**Revisiting the compilation of Matthew Paris’s *Chronica majora*: new textual and manuscript evidence**

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The *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris (*c*.1200–59) is a vital source for the study of thirteenth-century Europe. This article explores its compilation and dating. Much previous scholarship has rested on the assumption that the first part of the text, a revision of the *Flores historiarum* of Roger of Wendover covering the years from the Creation to 1235, was written at the same time as Matthew’s continuation of it (stretching to the year 1250). Textual, codicological and palaeographic evidence suggests that this was not the case. Matthew at first wrote only to revise the *Flores*, and only later was it extended to become the *Chronica majora*. This article also puts forward evidence that Matthew’s continuation was begun in the year 1247. The complex compositional process of the *Chronica majora* offers rare insight into the methods available to medieval authors charged with writing large-scale projects.

**Keywords:** Matthew Paris; *Chronica majora*; St Albans; medieval historical writing; thirteenth-century England; thirteenth-century Europe

This article seeks to offer new insights into the production of the *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris (*c*.1200–59).[[1]](#footnote-2) Written in the scriptorium of the Benedictine community of St Albans during the mid thirteenth century, this vast universal chronicle recorded history from the Creation until shortly before Matthew’s death.[[2]](#footnote-3) It remains an valuable source for examinations of the quarrels of Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) with the papacy, the crusade of Louis IX of France (1214–70), the Mongol invasions of Europe, and the early part of the period of baronial reform and rebellion in England. Furthermore, it preserves various newsletters, diplomatic correspondence and laws, many of them found nowhere else. Aside from its thematic scope and geographic breadth, the *Chronica* is famous for ‘the extravagance’ of Matthew’s ‘prejudices, and the constant intrusion of his own personality’.[[3]](#footnote-4) Few texts allow us to explore the mind of a medieval man so thoroughly. Finally, Matthew was an accomplished artist who illustrated the manuscripts of the *Chronica* and several other texts lavishly, including some of the earliest known maps of Britain, Europe and the Holy Land. In sum, the *Chronica* is an indispensable source for the thirteenth century.

The text itself can be divided into three distinct parts. The first part, the annals up to early 1236, was largely based on the *Flores historiarum*, an earlier chronicle of St Albans written by Roger of Wendover. The second part, in which the text became Matthew’s own compilation, continued to the year 1250, and concluded with an elaborate summary of the previous 50 years.[[4]](#footnote-5) Later, Matthew decided to resume work, and the third part of the *Chronica* extends from the year 1251 to 1259. It has often been assumed that the first two parts were written together as part of a single project. What follows demonstrates that they were in fact written separately, with a (probably significant) pause between them, and that the writing of the second part of the *Chronica* extended from 1247 to 1251.

Scholars interested in how and when the *Chronica* was assembled have plenty of evidence to mull over. First, the autograph text of the *Chronica* has survived into modern times. Today, it is divided between three manuscripts, though these do not correspond with the three parts highlighted above. The first two manuscripts, now housed at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, are MS 26 (often referred to by the siglum *A*), which contains the chronicle from the Creation through to 1188; and MS 16 II (*B*),[[5]](#footnote-6) covering 1189 to 1253. The final volume (*R*), containing 1254 to 1259, is found in London, British Library, MS Royal 14 C VII. *A* and *B* were originally a part of the same book, and they were separated only later.[[6]](#footnote-7) In what follows, when these manuscripts are referred to together, they will be described as *AB*.

Matthew was a prolific writer and, alongside the *Chronica*, almost all of his texts survive. It is not necessary here to provide a list of all of them.[[7]](#footnote-8) However, a few will feature prominently in the discussion that follows. The *Historia Anglorum*, a history of England covering the years 1066 to 1253, was in large part derived from the *Chronica*.[[8]](#footnote-9) Similarly, the *Chronica* was used as a source in the compilation of the first part of the *Gesta abbatum*, a text documenting the deeds of the abbots of St Albans. Indeed, this domestic history and the *Chronica* once were once part of the same manuscript volume.[[9]](#footnote-10) Another text worth mentioning is the *Liber additamentorum*. While writing the second part of the *Chronica*, Matthew at first incorporated the documents he obtained into the main text of the chronicle. Later, he decided that a new method of recording them was needed. Hence, he devised the *Liber* as an appendix into which they could be copied. It was initially placed at the end of *AB*, but was later moved to what is now British Library, MS Cotton Nero D I, where it can be found with a host of other texts, documents and notes, many written by Matthew, others written by different scribes.[[10]](#footnote-11)

Armed with such rich manuscript evidence, questions relating to the *Chronica*’s compilation have long sustained the interest of historians. By far the most important contributions in this area are those of Richard Vaughan, who resolved many of the then lingering unresolved questions and debates. In 1953, Vaughan published the first scientific description of Matthew’s handwriting, and established definitively the manuscripts in which it was contained.[[11]](#footnote-12) In 1958, he published his seminal monograph, *Matthew Paris*, in which he established that *AB* was the earliest of Matthew’s chronicles, and showed that many of Matthew’s other texts had derived partly from it.[[12]](#footnote-13) In fact, Vaughan addressed longstanding questions regarding no less than 11 of Matthew’s works and, in the midst of all this, provided a comprehensive assessment of the importance of Matthew Paris to the study of the thirteenth century.[[13]](#footnote-14)

Since the publication of Vaughan’s monograph, scholarship on Matthew has continued apace. Historians have become particularly interested in the author and his approach. In the past decade, the charge has been led by Björn Weiler, who has published articles covering topics as diverse as Matthew’s conception of the historian’s task,[[14]](#footnote-15) his chronicles and the process of Europeanisation,[[15]](#footnote-16) his handling of prophecy,[[16]](#footnote-17) and not least Matthew’s trip to Norway to help reform the Benedictine abbey at Nidarholm in 1248.[[17]](#footnote-18) Other works of interest include Hans-Eberhard Hilpert’s examination of the papal and imperial letters in the *Chronica*,[[18]](#footnote-19) and David Carpenter’s study of its chronological sequencing.[[19]](#footnote-20) Nor has interest been restricted to discussions of Matthew’s writings. His maps have inspired a multitude of studies.[[20]](#footnote-21) His illustrations have also attracted attention. Suzanne Lewis’ 1987 study remains fundamental to this area, and recently Judith Collard has also published a series of articles on specific aspects of Matthew’s artwork.[[21]](#footnote-22)

In the last few years, two new studies have appeared offering various fresh insights into the production of the *Chronica*. Manuel Muñoz García included *A*, *B* and R in his study of the handwriting of Matthew and his assistants.[[22]](#footnote-23) Muñoz García used new digital techniques to chart the evolution of Matthew’s handwriting, and was consequently able to describe its characteristic features later in Matthew’s life. This development has allowed for the chronology of the Paris manuscripts to be refined.[[23]](#footnote-24) Meanwhile, Miriam Weiss has published a study highlighting aspects of the *Chronica*’s development.[[24]](#footnote-25) Of particular relevance to this article, Weiss emphasises the vital importance of the St Albans scriptorium and library to the making of such a wide-ranging text,[[25]](#footnote-26) and the significance of the first appearance of Matthew Paris in the text of the *Chronica*.[[26]](#footnote-27) Furthermore, Weiss has made important observations about the chronicle’s relationship with its copies and redactions.[[27]](#footnote-28)

The work of Muñoz García and Weiss has proved immensely valuable in what follows. Nonetheless, neither has addressed the question of whether the first part of the *Chronica* was written separately and much earlier than the second; both follow an approximate dating for the *Chronica* of the 1240s without attempting to refine this further.[[28]](#footnote-29) In tackling these two issues, I hope to show that students of Matthew Paris have an even more interesting text before them than previously thought. It seems that the first part of the *Chronica* was a separate production, that a long continuation of Roger of Wendover’s chronicle was not initially envisaged and that the annals from 1236 to 1250 were only added around the year 1247.

