these 1256–8 and 1261–5 portions of the *Flores* and another chronicle, parts of which were undoubtedly written at Pershore. No text of this survives but extracts were made from it by John Leland and subsequently published in his *Collectanea*.⁵⁶ Leland explains that he was copying from a 'History' borrowed from 'Lord Garter', presumably Garter King of Arms—a

46. *FH*, ii. 414.

47. *FH*, ii. 502.

48. *FH*, ii. 503.

49. *FH*, ii. 418–19; *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, I: 1219–1307 (London, 1916), no. 383.

50. *FH*, ii. 472. The passage was possibly influenced by the preceding account by Paris's continuator of the resistance to the judges at Hertford (p. 468).

51. *FH*, ii. 472–3. Contrast this to the much briefer note about the fall of Croyland abbey's tower in 1262: *FH*, ii. 476.

52. *FH*, ii. 475.

53. *FH*, ii. 480, 482–3, 486–7. This is the year March 1263 to March 1264.

54. *FH*, ii. 498–9, 502–4.

55. *FH*, iii. 2–6.

56. [*Joannis Lelandi Antiquari de Rebus Britannicis*] *Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (2nd edn., 6 vols., London, 1770), ii. 240–53. I am most grateful to John Maddicott for pointing out to me the relevance of this source.

history which, he conjectures, was either by an Evesham monk or, more likely ('verisimilius'), a Pershore one.⁵⁷ Certainly, if one may judge from Leland's extracts, the chronicle for the period from 1198 to 1265 was a Pershore production. Whereas it has nothing about Evesham, it records the succession of Pershore abbots, and has a long account of the discovery in 1259, when a new pavement was being installed in the Lady Chapel, of the bones of the abbey's benefactor, Earl Odda.⁵⁸ The overall nature of this Pershore chronicle, and its precise relationship to the Pershore *Flores*, is impossible to divine. Leland's extracts for the reign of Henry III only take up five printed pages and were embodied in a chronicle which was continued at Evesham after 1265 and runs down to 1388.⁵⁹ The text in places seems corrupt, since 1241 comes after 1251 and the Treaty of Montgomery is dated to 1261, not 1267.⁶⁰ Apart from material about Pershore, the chronicle has some notice of national events, although usually (as with the Treaty of Montgomery) where they also have local interest. What is clear is that the Leland Pershore has much in common with the Pershore sections of the *Flores*. Like them, it begins the year in March and uses the word 'consul' for earl.⁶¹ In its account of 1257 and 1258, moreover, it has whole passages which overlap with the *Flores* in terms of individual words and sometimes runs of words.⁶² Thus, recording the victories of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in Wales, the Leland Pershore has

Lewelinus igitur, filius Grifini principis Walliae, collectu exercitu de Wallia et alibi, pro posse suo viriliter paternas libertates sustinendo resistit

while the *Flores* has

Lewelinus igitur, princeps Walliae, collectu exercitu, viriliter patriam defendebat, et paternas libertates sustinendo, Angliis potenter resistebat.⁶³

By itself, this might show no more than that the author of the Leland Pershore had acquired a copy of the *Flores* and adapted some of its content. But clearly there is more to it than that, because the *Flores* itself, as we have seen, bears the imprint of Pershore. That imprint, unless the extracts are misleading, did not come directly from the

57. *Collectanea*, ii. 240. There is no likely candidate for the chronicle now at the College of Arms, where the Archivist of the College, Robert Yorke, kindly helped with my inquiries.

58. *Collectanea*, ii. 240. Leland says the 'History' ran 'ab origine rerum Britannicarum' down to 1388: *Collectanea*, ii. 253.

59. *Collectanea*, ii. 242–6, 253. For the Evesham continuation, see below.

60. *Collectanea*, ii. 242, 245.

61. *Collectanea*, ii. 244 and also 243, although this passage could have been copied from the *Flores*; see *FH*, ii. 418. The start of the year in March is clear from the way in which an attack on Italian clerks in London which took place in the Lent of 1260 is placed under 1259: *Collectanea*, ii. 245; *FH*, ii. 444.

62. *Collectanea*, ii. 243; *FH*, ii. 416–18.

63. *Collectanea*, ii. 243; *FH*, ii. 416.

Leland Pershore, for curiously enough the Pershore passages in the two chronicles, including those about Abbot Eleurius, are mutually exclusive.⁶⁴ By far the most likely explanation for these similarities in content and style is that the 1256–8 and 1261–5 sections of the *Flores*, just as much as the Leland chronicle, came from Pershore.

The 1256–8 and 1261–5 portions of the *Flores* are, then, almost certainly Pershore productions, but they are made up of very different elements. The 1256–8 portion has a retrospective feel, which suggests that its author was writing considerably later than the events he describes. Thus his account of the revolution of 1258 seems to be looking back from a later period, when it explains how ‘at that time’ the king’s foreign relatives had become very unpopular.⁶⁵ There are also two references to ‘the Provisions of Oxford’, although the designation only became common in the 1260s.⁶⁶ It is found neither in Paris nor his continuator, who was still referring to the ‘provision of the barons’ in 1261.⁶⁷ Outside 1258, the usage first appears in the *Flores* in the Pershore portion of 1261, which itself, as we will suggest, may have been copied from a text composed not in 1261 but some years later.⁶⁸

There are also distinctions within the 1261–5 section of the Pershore *Flores*. The sketchy nature of its commencement in 1261 has already been noted. The observation that the king’s recovery of power (towards the end of that year) meant that all the labour of the barons was in vain ‘at that time’ suggests composition when the labour had proved successful—which would mean in 1263 or 1264. This seems to be confirmed by the remark, under 1261, that the author has placed a text of the Provisions of Oxford at the end of the book. The text in question was almost certainly that circulated in January 1263, to which the author later refers. The chronicle’s brief account of 1262 (March 1262 to March 1263), running to only three printed pages, likewise has a retrospective feel to it, with more references to what had happened ‘at that time’.⁶⁹ It is with the start of its year 1263 that the Chronicle really gets into gear. A continuous narrative runs from there all the way down to the Christmas of 1264, taking up twenty-nine printed pages. Of these, twelve are for 1263 and seventeen for 1264.⁷⁰ It is difficult to be precise as to when this narrative was composed, but there are

64. For the Leland Pershore’s passages about Eleurius, see below.

65. *FH*, ii. 418.