More broadly, this article adds to recent literature on the complicated business of chronicle-writing in the thirteenth century. In 2012, Carpenter convincingly argued that a crucial section the *Flores historiarum* (another chronicle of Matthew’s, not to be confused with Roger of Wendover’s work of the same name) was written at Pershore Abbey, and that this provides a near contemporary account of the Montfortian movement of the 1260s.[[29]](#footnote-30) Carpenter’s study demonstrates that chronicle-writing in the thirteenth century could be a messy undertaking. Multiple religious houses could contribute lengthy sections to a single text, all written with different aims and methods. In what follows, we will see that, even within a single house, the development of a chronicle could be complex. Texts may have been begun for a particular reason, but then the manuscript passed into the hands of another scribe, was refashioned and repurposed for altogether different ends. The production of the *Chronica* adds to our understanding of the methods available to medieval authors charged with such large and ambitious projects.

Recent scholarship has also highlighted the need to question the processes by which chronicles were compiled, using the manuscript evidence wherever possible. Ian Stone’s examination in 2014 of the manuscript containing the chronicle of Arnold fitz Thedmar provides a case in point.[[30]](#footnote-31) Not only did Stone uncover a previously unknown oath, sworn between the rebel barons and the commune of London in 1264,[[31]](#footnote-32) he was able to shed new light on fitz Thedmar’s attitude to the baronial cause as a consequence.[[32]](#footnote-33) This article will demonstrate the rich potential for further analysis of Matthew’s views in light of a similar reassessment. The *Chronica* is a text written in three separate segments over an extended period, with a different set of aims and methods guiding the writing of each. This gives us the opportunity to explore more broadly how far Matthew’s task changed over time, how far his conception of history altered, and how his attitudes and interests developed.

**The sources for *AB***

A series of major sources lies behind the compilation of *AB*. The first part of the *Chronica majora* is based in large part on the *Flores historiarum* of Roger of Wendover. Weiss stressed the collaborative effort behind producing *AB*,[[33]](#footnote-34) and nowhere is this more apparent than in the first part of the text. Up to the annal for 1213, it is largely the work of an unnamed scribe. Other hands – Matthew’s among them – were responsible for numerous short additions.[[34]](#footnote-35) From around mid 1213, the writing is largely Matthew’s own, and with this comes a radical change. Until this point, the text of *AB* is a more or less faithful copy of the *Flores*. When Matthew took over, the text changed in various ways. Of most importance for present purposes, he introduced entirely new information and materials to the annals.[[35]](#footnote-36) This fact is key for establishing whether the first and second parts of the *Chronica* really were written during a single campaign of writing. If they were, we would naturally expect the same set of sources to be used across both segments.

The difficulty is that no sustained examination of Matthew’s sources and intelligence gathering methods has yet been published. Instead, we have a few snapshots into the compilation of small sections of the *Chronica*. For instance, Carpenter has shown that the final annals of the text were copied into the *Chronica* from a rough set of drafts.[[36]](#footnote-37) Both Carpenter and Vaughan found signs throughout the annals for the late 1250s that Matthew jotted down news as soon as he heard of it, wrote a draft version of the text on loose leaves, before finally copying his report into the existing manuscripts.[[37]](#footnote-38) A similar process may have lain behind the compilation of the second part. The presence of obscure information in its earlier annals certainly supports this idea. It is difficult to see how, when writing *AB* several years afterwards, Matthew would have recalled from memory a fluctuation in the price of herring caused by the threat of the Mongols in 1238.[[38]](#footnote-39)

At the same time, we know that the writing of the second part of the *Chronica* began in the 1240s.[[39]](#footnote-40) If a rough mass of notes kept over many years does lie behind it, it also seems clear that a final preparatory stage of the second part occurred close to the actual writing of *AB*, and that much of the *Chronica*’s content was assembled around that time. Hilpert discovered that the annal for 1239 contained a fragment of a letter to Louis IX referencing the deposition of Frederick II, an event that did not occur until the Council of Lyons in 1245.[[40]](#footnote-41) More evidence is found in the annal for 1243 where, by some accident, Matthew inserted a report of the election of Henry Raspe as anti-king in 1246.[[41]](#footnote-42) Neither example would have been possible had these annals been a simple fair copy taken from rough drafts written in or close to the years they described. A final arrangement of materials must have occurred late in the compositional process.

Two sources in particular warrant mentioning. The first of these, Henry III’s brother Richard, earl of Cornwall (1209–72), has long been recognised as among Matthew’s most important informants.[[42]](#footnote-43) Richard supplied Matthew with an array of documents, including five letters sent by Emperor Frederick II. In fact, in at least two instances Matthew copied from originals still bearing their imperial seals.[[43]](#footnote-44) Aside from these, Richard was probably Matthew’s source for lengthy narrative sections of the *Chronica*. In particular, Vaughan highlighted the likelihood that Richard gave Matthew an eyewitness account of his crusade.[[44]](#footnote-45) Richard’s time in the Holy Land and his preparations are given extensive treatment. The *Chronica* reports how Richard first took the cross in 1236,[[45]](#footnote-46) his departure in 1240,[[46]](#footnote-47) his travels through France and meeting with Louis IX,[[47]](#footnote-48) and his landing at Acre in October 1240.[[48]](#footnote-49) After his arrival, we read how Richard ensured the proper burial of those killed in the Battle of Gaza of 1239.[[49]](#footnote-50) There is also a long letter from Richard to the earl of Devon, the abbot of Beaulieu and one of his own clerks recounting his crusade.[[50]](#footnote-51) Finally, there is a detailed account of Richard’s journey home.[[51]](#footnote-52)

It is not only Richard’s crusade that features prominently in the *Chronica*. He appears frequently after 1235, and may have provided the information behind at least a few of the relevant episodes. For example, Matthew dedicated considerable space to Richard’s foundation of the Cistercian abbey at Hailes,[[52]](#footnote-53) his quarrels with Simon de Montfort[[53]](#footnote-54) and his involvement in the war in Wales in 1245.[[54]](#footnote-55) There are reasons to suspect that Matthew did not obtain much of this information until a considerable time after these events occurred. For example, he would not have received details of Richard’s crusade until after the earl’s return. Furthermore, chapters in which Richard featured sometimes foreshadowed much later events. Thus, in the annal for 1242, Matthew recounted the story of Richard’s perilous crossing of the English Channel. With his ship in danger of sinking, Richard resorted to prayer. In exchange for his safe passage, he promised God that he would establish a monastery. He landed safely at Scilly shortly thereafter.[[55]](#footnote-56) This passage clearly anticipates the foundation of Hailes Abbey in 1246.