66. *FH*, ii. 417, 419.

67. *FH*, ii. 463, 466. The draft of the reforms proposed at Oxford found in the Burton annals comes, however, under a heading ‘The provisions made at Oxford’: *Documents of the Baronial Movement*, pp. 96–7.

68. *FH*, ii. 474.

69. *FH*, ii. 473, 474, 477. The account, under 1262, of the king’s confirmation of the Provisions of Oxford in January 1263 observes that this did not succeed in establishing peace, which means that the passage was written at the earliest in the second half of the year: *FH*, ii. 477.

70. *FH*, ii. 478–88, 488–505. The years 1263 and 1264 both run from 25 March. The printed text includes material from later versions of the *Flores*.

indications that it was begun before the battle of Lewes in May 1264. The author thus comments that it will be seen in what follows how the Londoners' attack on the Queen (in July 1263) became 'an impediment to peace'. This passage looks forward to the account of how the queen, inspired by hatred of the Londoners, persuaded Louis IX of France to summon the king and Simon de Montfort to a meeting at Boulogne in September 1263.⁷¹ The implication seems to be that the queen's initiative was designed to disrupt the peace achieved by the Montfortian government. What is much less clear is that the passage also looks forward to the slaughter of the Londoners by Edward at the battle of Lewes. The author says that this was in revenge for the attack on his mother.⁷² But had he known of the bloody denouement, when writing of that attack, would he have described it as a mere 'impediment to peace'?⁷³ Another strand of evidence likewise suggests that the account of 1263 was composed before Lewes. The author describes a wonderful 'signa' appearing in the sky on 30 July 1263, followed by an eclipse on 5 August, but says nothing about their meaning. It is only after the battle of Lewes that he refers back to them as portents of that event.⁷⁴ There is, however, still a retrospective tone to some of the account of 1263. 'This was the form of peace conceived at that time', we are told of the proposals of July 1263.⁷⁵ Perhaps the author began writing in the later part of the year, inspired by Montfort's seizure of power and what followed, many of the key events (notably at Gloucester and Worcester) taking place in his vicinity.

If, then, the chronicle for these revolutionary years was begun in 1263, it also seems that everything down to Christmas 1264 was composed prior to Montfort's defeat at Evesham in the following August. Although the author, as in the case of the Londoners, was quite prepared to look forward, he says nothing which foreshadows Montfort's fall. Yet his description of Montfort's power and the king's abasement around Christmas 1264 would surely have invited comment, had he known what was to come. There are other signs that the author brought his text up to date soon after Christmas 1264, and only took up his pen again after the battle of Evesham. Thus, whereas he observes that Montfort's settlement with the Marchers (in August 1264) did not last, he makes no similar observation about the second settlement in December, although its failure was clear by the spring of 1265.⁷⁶ Then, in a passage placed just before the events of December 1264, the author refers to the death of Pope Urban, which took place (although the date is not given) on 2 October 1264. The author clearly did not know, when

71. *FH*, ii. 482, 484.

72. *FH*, ii. 496.

73. *FH*, ii. 482, 496.

74. *FH*, ii. 483–4, 498.

75. *FH*, ii. 482; see also p. 481.

76. *FH*, ii. 499, 502–4; Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, pp. 289–90, 306–8, 330–1.

he wrote, of the succession of Clement IV, which occurred on 5 February 1265. Instead, this was placed, with another notice of Urban's death, immediately after the account of Christmas 1264 and the reflections on Montfort's power.⁷⁷ One may suspect that it was these reflections which brought the portion of the chronicle composed before Evesham to an end. The obituaries and related information which follow break up the flow of the narrative (there were none between 1263 and 1264), and probably represent the post-Evesham start. Hence, the ensuing account of Montfort's 1265 parliament observes that Edward was waiting his opportunity to escape, which seems to look forward to that escape later in the year, from where there was a direct road to Evesham.⁷⁸ This final section of the Pershore *Flores* was probably composed not long after the battle. Thus, when the author wrote the obituaries at the section's start, he did not know that William Langton's election as the new archbishop of York had been quashed by the pope. News of this probably reached England early in 1266, since it took place on or before 24 November 1265. An even shorter time-frame is suggested by the appearance of Humphrey de Bohun as one of those captured at Evesham, without any reference to his death two months later in prison.⁷⁹

To sum up this complex story. The *Flores Historiarum* down to 1249 is a work of Matthew Paris, with the 1241–9 portion being in his own hand. It was intended for Westminster but did not go there.⁸⁰ Thereafter, the whole chronicle, down to the battle of Evesham in 1265, has a decorative unity, which sets it apart from what comes before and after. For the last part of 1249 and the first part of 1250, a scribe copied out an abridged version of the *Chronica Majora*. After that, another hand continued all the way down to the battle of Evesham, making use of the following materials: for 1250 to 1255 Matthew Paris's *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*; for 1256 the sentence of excommunication launched in 1253 against violators of Magna Carta; for 1256 to 1258 a brief text from Pershore, probably written in the early 1260s, which shows some knowledge of Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*, but does not use its actual words; for 1258 to 1259 an abbreviated version of the *Chronica Majora*; for 1259 to 1261 the St Albans' continuation of the *Chronica Majora*; for 1261 and 1262, more text from Pershore, composed a year or so after the events described, the account of 1262 itself being brief; for 1263 and 1264 a long narrative from Pershore of the barons' wars which was begun before the battle of Lewes and was completed soon after Christmas 1264; and finally, for 1265 a Pershore narrative running down to the battle of Evesham in August 1265, which was composed

77. *FH*, ii. 502, 505.