**[Printer: please place Table 1 near the following paragraph. Caption is in the Table 1 file.]**

The second significant source used in compiling the *Chronica* is a series of documents from the royal exchequer. Table 1 shows the materials recorded in the second part that certainly originated from this batch. In the past, historians have argued that Matthew’s source for these documents was Alexander of Swereford (d. 1246), a baron of the exchequer, who compiled the early part of the *Red Book of the Exchequer*, a miscellany of letters, memoranda, legal precedents and literary works which shares with the *Chronica* all the documents mentioned above.[[56]](#footnote-57) However, the evidence for a personal connection between Matthew and Swereford is not nearly as convincing as commonly assumed. It seems far more likely that Matthew received a set of texts from the exchequer after Swereford’s death.

The theory that Alexander of Swereford was Matthew’s personal contact rests, almost exclusively, on the following note, giving information about Offa of Mercia, found on a spare leaf in British Library, MS Cotton Nero D I:

According to the account of Master Alexander of Swereford, who was trained and accomplished in history, King Offa held under his control at the beginning of his reign only nine counties (which the English call ‘shires’) before he won for himself complete control of Britain. He also collected the annual tax (which is called Romscot) in the new shires, particularly for the upkeep of the English School for travellers to Rome.[[57]](#footnote-58)

This note, together with several references to treasury documents and rolls written by Swereford (to which we shall return), proved enough for both Hubert Hall, the *Red Book*’s nineteenth-century editor, and Vaughan to say that Swereford allowed Matthew to see and use the exchequer materials.[[58]](#footnote-59) Several historians since have followed their lead.[[59]](#footnote-60)

However, there are reasons to think that this note was written only after Swereford’s death in 1246, and refers instead to something written *by* him. First, it was roughly copied onto a spare leaf of the manuscript, rather than into any of Matthew’s actual texts.[[60]](#footnote-61) Matthew was usually keen to highlight his friendships with high profile figures,[[61]](#footnote-62) yet, had this leaf been lost, there would be no suggestion of personal contact, for nowhere else can it be implied. It is odd that, in the course of the *Chronica*, Matthew mentioned the activities of unnamed exchequer officials,[[62]](#footnote-63) yet no reference was ever made to Swereford, save for an obituary notice.[[63]](#footnote-64) Furthermore, Matthew tells us that his information is *secundum assertionem* (‘according to the account’) of Swereford, and *assertionem* does not necessarily imply an oral statement.[[64]](#footnote-65)

Had Matthew quizzed Swereford during the latter’s lifetime, it would be reasonable to suppose he did so with the intention of including the information in the note among his earliest writings, but this is not the case. Offa of Mercia is mentioned in the first part of the *Chronica* and the *Gesta abbatum*,[[65]](#footnote-66) but there is no evidence of Matthew putting the note to use in either of these works. The *Chronica*’saccount of Offa’s rule was originally a faithful copy of Roger of Wendover’s text.[[66]](#footnote-67) Matthew later added marginal notes, but none bears any connection with the counties Offa controlled or the extension of Romscot (or Peter’s Pence as it was also known) to Offa’s newly-conquered lands. Similarly, the *Gesta* describes the exploits of Offa, but not the information contained in the Swereford note.[[67]](#footnote-68) Judging by these texts, it is difficult to see why Matthew would have needed to record a conversation about Offa of Mercia between himself and Swereford.

On the other hand, the content of the note shares similarities with Matthew’s *Vitae duorum Offarum* (the ‘*Lives of the Two Offas*’), a short text recounting the legend of the founding of St Albans.[[68]](#footnote-69) While no mention is made in it of the shires under Offa’s control at the beginning of his reign, we do find a list of the shires he eventually subdued. Interestingly, in the same passage, Matthew referred to the collection of Peter’s Pence.[[69]](#footnote-70) Clearly, while compiling the *Vitae*, Matthew became interested in the extent of Offa’s lands and the help he gave the Church, and this is just what we find in the Swereford note. More striking still, there is a second rough note in British Library, MS Cotton Nero D I on the same topic,[[70]](#footnote-71) leaving the impression that Matthew used various spaces in the *Liber additamentorum* to make notes while conducting his research. It seems more explicable to associate the note with the writing of the *Vitae*. This has important implications for whether it is reference to a meeting between Matthew and Swereford.

There has been uncertainty as to the date of the *Vitae*, but two scholars who have examined it recently both argued it was one of Matthew’s later productions. Cynthia Hahn suggested that, since the illustrations in the *Vitae* remained unfinished, the text must have been Matthew’s final major project.[[71]](#footnote-72) Weiler based a dating of 1256 on a reference, found in the *Chronica*’s annal for that year, in which Matthew lamented that King Offa had never previously been commemorated by the St Albans monks.[[72]](#footnote-73) The earliest dating is that of Vaughan, who suggested *c*.1250,[[73]](#footnote-74) and indeed this year is mentioned in the *Vitae* in a reference to the *Gesta abbatum*.[[74]](#footnote-75) We are certainly dealing with a text written after Swereford’s death (and perhaps more than a decade later).

Two further considerations support the theory that the note was written at a similar time to the *Vitae*. The first is a palaeographic examination.[[75]](#footnote-76) The note exhibits several features common to the handwriting in Matthew’s later manuscripts (that is, those written after *c*.1250), with large split ascenders (especially on the letters *h* and *l*) particularly notable in this respect.[[76]](#footnote-77) The second is that the note and *Vitae* are found in the same manuscript. With the important exception of the first part of the *Gesta abbatum* and a series of papal privileges, little of British Library, MS Cotton MS. Nero D I appears to have been to have been written until after 1247.[[77]](#footnote-78) Given that the majority of the manuscript was written after Swereford’s death, it is surely more likely that the note was too.

There is thus no positive evidence that Matthew and Swereford knew each other. By contrast, there is every indication that Matthew had access to a set of documents at St Albans compiled by Swereford. In the *Historia Anglorum* (the writing of which began in 1250) we find two references to these materials. In Matthew’s account of how Pope Innocent III annulled Magna Carta, readers are directed to ‘seek out the exchequer rolls of Master Alexander of Swereford’ for a copy of Innocent’s letter.[[78]](#footnote-79) Similarly, readers wishing to view a letter sent by Prince Louis in 1216 to his envoy in Rome during his war in England are instructed that ‘among the little rolls of Master Alexander of Swereford, exchequer clerk, begin with the first roll he compiled.’[[79]](#footnote-80) The second of these notes gives a very specific direction, one Matthew is hardly likely to have made had he not been able to check its accuracy. Rolls compiled by Swereford appear to have been available to Matthew for consultation several years after the exchequer clerk’s death.

There is reason to believe that this was also the case at the time Matthew was writing the *Chronica*, and that the rolls were as Swereford left them upon his death. One of the letters shared between the *Red Book* and the *Chronica* was written by Walter of Ocra, a clerk of Emperor Frederick, to Henry III.[[80]](#footnote-81) While it does not include a date, it is possible to surmise the time of its drafting. The letter concerns the capture of Capaccio, a fortress south of Naples, which took place in late July 1246, and was probably written soon after. It is not clear exactly when the letter arrived in England but, assuming Walter had it dispatched immediately, it could not have reached the court much before mid September.[[81]](#footnote-82) Now Swereford died sometime between Michaelmas (29 September) and 1 November 1246,[[82]](#footnote-83) meaning this letter must have been among the final pieces he recorded. The Ocra letter can thus be regarded as a termination point for Swereford’s rolls or, at least, a point very close to it. The presence of this document supports the theory above, that, rather than Matthew being sent materials piecemeal by Swereford, he was instead copying from a group of materials after the death of their compiler.

**The *Chronica majora*, its composition and sources**

Viewing the exchequer materials in the *Chronica majora* as documents copied from a single batch of materials allows them to be compared with other manuscripts. When we do this, we encounter the first evidence that that a break occurred between completion of the first part of the *Chronica* and the start of the second. These materials were not available during the writing of the first part of the *Chronica*. The exchequer materials survive in at least two other manuscripts: that of the *Red Book* itself,[[83]](#footnote-84) and in London, British Library, MS Hargrave 313. Though a collation of these two manuscripts with the *Chronica* has shown that Matthew did not directly copy from either,[[84]](#footnote-85) they nonetheless give us a good idea of the materials available to him. Indeed, a comparison shows that almost all the documents found in the *Red Book* and MS Hargrave 313, and datable between 1235 and 1246, can also be found in the *Chronica*.[[85]](#footnote-86)

There are, however, exceptions: key among them three letters. One, dated at Ascoli on 18 July 1240, was sent by Emperor Frederick II to Henry III;[[86]](#footnote-87) but it is the other two letters that are of interest here. They concern Frederick II’s proposed marriage to Isabella (Henry III’s sister) in 1235. Both are addressed to Louis IX of France, and are attempts by Frederick and the pope to allay Louis’ fears about the diplomatic implications of the union. These missives presumably arrived at the English court during the marriage negotiations. Their presence in the *Red Book* and MS Hargrave 313 suggests they were a part of the exchequer material when Matthew had access to it.

The *Flores* terminates with a detailed account of the emperor’s wedding. When copying this section into the *Chronica*, Matthew made significant alterations to the text.[[87]](#footnote-88) Had Matthew had the letters to Louis available to him when he was working on this episode, he surely would have included them; but they are nowhere to be found. Shortly after, however, in the annal for 1236, Matthew used information drawn from the exchequer material in his account of Henry III’s wedding to Eleanor of Provence.[[88]](#footnote-89) Matthew marked the point where he began using this source by directing readers to a ‘better and fuller’ (*melius et plenius*) account in the exchequer rolls.[[89]](#footnote-90) When we inspect *B*, the gap between the two marriage narratives amounts to just two leaves.[[90]](#footnote-91) Now, Michael Gullick estimated that a scribe could write about 200 lines a day.[[91]](#footnote-92) If we apply this (admittedly speculative) estimate to the *Chronica*, and had there not been a pause at some point between the writing of these two chapters, only about a day and quarter would have elapsed between their completion. It would have been very unfortunate had the exchequer materials arrived at Matthew’s side mere hours after he copied the account of Frederick’s wedding.

That the exchequer materials were not available before the first part was completed would explain how some of the letters came to be entered under entirely wrong annals. The most striking example of this is the series of four letters sent between Germanus II, patriarch of Constantinople, and the Latin Church, originally exchanged in 1232–3.[[92]](#footnote-93) They concern the schism between the Latin and Eastern Churches, and have attracted interest before. In particular, Vaughan used them to show that Matthew sometimes introduced his own interpolations into the documents he recorded.[[93]](#footnote-94) Another notable feature of these letters is that they are not found under the correct annals. Instead, we find them under 1237.[[94]](#footnote-95) A feasible explanation for this discrepancy is that the annals for 1232–3 had already been written when Swereford’s rolls became available to Matthew. These substantial missives were too long to be added in the margins under the correct years,[[95]](#footnote-96) but their subject matter made as much sense in 1237. Here, the fraught exchange between the Latin and Eastern Churches could be used to introduce the pope’s scheme to launch a crusade against John Vatatzes.[[96]](#footnote-97)

Aside from the documents Matthew copied from the exchequer materials, there is also a short marginal reference to them in the first part of the *Chronica* that is of interest here. In the annal for 1175, Matthew added a marginal note next to the copy of a treaty made between Henry II of England and William the Lion of Scotland the previous year, reporting that ‘this is the correct form of the charter, which is at the treasury.’[[97]](#footnote-98) This suggests that the version of the treaty in the text had already been copied by the time Matthew gained access to the exchequer documents. With an additional copy of the treaty’s text, he apparently went back to check the accuracy of Roger of Wendover’s text. Finding that they matched, he saw fit to note this fact. Had Swereford’s rolls been available during the writing of the annal for 1175, this would surely not have been necessary.

The impression of a break is reinforced when we examine the documents obtained from Richard of Cornwall. In the annal for 1239, we find a long anti-papal manifesto sent by the emperor to Earl Richard during that year.[[98]](#footnote-99) On the same leaf as this letter, Matthew drew Emperor Frederick II’s seal. In her study of Matthew’s illustrations, Lewis noted the image’s close resemblance to surviving examples of the imperial seal.[[99]](#footnote-100) Such an accurate representation was possible because Matthew had at least two original letters available from among the source materials given to him by Richard of Cornwall.[[100]](#footnote-101) For present purposes, what makes the illustration significant is that it is the second rendition of Frederick II’s seal found in the *Chronica*. The earlier example is found in the annal for 1229, and this gives us an opportunity to compare drawings found in the first and second parts of the text.