78. *FH*, ii. 505.

79. *FH*, iii. 6; William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (new edn., 6 vols., London, 1817–30), vi. 135.

80. If Morgan's ideas are right (see above, n. 7), this would be returning to Westminster.

in the immediate aftermath of the battle. Thereafter, the chronicle was continued at Westminster Abbey.

That it was Pershore which put together all this material to make a continuous chronicle seems certain. It was Pershore, after all, which provided the essential section between 1256 and 1258, which sewed together the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum* for 1250–55 and the abridged *Chronica Majora* for 1259. One can only suppose that St Albans did not have an abridgement of the *Chronica Majora* (which runs to 192 printed pages) for this period, and Pershore quailed before the task of making one. Pershore also seems to have produced the account of the second half of 1261 and the whole of 1262, at least in part, to link the Paris continuation with its own detailed narrative which began in 1263. The stylistic similarities already noticed between the 1256–8, 1261–2 and 1263–5 portions of the chronicle suggest that they were the work of one author.⁸¹ The links of style and content likewise suggest that he was also responsible for the Leland Pershore chronicle. Indeed, the latter may well preserve his name. Under 1252, it notes that ‘brother William de Flemstede received the monastic habit on the day of Saint Trinity at Pershore’.⁸² For monastic chronicles to record the profession of individual monks is very unusual. The Chronicle of Bury, St Edmunds, under 1244, did so for John Taxter and described him as the ‘the writer of this present volume’.⁸³ The suspicion must be that the same was true of William de Flemstede. Whether the author was also the scribe of the *Flores* is more doubtful. Could a scribe at all engaged in the work have copied out under 1256 the sentence of excommunication which he had already copied under 1253 as part of the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*?

Just when was the material first prepared for the scribe and copied out? Although the manuscript changes appearance according to whether or not there are chapter headings, and must have been the work of many sessions, the ink, pen and size of hand remain remarkably consistent and suggest no obvious breaks.⁸⁴ There is, however, one clue. In the account of the battle of Lewes, some alterations have been made. A hand different from that of the scribe has added, over erasures, words which declare the fame and God-given nature of Montfort’s victory.⁸⁵ This cannot

81. ‘rex noster’ is found in all three sections (*FH*, ii. 419, 472, 475, 481); ‘consul’ in 1258 and between 1263 and 1265 (*FH*, ii. 418, 482, 485, 497, 502; *FH*, iii. 1–3); ‘teutonicus’ appears in 1256 and 1262 (*FH*, ii. 414, 477).

82. *Collectanea*, ii. 242. Under 1259 the death of brother Robert Flamstede is also noted (p. 243).

83. A. Gransden, ed., *The Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds, 1212–1301* (London, 1964), p. 13, n. b. See A. Gransden, ‘The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland’ in her *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England*, p. 228.

84. Headings at the top of the folios giving the regnal year, which commence with copying out the abridged version of the *Chronica Majora* in 1259, cease in 1260 before the end of the work of Paris’s continuator: Chetham Library, MS 6712, fos. 216–222v.

85. *FH*, ii. 494–5, n. 1, 496, n. 1, 497, n. 1 and (unnoticed by Luard) ‘eadem die Dei iudicio’ (p. 497); Chetham’s Library, MS 6712, fos. 235–235v. Luard also did not note the insertion ‘clarissima’ referring to the victory (p. 496).

have been the work of Westminster, which had very different political views. Nor is it likely to have been done at Pershore in the much-altered climate following the battle of Evesham. Certainly no effort was made to change in Montfort's favour the rather neutral account of that battle. The most likely date for the emendations to the narrative of Lewes is in the period when it was still possible to regard Montfort's victory with unalloyed satisfaction. In that case, the text was copied and then altered before his position began to collapse in the course of 1265.

Pershore's acquisition of all of the St Albans material could have taken place in various ways. It was, of course, common in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for one monastic house to secure a copy of the chronicle of another. Sometimes it was copied *in situ* by the donor house (as Paris copied the 1241–9 section of the *Flores*); sometimes it was sent to the donee's house to be copied there.⁸⁶ In our case, probably the most likely scenario is that the St Albans material was sent to Pershore and assembled and copied there.⁸⁷ Conceivably, the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum* and the abridgements of the *Chronica Majora* came on loan, but the *Flores* itself was obtained outright, forming the foundation for Pershore's own chronicle of the barons' wars. How the *Flores* down to 1249 had escaped going to Westminster is a question which has never been addressed, although the answer is not hard to divine. Paris's final remarks in 1249 show that he regarded the work as being at an end. In the portion he wrote in his own hand, he added material about Westminster and made some positive comments about its patron, King Henry III. The trouble was that he did not leave it at that. He also included some vitriolic passages about the king from the *Chronica Majora*, and added others.⁸⁸ At some point, he must have realised that this was not a text which would be acceptable to the monks of Westminster, totally dependent as they were on the king for the rebuilding of their church. So the *Flores* stayed at St Albans until it was acquired by Pershore.⁸⁹

Links between the two monasteries facilitated the acquisition. An institutional affiliation is suggested by the anniversary of Pershore's Abbot Reginald (1155–74) being kept at St Albans.⁹⁰ Another possible

86. See A. Gransden, 'Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland', pp. 236–8, 204–5; C.R. Cheney, 'Notes on the Making of the Dunstable Annals, AD 33 to 1242', in T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke, eds., *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 85–8.