When Roger of Wendover wrote the annal of 1229 for his *Flores*, he included a letter in which the emperor recounted his successes on crusade to Henry III. Matthew copied this document into the first part of the *Chronica*,[[101]](#footnote-102) and added a drawing of the emperor’s seal. Matthew appears to have been copying an illustration from Roger’s manuscript on this occasion for, in both of the other surviving copies of the *Flores*, there is a blank space left in the text for a drawing of the seal to be inserted.[[102]](#footnote-103) While Matthew usually added his illustrations to the margins, in this case the seal was incorporated directly between the letter’s text and the next chapter.[[103]](#footnote-104) Hilpert noted that the illustration of the reverse side does not correspond to any known imperial seal,[[104]](#footnote-105) the implication being that Matthew had not seen one for himself when executing the drawing. It seems unlikely that Matthew would have copied an inaccurate representation of the imperial seal had he had a genuine one before him. In fact, there is evidence that Matthew was well aware of the differences from his first illustration when Richard of Cornwall finally supplied his source materials. At some point, Matthew returned to the folio containing his first drawing, and added a rubric describing the imperial seal as follows:

On one side of the imperial seal is the likeness of a king, and around it is ‘Frethericus Dei gratia Romanorum imperator et semper Augustus’. On the other side of the seal is an engraving of a certain city, namely Rome, and ‘Roma caput mundi tenet orbis fraena rotundi’ is written surrounding it. It was also a slightly larger seal than the papal seal. On the side with the likeness of a king, above his right shoulder ‘Rex Jerusalem” is written. At the other side of the same image, besides the left shoulder ‘Rex Siciliae’ has been inscribed.[[105]](#footnote-106)

The inclusion of ‘Rex Jerusalem’ and ‘Rex Siciliae’ shows the rubric is not a description of the 1229 seal, as this text is nowhere to be found on the first illustration. On the other hand, both captions are found on the seal in the second part. Just as with the marginal note about the agreement between Henry II and William the Lion, it looks like Matthew went back to check earlier annals having received new source materials.

A thematic shift also occurs in Matthew’s reporting on Richard of Cornwall. As we have already seen, Richard was probably a source of critical importance for many chapters in the second part of the *Chronica*. However, he features little in the narrative of the first part. The striking contrast between the two segments becomes apparent on inspection of the index to the Rolls Series’ edition. In the annals between 1231 and 1234, Henry Richards Luard noted only four references to the earl, and none during 1235. Luard then recorded six events involving Richard during 1236, three in 1237, 17 in 1238, seven in 1239 and nearly 40 in 1240.[[106]](#footnote-107) Furthermore, there are notable absences in the *Chronica*’s coverage of Richard’s life before 1236. For instance, we read nothing of the birth in 1235 of Henry of Almain, Richard’s eldest son and heir.[[107]](#footnote-108) This fact is made more remarkable by the presence of a report of the birth and death of Richard’s unnamed infant son in the annal for 1246.[[108]](#footnote-109)

The changes made by Matthew to the chapters of the *Flores* mentioning Richard were also minor and usually amounted to the alteration of a handful of words. The only significant addition of material relating to the earl cannot prove his contribution to the first part of the *Chronica*. While writing the annal for 1225 for the *Flores*, Roger of Wendover included a report of the reissuing of Magna Carta. Matthew copied this account without making any changes.[[109]](#footnote-110) However, he later added a brief marginal note about Richard receiving his knighthood at the same time.[[110]](#footnote-111) It seems that Matthew did not have a crucial piece of information about the life of an important source while work on the first part was ongoing. Matthew’s treatment of Richard of Cornwall mirrors the use of the exchequer materials in several ways, and is further evidence that the information used to compile the second part was unavailable during production of the first.

Other evidence supports the theory that a break occurred between the writing of the first and second parts. For instance, the *Chronica* commences with a prologue, taken directly from Roger of Wendover’s text, headed ‘Incipit prologus in librum qui Flores historiarum intitulatur.’[[111]](#footnote-112) This is the only place where the *Chronica* is referred to as the *Flores historiarum*. Elsewhere, it is variously described as the *Majora chronica S. Albani*, *Magna chronica S. Albani*, *Liber chronicorum*, *Chronica S. Albani*, *Historiae S. Albani*, *Liber historiarum* and *Liber historiarum annalium*.[[112]](#footnote-113) The prologue heading is unusual, unless the first part of the text was originally intended simply as a copy of the *Flores*.

There is also considerable additional evidence for a break on inspection of the manuscripts. For example, there are noticeable differences in the quality of drawings in the first and second part of the *Chronica*. Between the annals for 1237 and 1240 are a sequence of illustrations adjudged by Vaughan and Lewis to be among Matthew’s finest.[[113]](#footnote-114) These are: Legate Otto addressing the Council of London (*B*, f. 109r), Patriarch Germanus (f. 112r), the seal of Emperor Frederick II noted above (f. 127r), a depiction of the death of Llywelyn of Wales in 1240 (f. 133r), the French defeat at the battle of Gaza (f. 134v), and the truce between the crusaders and the Saracens (f. 139v). These drawings were certainly executed during the writing second part, as the text and decorative features have been incorporated around them.[[114]](#footnote-115) By contrast, Lewis felt that a few of the drawings in the first part were those of an inexperienced draughtsman. She singled out the depiction of the siege of Lincoln (*B*, f. 55v) as being especially awkward.[[115]](#footnote-116) The appearance of Matthew’s most immature illustrations, followed shortly after by his best, suggests a break in which Matthew honed his artistic skills.

A comparison of the decorative features of the manuscript in the first and second parts also provides evidence for a pause. Both sections of the text contain various rubrics, initial capitals, flourishes, page headings and quire numbers. With the exception of Sonia Patterson, who suggested that the flourishing in *AB* was the work of two hands,[[116]](#footnote-117) scholars generally agree that Matthew was responsible for adding almost all of this decoration.[[117]](#footnote-118) Had the annals up to 1250 been completed in a single campaign of writing, we would reasonably expect that Matthew might have executed certain of these elements in a consistent style. However, in one respect this is not the case. In both parts, the text of each annal begins with the words ‘Anno Domini’ followed by the year in Roman numerals; and in both parts, the first letter of each annal is a fine initial capital *A*. However, when we compare those in the second part with those in the first, an interesting difference emerges.

In the first part, there are 16 initial capitals commencing an annal on leaves where Matthew was also responsible for the writing of the text.[[118]](#footnote-119) Of these capitals, all bar that marking the beginning of the annal for 1228 (f. 71v) occupy between two and three lines of text. On certain folios (ff. 39v, 41v, 56v, 58r) they cover no more lines than other initials, and the remainder are usually only slightly larger. With the transition into the second part of the *Chronica*, there is a marked shift in the size and prominence of the initial capitals marking the beginning of an annal.[[119]](#footnote-120) The annal for 1237 begins at the top of the right-hand column of folio 104v of *B*, and the initial capital marking it extends over three lines and well above the text block. Every annal after this, up to 1250, then commences with a fine initial occupying between four and seven lines. Most are ornately flourished and decorated, so that they are the most eye-catching feature on the leaf. This change in *B*’s decorative features occurs immediately at the transition of the first and second parts of the *Chronica*, and suggests that this decoration was done in two separate stints.