87. If, however, notes were taken of the content of the *Chronica Majora* between 1256 and 1258, those presumably were done *in situ* at St Albans.

88. *FH*, ii. 289, 311–12, 321, 338–9.

89. There was a quarrel between Westminster and St Albans over Aldenham around 1250, but this was resolved in 1256: *CM*, v. 128, 569–70.

90. We know this from Reginald's name appearing in St Albans' fourteenth-century 'Book of Benefactors': British Library, Cotton MS Nero D VII, fo. 71v. I am grateful to James Clark for bringing this source to my attention, and also for the suggestion that this indicates an institutional affiliation. For Reginald, see D. Knowles, C.N.L. Brooke and V. London, eds., *The Heads of Religious Houses in England and Wales, 940–1216* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 59.

connection was through the Pershore monk, William de Flemstede, who, as we have seen, was quite probably the author of the Pershore histories in the first place. There appears to be only one candidate for William's Flemstede or Flamsted, as it is also called, namely Flamstead in Hertfordshire, a village some seven miles from St Albans in which the abbey had property.⁹¹ If William de Flemstede was instrumental in acquiring the St Albans material, however, he cannot have acted alone. After all, what took place was a very major acquisition. The *Flores* down to 1249 was a massive work, which runs to 960 printed pages in the Rolls Series edition. It was carefully written and included some fine paintings of the coronations of the kings of England. To have obtained this volume would have required considerable influence and quite possibly the expenditure of a significant sum of money.⁹² Pershore's Abbot Eleurius had both. He was also close to William de Flemstede; in 1262 he made William his attorney in an important law case *coram rege*.⁹³ It is time to look at Eleurius, by far the most prominent abbot in the history of Pershore.

A monk of the Benedictine abbey of Fécamp in Normandy, Eleurius became in 1238 prior of its cell at Cogges in Oxfordshire.⁹⁴ He also acted as Fécamp's proctor in England and then in 1251 became abbot of Pershore.⁹⁵ By this time his career in the king's service was taking off. In 1251 he was appointed to value the king's manors and proudly demonstrated, in a schedule on the fine rolls, how he had increased their revenues by £367 a year.⁹⁶ That August, he was made the escheator south of Trent, a major administrative post.⁹⁷ In 1254 Henry III wished to promote him to another abbacy more fit 'for so great a man'.⁹⁸ Nothing came of that but, in the following year, Eleurius went on a mission to Wales in the cause of papal and royal taxation. Around this time he seems to have resigned as escheator, but the climax of his career

91. *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III* (14 vols., London, 1902–38), 1261–4, p. 133; *CM*, vi. 21. I am grateful to Jonathan Mackman for advice about the identification of Flemstede.

92. Not surprisingly, book prices varied greatly. Henry III can be found spending 32 marks on a gospel book, and 15 marks on a 'scriptura', but other books could cost only a few shillings: *C[alendar of] L[iberate] R[olls: Henry III]* (6 vols., London, 1916–64), 1240–5, p. 121; *CLR 1251–60*, p. 297; R.M. Hogg, 'Some Thirteenth-century Book Prices', in P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, eds., *Thirteenth Century England V* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 179–94.

93. *Close Rolls 1261–4*, p. 133.

94. D.M. Smith and V.C.M. London, eds., *The Heads of Religious Houses in England and Wales 1216–1377* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 151.

95. *Curia Regis Rolls* (20 vols., London, 1906–2006), vol. xvi, no. 148H; *C[alendar of] P[atent] R[olls: Henry III]* (4 vols., London, 1906–13), 1247–58, pp. 77, 92; *Collectanea*, ii. 242; H.R. Luard, ed., *Annales Monastici*, Rolls Series, xxxvi (5 vols., 1864–9), iv. 440; Smith and London, eds., *Heads of Religious Houses, 1216–1377*, p. 56. For Pershore Abbey, see J. Willis-Bund and W. Page, eds., *Victoria County History Worcestershire*, ii (1906; repr. Folkestone, 1971), pp. 127–36.

96. *CPR 1247–58*, p. 71; *C[alendar of the] F[ine] R[olls of the Reign of Henry III]*, 1250–1, no. 1107, available online at <http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk>.

97. *CPR 1247–58*, p. 104; *Collectanea*, ii. 242. The chancery rolls are full of writs addressed to Eleurius in his capacity of escheator.

98. *CPR 1247–58*, p. 211.

was yet to come.⁹⁹ As the *Flores* records, in 1257 he was made a baron of the exchequer, where he sat at the very top of the kingdom's financial hierarchy. We do not know when Eleurius left the exchequer, but he retired from the abbacy due to ill health in October 1264.¹⁰⁰ He seems, however, to have remained at Pershore, for he received a gift of a deer from the king on 13 December 1264, just after the latter's visit to the monastery.¹⁰¹