Yet more evidence for a pause ought to be found at the point of transition between the first and second parts. Of course, the problem here is that we first need to find it. The most natural place to look is where the text of the *Flores* ceased, and Matthew’s continuation began.[[120]](#footnote-121) Luard did just this while preparing his edition of the *Chronica*, and remarked that Matthew ‘takes up the history without any apparent break, continuing Wendover as if he left off in the middle of a paragraph and only marking the commencement of his continuation by a quotation from Ovid’.[[121]](#footnote-122) It is easy to see how Luard reached this conclusion. The text continues between the last lines of the *Flores* and the first of the continuation without an apparent change of quill or ink, or any other sign of a pause. On this basis, it seems probable that the break occurred before or after this. It is unlikely that Matthew would stop before fully completing the copy of the *Flores*, and a pause around this point would have provided the opportunity to use the exchequer letters on the emperor’s marriage. The break surely occurred later.

Two leaves on from the transition from the *Flores* to the continuation, we find Matthew’s description of Henry III’s marriage to Eleanor of Provence, and of the new queen’s coronation in 1236. This account occupies almost the entire folio.[[122]](#footnote-123) In the right-hand column, however, on the forty-first line of text, there is an immediately striking piece of evidence. Suddenly, Matthew began writing with a thinner, harder nib and in a lighter ink. There was clearly a pause in the writing immediately before this point. In fact, it is one of the most obvious breaks in the whole manuscript. It just so happens that the resumption of writing coincides with the introduction, for the first time, of the materials obtained from the exchequer. The *Red Book* contains an account of the queen’s coronation, and particularly the role played by various officials in the ceremony.[[123]](#footnote-124) Matthew copied an abridged version of this text into the *Chronica* but, importantly, he did not rely on Swereford’s rolls at any point before the break on folio 99r, and instead based the earlier part of the marriage narrative on other information. Indeed, Vaughan thought this part of the text was Matthew’s own eyewitness account.[[124]](#footnote-125)

The other evidence for a pause is consistent with the resumption of writing at the first introduction of the exchequer material. The fine initial marking the beginning of 1236 (also on f. 99r) takes up only three lines and is much simpler than those in the second part. Furthermore, there are no documents that can be linked to Richard of Cornwall in the text between the end of the *Flores* revision and the abridged exchequer account of Eleanor’s coronation. In fact, there is no mention of the earl at all, an interesting omission given that so much of intervening text is taken up with his brother’s marriage. It would be an extraordinary coincidence for there to be such an obvious sign of disruption at this point if the transition between the first and second parts did not occur here. It seems that Matthew and the other scribes at first only produced a copy of the *Flores* of Roger of Wendover with a short continuation ending with the marriage of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence in January 1236. The second part of the *Chronica* commenced later with the additional information on Eleanor’s coronation drawn from the exchequer material, beginning on the forty-first line of the right-hand column of folio 99r.[[125]](#footnote-126)

**Dating the first two parts of the *Chronica***

We can now approach the question of the date of the first and second parts of the *Chronica majora*. I will deal first with the second part. In the nineteenth century, Hans Plehn argued that the annal for 1239 contained an allusion to the deaths of Gilbert and Walter Marshal, the latter of which did not occur until November 1245, and that consequently this was the *terminus a quo* for the whole chronicle.[[126]](#footnote-127) Many years later, Hilpert questioned the significance of Plehn’s evidence, but nonetheless found other signs that the annal for 1239 could not have been written until at least 1245. Furthermore, he pointed out that the writing of the annal for 1243 could not have occurred until or after 1246.[[127]](#footnote-128) Most major studies have accepted this approximate dating without attempting to refine it further. For instance, Vaughan was content simply to restate Plehn’s findings;[[128]](#footnote-129) and Lewis based her chronology of the illustrations in the *Chronica* partly on Hilpert’s discussion.[[129]](#footnote-130)

The most recent study of the development of the *Chronica* reinforces the common view that the writing of *AB* was a slow process carried out over a long campaign of writing. In *c*.1250, a scribe began copying what is now part of British Library, Cotton Nero MS. D V (a fair copy of *B*, also known as *C*). In preparation for this, Matthew went through *B* marking numerous passages considered offensive to the king, many of which were then omitted from the text of *C*.[[130]](#footnote-131) Weiss noticed that many passages were marked as offensive up to the annal for 1246, but afterwards none can be found in the remainder of the second part.[[131]](#footnote-132) She argued that the meeting between Henry III and Matthew at the translation of the Holy Blood relic at Westminster in October 1247 (to which we shall return) was a significant factor in the disappearance of these marginal notes. This sudden royal patronage, Weiss argued, prompted Matthew to moderate his tone.[[132]](#footnote-133)

Weiss believed that the annals up to 1246 had been completed at the time of Henry III and Matthew’s meeting. A year-long lag between events and their copying into *AB* gave Matthew the chance to avoid troublesome statements from the annal for 1246 onwards, and few appear afterwards.[[133]](#footnote-134) In other words, by 1247, production of the second part had been underway for a significant time. Yet, while there may be fewer passages critical of the king between 1247 and 1250, there remain enough to have potentially caused outrage. In Matthew’s account of the parliament held in London in February 1248, he accused Henry of feigning regret for past behaviour in an effort to gain money from the assembled magnates.[[134]](#footnote-135) Another example is found in the annal for 1250, where Matthew himself reproached Henry for perceived injustices against St Albans.[[135]](#footnote-136) The king promised to reconsider his conduct, but Matthew bluntly stated that any trace of this pledge quickly vanished from Henry’s memory.[[136]](#footnote-137) Weiss’s observations are of great significance to our understanding of the compilation of *C* and the *Chronica*’s redactions, but I do not think that they show work on *AB* under way before 1247.

Muñoz García has suggested that Matthew may have spent an accumulated total of just two and a half years writing his various stints in 10 different manuscripts, *A* and *B* among them.[[137]](#footnote-138) Though (as Muñoz García acknowledged) this estimate does not account for preparation time,[[138]](#footnote-139) it is possible that the writing of the second part was a much swifter undertaking than often believed. Indeed, while preparations for the second part may well have been going on prior to 1247, there is much textual evidence that the actual writing began in that year. This theory rests on the dating of the second part’s source materials, and also on changes in the method of information-gathering after Matthew began keeping the *Liber Additamentorum*. Besides this, scholars have noticed other coincidences to suggest something of significance happened in 1247.

To begin with the dating of the exchequer materials: as we saw above, the final document common to the *Chronica* and the *Red Book of the Exchequer* is the letter of Walter of Ocra, and this probably did not arrive in England until after mid September 1246. The earliest common material is the opening text of the second part. Assuming that Matthew was working from a complete set of rolls, then late 1246 is the earliest that the writing of the second part commenced. If we allow enough time for the Ocra letter to be copied, the rolls to be dispatched for the use of St Albans, and Matthew to assemble his other documents and intelligence, then work would probably not have commenced much sooner than early 1247.