Despite his wish to move to a greater house, Eleurius was a conspicuous benefactor of Pershore. He secured timber from the king for its fabric, endowed it with markets, fairs and hunting rights,¹⁰² spent some £230 (in more than eighty transactions) increasing its properties,¹⁰³ and probably initiated the cartulary which recorded the acquisitions of himself and his predecessors.¹⁰⁴ Against this background, what is more likely than that Eleurius decided to endow Pershore with a major chronicle? He would thus have been acting in exactly the same way as the prior of Dunstable, Richard de Morins, another distinguished man of affairs who, in 1209 or 1210, obtained from St Albans a copy of the work of Ralph de Diceto to form the foundation for Dunstable's own annals.¹⁰⁵ How extensive Pershore's historical writing had been prior to Eleurius's abbacy is impossible to know. If Leland's extracts are in any way representative, it amounted to very little more than brief notes about the succession of the abbots and other matters connected with the church. Whatever was there before, the acquisition of new material shows that it was thought to be inadequate. The *Flores* provided Pershore with history on a completely novel scale. Quite apart from other contacts, Eleurius knew St Albans well from his work as a royal official. Indeed, he attested the exchequer writs of February 1257 which protected the interests of the convent's cell at Belvoir—writs which Paris copied into his *Liber Additamentorum*.¹⁰⁶ Paris himself was well informed about the exchequer and, in 1257, gave details of the king's

99. *CPR 1247–58*, p. 449; *Collectanea*, ii. 242. Eleurius seems to have given up as escheator in November 1255, at the time of his mission to Wales, since in the same month John Walerand was appointed escheator south of Trent: *CPR 1247–58*, p. 446.

100. *CPR 1258–66*, p. 355. At the end of June 1264, Pershore offered 50 marks for custody of the abbey at the next vacancy, whether caused by Eleurius's death or resignation: *ibid.*, p. 351. Eleurius may thus have been contemplating resignation at that point.

101. *Close Rolls 1264–8*, p. 7. The deer came from the neighbouring Feckenham forest.

102. *Close Rolls 1254–6*, p. 273; *Close Rolls 1256–9*, p. 99; *Calendar of Charter Rolls*, I: *Henry III: 1226–57* (London, 1903), pp. 365, 410.

103. The transactions (not all of which have money changing hands) are recorded in the abbey's cartulary, for which see next note.

104. The cartulary is T[he] N[ational] A[rchives], P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice], E 315/61; see G.R.C. Davis, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue* (London, 1958), p. 86. I am grateful to Henry Summerson for bringing it to my attention. It is, for the most part, written in typical mid- to late thirteenth-century hands. Some of the Eleurius material was copied in the time of his successor, but there seem, judging from the hands, to be earlier portions, containing material from Eleurius and his immediate predecessors, which may come from the cartulary as initiated by Eleurius.

105. Cheney, 'Making of the Dunstable Annals', pp. 83–8.

106. *CM*, vi. 342–4.

expenses as obtained from the 'clerks who revolve the rolls'.¹⁰⁷ That he and Eleurius knew each other seems a completely safe assumption. Just when Eleurius made, or sanctioned, the application to St Albans to obtain the *Flores* and its related material, we do not know. It must, however, have been after 1261 since, as we have seen, the St Albans' continuation of Paris ran into that year. It seems unlikely that an application would have been made in the turbulent state of the realm between 1263 and 1265. Perhaps the most likely time is in 1262, the one full year between 1258 and 1265 when the king was in control of government and the realm was at peace. It was precisely in this year that Eleurius made William de Flemstede his attorney in the case *coram rege*.

Before his resignation in October 1264, Eleurius seems, therefore, to have presided over a series of historical enterprises. If we are correct about the dating, there was the acquisition of a large amount of material from St Albans. There was also the beginning of the detailed account of the years 1263 and 1264. Quite probably, work had also started on linking the two together and writing out the fair copy which we now have in the Chetham volume. Something of that kind must at least have been envisaged, since the St Albans' material by itself did not make a coherent whole. As for the Leland Pershore, some of its annalistic material about Pershore and local events (such as the struggle to control Bristol Castle in 1260) was probably entered contemporaneously.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the account was subsequently filled out with St Albans' material, if we may judge from the subject matter between 1257 and 1260.¹⁰⁹

How closely connected was Eleurius with the actual making of the chronicles? This was certainly an area in which monastic superiors could be involved. The prior of Dunstable, Richard de Morins, did not merely obtain the copy of Diceto from St Albans. He 'lent a hand or kept an eye on' the chronicle, and probably contributed passages of his own.¹¹⁰ There is no evidence that Eleurius himself wrote either of the Pershore chronicles. As we have seen, their probable author was William de Flemstede. Whoever the author was, he was certainly a man of personality and ability, not afraid to offer his own comments on events 'for the instruction of posterity'.¹¹¹ If he was clumsy in inserting the Pershore section between 1256 and 1258 into the material from St

107. *CM*, v. 627; Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, pp. 14, 17–18; D. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (London, 1996), ch. 7.

108. *Collectanea*, ii. 243–4.

109. The overlap in phraseology between the Leland Pershore and the *Flores* includes material which seems to have been influenced by the *Chronica Majora*. The Leland Pershore also overlaps with the St Albans' continuation of Paris, as found in the *Flores*, in what it says, under 1260, about the attack on two Roman clerics in London and the death of the judge Roger of Thurkleby. It also adds, however, to what is found there: *Collectanea*, ii. 243–5; *FH*, ii. 416–19, 444, 450–1.

110. Cheney, 'Making of the Dunstable Annals', pp. 83–91, 96–7. I am condensing here a complex story. See also Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 335–6.

111. *FH*, ii. 479. The author here had a passage showing how a unified stand could be efficacious in resisting illegitimate demands, in this case papal taxation sought by the emperor.

Albans, that just reflected how the real focus of his work was later in the 1260s.¹¹² Eleurius, however, was close to William de Flemstede, as we have seen. He was also close to the two chronicles, for both contain admiring references to his career. The *Flores* records his appointment as a baron of the exchequer. The Leland Pershore tells how, 'a monk of Fécamp', he became 'escheator of the king of England over all of England this side of the river Trent' and was then sent 'through all Wales on the business of the crusade and the tenth conceded to the king', being 'received by Llywelyn, prince of North Wales, and other magnates of the same land everywhere honourably'.¹¹³

Against this background, one may well believe that Eleurius influenced the content of both the chronicles beyond simply inspiring the references to himself. Take first some of their purely factual information. Given his Norman background and contacts, Eleurius is highly likely to have been the source for the information in the Pershore *Flores* about the great fire 'at the celebrated and famous monastery of Bec in Normandy'.¹¹⁴ The same may be true of the Leland Pershore's intelligence about the Norman family of Harcourt, and the visit to England of John de Harcourt and the archbishop of Rouen in 1260.¹¹⁵ Was Eleurius, with his knowledge of the continent, also the source for both the *Flores*' claim that there was no finer castle than Windsor 'within the bounds of Europe' and its detail about the 'European' dimension to the civil war of 1264, which comes just before the note of his resignation?¹¹⁶ Both chronicles also display an interest in royal administrators, which is just what one would expect from someone of Eleurius's background. The Leland Pershore has unique detail about the will of the judge Roger of Thirkleby.¹¹⁷ The Pershore *Flores*, under 1263,

112. There was also the laying before the scribe of a text of the 1253 excommunication as his material for 1256, although it had already been copied out as part of the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum* under 1253. Perhaps the author, if he was responsible, had not actually read through the *Abbreviatio* and, having a text of the sentence from another source, decided to insert it here. The version of the excommunication copied under 1256 differs from that copied as part of *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*. For example, it includes Richard de Clare, earl of Gloucester and Hertford, among those present, and includes too the surnames of the other earls (Bigod, Bohun and Warenne): *FH*, ii. 412–14, and p. 412, n. 3; *CM*, v. 375; *HA*, iii. 137.

113. *Collectanea*, ii. 242. The praise of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in the Pershore *Flores* for 1257 (*FH*, ii. 416) echoes Paris's sentiments (*CM*, v. 646–7), but one wonders whether it also echoes Eleurius's.

114. *FH*, ii. 479. Eleurius kept in touch with his home monastery of Fécamp in Normandy and, in February 1258, in a reciprocal confraternity agreement, secured a promise of its prayers and masses for both himself and his monks: TNA, PRO, E 210/10188. For Pershore's side of the agreement, see Rouen, Archives Départementales Seine-Maritime, 7H51. I owe these references and a transcription of the charters to the kindness of Nicholas Vincent.

115. *Collectanea*, ii. 245; see F.M. Powicke, 'The Archbishop of Rouen, John de Harcourt, and Simon de Montfort in 1260', *ante*, li (1936), pp. 108–13, which uses the Leland Pershore 'History', and Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort*, p. 198. For another unique piece of information about control of Bristol in 1259, to which John Maddicott first drew my attention, see *Collectanea*, ii. 243–4; Carpenter, *Reign of Henry III*, p. 249.

116. *FH*, ii. 481, 501–2.

117. *Collectanea*, ii. 245; *FH*, ii. 450–1.

refers to the taking and imprisonment by the Londoners of the clerks of the king, the justices of the bench and the barons of the exchequer, of whom, of course, Eleurius had been one.¹¹⁸

What of the political views of the Pershore *Flores*? If the work was produced by a coalition between Eleurius and William de Flemstede, it is not one where we can follow the debates. The two men were close but may have disagreed. It is natural to assume that William was the Montfortian and Eleurius the royalist. Perhaps that was the case. Perhaps the truth was more complex. The *Flores* certainly supported the cause of reform and the Montfortian movement. It thought that the revolution of 1258 was caused by royal and papal taxation and the king's promotion of foreigners, especially his Poitevin half-brothers.¹¹⁹ It regretted the overthrow of the Provisions of Oxford in 1261 by the king, and suggested that he acted 'of his own will', 'wholly spurning counsel'.¹²⁰ When Montfort first appears in 1263, he is 'most noble and most excellent in war like things'. He supports the barons and the Provisions with his 'powerful counsel and efficacious work'. The king, queen and Edward, by contrast, have rejected their native men and elevated foreigners.¹²¹ At Lewes, under Montfort's leadership, the barons fight 'pro patria', united 'in faith and will'.¹²² If, moreover, the chronicle was begun in the second half of 1263, then it was inspired by Montfort's triumphant re-assertion of the Provisions of Oxford. It thus stands with the 'Song of Lewes' itself as testimony to how moved people were to record and comment on these momentous events. Compared, however, to the unrestrained celebration and defence of Montfort's cause in the 'Song', the tone of the *Flores* is far more balanced. It awards commendations for valour to Simon de Montfort junior on the one side, and Philip Basset and Matthias Bezill on the other, even though the latter was a foreign servant of the queen.¹²³ It also bemoans the destruction wrought by both sides in the war,¹²⁴ and describes Lewes, in one of the few headings in the text, as a 'miserable conflict'. The battle was an event of 'calamity, and misery, a day terrible beyond measure and exceedingly bitter', witnessing 'sedition and war moved between the citizens of one land'.¹²⁵ Then there is the extraordinary fact, already mentioned, that, while the account of Lewes is plainly favourable to the barons, all four of the passages which actually associate God with the victory, as well as one which proclaims its 'fame', are insertions

118. *FH*, ii. 479, 487, 502. The Pershore text was hostile to John Mansel, however: *FH*, ii. 481, 505.

119. *FH*, ii. 417–18.

120. *FH*, ii. 471, 474.

121. *FH*, ii. 479; for hostility to aliens, see also 417–18, 482, 499–500.

122. *FH*, ii. 494–7.

123. *FH*, ii. 480, 488, 496.

124. *FH*, ii. 487–9, 496–7; *FH*, iii. 3.