During the writing of the annal for 1247, Matthew abandoned his practice of copying all documents into the main text of the *Chronica*. Instead, he began keeping the *Liber additamentorum* as an appendix. Vaughan demonstrated that the *Liber* was originally kept at the end of *AB*.[[139]](#footnote-140) In spite of this new division between the chronicle and documentary materials, the two texts are inextricably linked. Wherever Matthew felt a document might be of interest to a reader of the *Chronica*, he directed them to the *Liber* through a system of *signa*.[[140]](#footnote-141) The first such in-text (as opposed to marginal) reference to the *Liber* is in roughly the middle of the annal for 1247, and relates to materials describing the power of a papal agent.[[141]](#footnote-142) From inspection of *B*, it is clear that the inclusion of this reference immediately followed a break in the writing.[[142]](#footnote-143) Although it is impossible to determine the length of this break, there are sufficient differences in method to indicate that the annals up to this point were composed in a very different way to those following.

Through an inspection of British Library, MS Cotton Nero D I, Vaughan was able to establish that, just prior to its removal from *AB*, the *Liber* comprised of folios 85r–100v of the current manuscript.[[143]](#footnote-144) The first two leaves were written by one of Matthew’s assistants,[[144]](#footnote-145) and there are frequent changes of ink on the remainder.[[145]](#footnote-146) This makes it impossible to determine exactly when the documents came into Matthew’s possession, or whether they were obtained as one or multiple discrete groups. What does seem clear is that the text of the *Chronica* up to (or shortly before) the first mention of the *Liber* had been completed by the time the earliest of its contents arrived.

Most of the materials copied onto folios 85r–100v date from 1247 and thereafter. However, there are a handful of exceptions.[[146]](#footnote-147) These are: brief passages (dated in the text to 1245) concerning the approaching Apocalypse (f. 85r),[[147]](#footnote-148) a series of four letters (dated 1242) recounting the devastation wrought by the Mongols in Europe (ff. 85r–87r),[[148]](#footnote-149) a report of the state of the royal forests from 1244 (ff. 87r–88r),[[149]](#footnote-150) a short note concerning Frederick II’s response to his deposition in 1245 (f. 89r),[[150]](#footnote-151) and an account of the miraculous recovery of Thomas of Savoy from fever through the intersession of St Edward (ff. 89v–90r).[[151]](#footnote-152) Also of interest here is the papal bull (dated 11 January 1247) confirming the canonisation of St Edmund of Abingdon (*c*.1170–1240) and a short Mass for the new saint (ff. 88r–89r).[[152]](#footnote-153)

In his study of Matthew’s handling of prophecy, Weiler pointed to the likelihood that one of these documents (a 1242 letter from a Hungarian abbot concerning the Mongols) was not available during the writing of the corresponding annal.[[153]](#footnote-154) The same appears true of the remainder. None of the four letters detailing the Mongol invasion is mentioned in the *Chronica*, even though this event is described.[[154]](#footnote-155) Twice Matthew mentioned the inquiry into the royal forests; yet twice Matthew had to return to the text to insert a marginal direction to the document in the *Liber*.[[155]](#footnote-156) Although the annal for 1245 contains a lengthy account of Frederick’s reaction to his deposition,[[156]](#footnote-157) the specific information of the *Liber* note (regarding threats and promises made by the emperor to his subjects) is missing. The annal for 1244 reports miracles at the tombs of several saints, but St Edward is not one of them.[[157]](#footnote-158) Finally, the annal for 1246 reported St Edmund’s canonisation, but again Matthew had to insert a marginal note directing readers to the *Liber*.[[158]](#footnote-159) Evidently, the documents of the *Liber* were not available much before the writing of the *Chronica*’s first in-text reference to them.

**[Printer: place Table 2 near the following paragraph. Captions are in the Table 2 file.]**

There are a variety of interesting changes after the first in-text *Liber* reference. For instance, there is noticeable drop in the use of documents. Table 2 shows the number included in each annal (the number of in-text references made to documents in the *Liber* is included in brackets). It shows that, though Matthew added documents throughout the second part of the *Chronica*, the number began to increase significantly in the year 1244 and continued at a substantial rate to 1247. There then followed a steep decline in the final three annals up to 1250. Even the annal for 1250, which is 26 pages longer than the yearly average of 78 between 1236 and 1258,[[159]](#footnote-160) has nothing approaching the numbers for 1247 and the years immediately before. At just the point when an appendix for documents was created, fewer were used.

Connected to this is an apparent change in how information was gathered. On the feast of Edward the Confessor, 13 October 1247, Matthew and three companions travelled to Westminster, where they witnessed the translation of the Holy Blood relic in a procession led by Henry III.[[160]](#footnote-161) After the ceremony was over, Henry, who recognised Matthew, called him over and instructed him ‘to write a plain and full account of all these events, and indelibly to insert them in writing in a book, that recollection of them may be in no way lost to posterity’.[[161]](#footnote-162) This is unlikely to have been the first encounter between the king and Matthew.[[162]](#footnote-163) Yet, as Weiss has noted, their exchange represents the earliest mention in second part of the *Chronica* of the name Matthew Paris.[[163]](#footnote-164) Shortly afterward, Matthew reported that he was the bearer of a message from Louis IX to King Håkon IV of Norway (1204–63).[[164]](#footnote-165) The chronicler is mentioned on a few more occasions before the close of the second part, each time either naming himself or using phrasing that makes clear he is a participant in events.[[165]](#footnote-166)

In most of these episodes, Matthew either recorded a conversation with a contact or obtained new information. His emergence from 1247 as an observer and collector of news coincides with another interesting change. It is from that year onwards that Weiler noticed an increase in the number of named informants.[[166]](#footnote-167) After the first reference to the *Liber*, four contacts are identified in the remainder of the second part: Henry III,[[167]](#footnote-168) Håkon IV,[[168]](#footnote-169) the bishop of Bath[[169]](#footnote-170) and Aaron of York.[[170]](#footnote-171) By contrast, only one informant was recognised during the writing of the second part before 1247: the bishop of Beirut in the annal for 1244.[[171]](#footnote-172) Clearly, there is a change in the method of information-gathering coinciding with the appearance of the *Liber*. All of a sudden, Matthew seems to have become far more proactive.

Other coincidences of interest occurring roughly around the annal for 1247 have been noticed by scholars. Lewis noticed that only one significant illustration appeared in the *Chronica* after the introduction of the *Liber*. Furthermore, she felt this drawing (depicting the Holy Blood ceremony) was a later addition, dating to *c*.1250–1.[[172]](#footnote-173) Weiler has observed that Matthew’s reporting on natural phenomena became more detailed from 1247. In the same study, he argued that the annals from *c*.1247 onwards are ordered in a far more sequential fashion than those preceding it.[[173]](#footnote-174) And while I disagree with Weiss’ theory for the reason behind the disappearance of the marginal directions noting ‘offensive’ passages, the fact they cease shortly before the annal for 1247 is nonetheless striking.