125. *FH*, ii. 494, 498.

written over erasures.¹²⁶ Were such sentiments kept out of the initial text by Eleurius's restraining hand? Were they put in by William de Flemstede, or by someone else, after Eleurius's resignation in October 1264? Whatever the case, it was only with the changes that the *Flores* came into line with the 'Song of Lewes' and proclaimed the God-given nature of the victory.

Another characteristic of the Pershore *Flores* is the sympathy it evinces for the royal family. Whereas the 'Song of Lewes' stigmatises the Lord Edward's faithlessness, the Pershore *Flores* commends his 'probity' as well as his martial prowess.¹²⁷ In 1261, the author was impressed by the 'very persuasive' letters sent round the counties by the king, recalling the people to his allegiance, and transcribed them at the back of the book.¹²⁸ He also admired Henry's piety, recording how in 1264 he visited the shrine of Saint Frideswide at Oxford 'personally and devotedly', something which (because of an ancient superstition) 'none of the kings of England before him had without doubt dared to do'.¹²⁹ Later, at the end of 1264, although unaware of the denouement, the author seems to have become uneasy at the emasculation of royal authority and Montfort's absolute power: 'the king, who had already reigned for fifty years, had only the shadow of a name, so that he was not able to traverse and perambulate his land, and was completely subject to the conduct and disposition of another'.¹³⁰ Most remarkable of all is the author's praise of the queen. Although he thanked God that England was spared the invasion of a foreign army, which she planned in 1264,¹³¹ he nonetheless continued: 'this however ought to be recorded to the praise and magnificence of the noble lady of the English, Queen Eleanor, that she sweated so valiantly, strenuously and vigorously, as a most powerful virago, to rescue her lord king and Edward her son'.¹³²

In all these sentiments, we may well see Eleurius's influence on the chronicle. We need not assume, moreover, that he necessarily condemned Montfort outright, any more than did the professional judges, such as Gilbert of Preston, who were prepared to work for

126. *FH*, ii. 494–5, n. 1, 496, n. 1, 497, n. 1, and (unnoticed by Luard) 'eadem die Dei iudicio' (p. 497); Chetham's Library, MS 6712, fos. 235–235v. Luard also did not note that the description of the victory as 'clarissima' (p. 496) is an insertion. I suspect that a further passage, erased at Westminster, about God dissolving Edward's forces was also an insertion: *FH*, ii. 495, n. 5. God only appears in the original account of the battle as not giving his consent to the attempts at a settlement beforehand (p. 494).

127. *FH*, ii. 484, 487, 504; *FH*, iii. 5. The *Flores* does note Edward's trickery: *FH*, ii. 483; see M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), p. 40.

128. *FH*, ii. 473–4.

129. *FH*, ii. 487, and see p. 488 for a similar comment about Henry entering Leicester.

130. *FH*, ii. 505.

131. This reference to God is not an insertion; nor is an earlier one about God rescuing Montfort at Southwark in December 1263; *FH*, ii. 485, 500.

132. *FH*, ii. 500, and see also pp. 481–2 on Eleanor's difference with Henry III in 1263; M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 221, 196.

him.¹³³ One wonders, indeed, if Eleurius had contact with Montfort's Norman supporters, the archbishop of Rouen and John de Harcourt, when they came to England to give evidence at his trial in 1260—which would explain the passage about the episode in the Leland Pershore. The fact that Eleurius was given a deer by the king in December 1264, while the latter was subject to Montfort's control, suggests that he was perfectly *persona grata* with the regime.¹³⁴ Even the pronounced anti-alien emphasis of the *Flores* was perhaps less objectionable to Eleurius than might first appear. By 1258 he had been in England for at least twenty years. He was clearly very attached to Pershore Abbey and also went on a pilgrimage to the shrine at Pontigny of England's latest saint, the archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund of Abingdon.¹³⁵ Eleurius knew at first hand how the privileges of the Lusignans had obstructed the work of the exchequer, and may have agreed with the *Flores* that they were the chief villains in 1258.¹³⁶ Likewise, one could understand if Eleurius had no brief for the alien soldiers whom Edward brought to England in 1263, and with whom the queen hoped to invade in 1264. The general attack in 1263 on aliens resident in England was another matter, and here the *Flores* expressed sympathy with the victims. Perhaps the observation that anyone who could not speak English was vilified and despised 'a vulgo' represents Eleurius's own complaint.¹³⁷

It is no surprise, in view of what has gone before, to see how restrained the Pershore chronicle becomes in its final narrative leading up to the battle of Evesham. Eleurius himself, of course, was no longer abbot, although he may still have been around. (We do not know when he died.) The course of events had now justified his reservations, if such they were, about the revolution. The *Flores*, to be sure, regrets the failure of the peace which Montfort attempted with the earl of

133. See S. Stewart, 'A Year in the Life of a Royal Justice: Gilbert de Preston's Itinerary, July 1264–June 1265', in J. Burton, P. Schofield and B. Weiler, eds., *Thirteenth Century England XI* (Woodbridge, 2009), ch. 11. The state of the evidence makes it difficult to know when Eleurius left the exchequer. An entry on the memoranda roll shows he was still there in July 1258 and expected to be there at Michaelmas so at least he continued during the initial phase of baronial reform: TNA, PRO, E 159/ 31, m. 15d (available at <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/aalt/H3/E159no31/bE159no31dorses/IMG-0122>).

134. *Close Rolls 1264–8*, p. 7.

135. *CPR 1247–58*, p. 574 (August 1257).

136. *FH*, ii. 417–18. Beside a conspicuously large marginal heading 'Memorandum', the exchequer memoranda roll recorded the appearance of Robert Walerand and Imbert Pugeis before the barons of the exchequer and the bishop of Worcester on 25 May 1257, with the injunction from the king that the barons were 'henceforth' to exhibit 'full justice' both to William de Valence 'and all his other brothers' and to everyone else. 'Justice', in this context, meant, in effect, that they were not to hold back in exacting money rightfully due to the king, and the next entry but one is indeed an exchequer order to the sheriff of Hertfordshire to distrain William de Valence to pay his debts. In the entry immediately preceding the 'memorandum', Eleurius appears as a baron of the exchequer. See TNA, PRO, E 368/ 32, m. 15d (available at <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/aalt/H3/E368no32/bE368no32dorses/IMG-5291>). For a different interpretation of the memorandum, see H.W. Ridgeway, 'Foreign Favourites and Henry III's Problems of Patronage', *ante*, civ (1989), p. 605.

137. *FH*, ii. 481.

Gloucester, and speaks of the 'unhappy fate' which led to his army pausing at Evesham and being trapped there. But, on the other hand, it seems, if anything, to side with the earl of Gloucester (patron of the nearby monastery of Tewkesbury) in telling how he was alienated by Montfort's failure to share power. It continues to sympathise with the predicament of the king and thanks God for his survival at Evesham.¹³⁸ The author of a later version of the *Flores* felt that this let Montfort down, and added invectives against Gloucester and a series of laments to its narrative of Evesham.¹³⁹ The so-called Eton *Flores*, by contrast, inserted a far more royalist version of the civil war and its causes.¹⁴⁰ In the sympathy it shows for both sides of the political divide, and its sadness about the sufferings of the civil war, the Pershore *Flores* reveals how a worldly wise monk of Fécamp, English abbot and royal servant viewed this tumultuous and terrible period. That the resulting chronicle pleased the extremes on neither side is the best testimony to its sanity and value.

The story of historical endeavour at Pershore has a curious sequel. Having become an importer of material, it soon became an exporter. After 1265, the Pershore 'History' which Leland saw moved to Evesham, for references to Pershore cease and those to Evesham become abundant. Since, under 1265, the 'History' records the appointment of William de Whitchirche, abbot of Alcester and a former monk of Pershore, as the new abbot of Evesham, one suspects that it was through him that Evesham obtained its copy.¹⁴¹ Around the same time, the *Flores* too left Pershore and went at last to Westminster. This is also explicable. The relations between Pershore and Westminster were close but contentious. Westminster possessed extensive rights and properties in and around Pershore, thanks to the endowment of Edward the Confessor, and these led, not surprisingly, to frequent disputes between the abbeys—disputes in which Eleurius himself played no backward part.¹⁴² In 1268, however, 'through the mediation of mutual friends', Pershore's abbot, Henry de Bideford, and Westminster's Abbot Ware, reached an agreement, which sought to lay at least some of these quarrels to rest.¹⁴³ Was it, then, as

138. *FH*, iii. 1–2, 4–5.

139. *FH*, iii. 4–5; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 420–1. This is the 'W' version of the *Flores* which is now at Westminster Abbey, although there is no evidence it was written there: *FH*, vol. i, pp. xix–xx.

140. *FH*, vol. i, p. xvi; *FH*, iii. 251–66; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 461. For the Eton *Flores*, see above, n. 5.

141. *Collectanea*, ii. 246. The change was noted by F.M. Powicke, who thanked Mr Denholm-Young for pointing out to him the appointment of a Pershore man as abbot of Evesham in that year: Powicke, 'The Archbishop of Rouen, John de Harcourt, and Simon de Montfort in 1260', p. 108, n. 2. For historical writing at Evesham, see D.C. Cox, 'The Battle of Evesham in the Evesham Chronicle', *Historical Research*, lxii (1989), pp. 340–4, and J.R. Maddicott, O. de Laborderie and D.A. Carpenter, 'The Last Hours of Simon de Montfort: A New Account', *ante*, cxv (2000), pp. 379–412.

142. *Close Rolls 1256–9*, p. 480.

143. Westminster Abbey, Muniments Book no. II (The Westminster Cartulary), fo. 285v; see W. Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries: Westminster and Saint Denis in the Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2009), pp. 96, 46, 149.

a result of the amicable contacts forged in negotiating this settlement, that Westminster at last secured the copy of the *Flores*, which had been intended for it in the first place? Abbot Ware, having learnt of the long chronicle tradition at Saint Denis, where he probably stayed at the time of the Treaty of Paris in 1259, perhaps hoped to establish something similar at Westminster.¹⁴⁴ By this time, Matthew Paris's invectives, which had made the transfer of the *Flores* in the 1250s impossible, were buried deep in the text. The account of the 1260s was at least bearable, although the Westminster continuation became more royalist in tone and one Pershore passage about the God-given nature of the victory at Lewes was erased from the text.¹⁴⁵ Presumably Pershore kept copies of its historical works, but none of these seem to survive: hence the way in which Pershore's place as an important centre of historical writing in the 1260s has for so long been unappreciated.

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144. Jordan, *A Tale of Two Monasteries*, pp. 30, 54, 99.

145. *FH*, ii. 495, n. 5. The deleted passage is preserved in the work of the St Albans' monk William Rishanger, written in the early fourteenth century. This shows that St Albans had acquired a copy of the Pershore *Flores* before the passage was deleted by Westminster: *The Chronicle of William de Rishanger of the Barons' Wars*, ed. J.O. Halliwell, Camden Society, 1st ser., xv (1840), p. 34. For other deletions, see *FH*, ii. 370, n. 4, and 371, n. 1. Other later copies of the *Flores* omitted the insertions about the God-given nature of Lewes; see the references in n. 126 above. The royalist tone of the Westminster *Flores* is noted in Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 420–1.