All of which brings us back to the question of the date of the second part. There is a methodical shift in composition occurring at exactly the point during 1247 that the *Liber additamentorum* is introduced. Suddenly, Matthew needed to seek out fresh information to fill the final annals of the second part. This resulted in an increase in named contacts, as Matthew sought out the latest gossip from his abbey’s guests. It resulted in Matthew’s sudden emergence as a gatherer of news and witness to notable events; and it led to a notable fall in the use of documents. These changes are explicable if we assume that the annals up to about mid 1247 depended mainly on a large amount of documentary materials and other historical matter already available to copy. This meant a plentiful number of documents, that sources for narrative reports were not always clear, and would of course have rendered the actual witnessing of events outside St Albans impossible. The balance of the evidence points to 1247 as being the year that the writing of the second part of the *Chronica* began.

It is impossible to say much about how quickly work on the second part progressed. The annals after the introduction of the *Liber* were certainly written after Matthew’s return from Norway, as the annal for 1247 references a conversation between him and Håkon IV.[[174]](#footnote-175) The annal for 1249 cannot have been written until 1250, for it refers to two documents in the *Liber* which follow a document dated to the following year.[[175]](#footnote-176) Vaughan studied the end of the annal for 1250 in connection with efforts to establish that *B* was Matthew’s working autograph copy of the *Chronica*.[[176]](#footnote-177) He noted how two references to Frederick II’s death (13 December 1250) were inserted into the chronicle after its completion. From this, Vaughan deduced that the second part of the *Chronica* had been completed in early 1251, shortly before word of the emperor’s death reached St Albans.[[177]](#footnote-178) This is convincing for, as Vaughan himself noted, news of the death of such an important figure would certainly have been incorporated into the main text had Matthew been aware of it at the time. We can therefore date the second part of the *Chronica*, that is the annals from early 1236 to 1250, to 1247–51.

**Dating the first part of the Chronica majora**

Unfortunately, the evidence for an exact date for the first part of the *Chronica majora* is scant. Indeed, Vaughan believed that there was no evidence at all.[[178]](#footnote-179) The first part’s text terminates early in the annal for 1236, and the only fact we may state with certainty is that it was completed sometime between then and 1247. However, one scholar has suggested a narrower dating range. Hilpert compared the text of the *Chronica* to that of an anthology of poems by Henry of Avranches found in Cambridge University Library MS Dd.11.78, a manuscript copied partly by Matthew.[[179]](#footnote-180) He noticed that, in the *Chronica*, under the annal for 1229, Matthew had written the following short verse, a version of which could also be found in the anthology: ‘The king bestows the funding, the bishop provides assistance, and the masons do the work; all three are needed if the building is to stand.’[[180]](#footnote-181) From this, Hilpert argued that the annal for 1229 could not have been written until after 1243, when Avranches returned to England after having spent maybe a decade or more travelling abroad.[[181]](#footnote-182)

There are difficulties with this theory. In the *Liber additamentorum*, Matthew copied a poem addressed to William of Trumpington, which he attributed to Henry.[[182]](#footnote-183) Trumpington, who was an abbot of St Albans, died in 1235.[[183]](#footnote-184) This suggests that Avranches had connections with the abbey long before 1243. The verse Hilpert discussed is from a poem on the dedication of Salisbury Cathedral in 1225.[[184]](#footnote-185) The extract we find in the *Chronica* is different from that in Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.11.78.[[185]](#footnote-186) It is not clear whether Matthew was responsible for this variant or whether he copied from another source.[[186]](#footnote-187) Furthermore, when Townsend and Rigg published their description of MS Dd.11.78 in 1987, they convincingly showed that it originally consisted of eight separate booklets only later assembled into a single manuscript.[[187]](#footnote-188) In the original booklet containing the poem on Salisbury Cathedral, there is nothing datable beyond 1225 that would prove it came into the possession of St Albans only after 1243.[[188]](#footnote-189) Even if MS Dd.11.78 was the source, there is no firm evidence that it can be used to date the first part of the *Chronica* with certainty.

Although evidence for a precise date is lacking, it is likely that the writing of the first part took place closer to 1236 than 1247. First, a terminal date of 1236 becomes more inexplicable the further removed from that year the first part was written, and much of the evidence cited above – the entirely new source material, the improvement in Matthew’s artistic skills and the difference in the decorative elements between the two parts – all point to a long pause. There are other textual and codicological grounds to support this theory. For instance, under the annal for 1228, we find a record of a visit to England by an Armenian archbishop, who shared with the monks of St Albans the story of the Wandering Jew.[[189]](#footnote-190) Matthew took this story from Roger of Wendover, but added a short passage stating that Noah’s Ark was to be found in Armenia. This fact, Matthew continued, had been confirmed by Richard of Argenton, an English knight who had travelled there.[[190]](#footnote-191) Later, in the annal for 1246, Matthew reported Argenton’s death.[[191]](#footnote-192) The conversation that led to Matthew’s additions may well have taken place long before final preparations for the second part began.

The *Historia Anglorum* contains more convincing evidence of Matthew gathering information long before 1247. In an account of how Hubert de Burgh, earl of Kent,[[192]](#footnote-193) escaped from custody at Devizes in 1233, Matthew wrote: ‘this was related to me while I was writing by Hubert of London himself in the presence of Lawrence, his clerk.’[[193]](#footnote-194) Vaughan noticed that many of the additions Matthew made to the first part of the *Chronica* seemed to be based on intelligence provided by Hubert.[[194]](#footnote-195) Hubert died on 12 May 1243,[[195]](#footnote-196) and so this information must have been gathered before then. It is possible that Hubert’s contributions came even earlier. Lawrence of St Albans, the clerk mentioned in the note, helped Hubert with various legal troubles during the 1230s, and there is no evidence that Hubert engaged Lawrence’s services after 1239.[[196]](#footnote-197) Matthew could have obtained his information from the earl around that time.

It is difficult to determine exactly why Matthew would have been collecting information from these men were it not directly connected to the writing of the first part of the *Chronica*. Matthew used some early lost annals (referred to as the ‘new material’ by Vaughan) in a few of his texts, but unfortunately it is unclear whether these were compiled by him or extended beyond 1223.[[197]](#footnote-198) There are two texts accepted as Matthew’s that *may* pre-date *AB*, but these are hagiographical and concern figures historical to the thirteenth century. The first is the *Life of St Alban*.[[198]](#footnote-199) The second is the *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, which Paul Binski compellingly argued dates from before 1245.[[199]](#footnote-200) If the information of Richard of Argenton and Hubert de Burgh was originally collected as part of some other project, it is not clear what this project was.

More evidence for a long break is encountered in the *Gesta abbatum*, which contains two references suggesting that *AB* was once a very different manuscript. The *Gesta*’s account the abbacy of Abbot Simon (1167–83) contains a story narrating the discovery of the body of St Amphibalus at St Albans in 1178. The text includes a curious passage directing readers to a chronicle in the same book with a more detailed version of the story.[[200]](#footnote-201) Turning to the *Chronica*, the annal for 1178 has a lengthy description of the discovery of St Amphibalus.[[201]](#footnote-202) Its first part was used as a source in the compilation of the *Gesta*, and is almost certainly the chronicle to which the note refers.[[202]](#footnote-203) The reference is fully integrated into the text (rather than a marginal addition or writing over an erasure), meaning that the *Chronica* and *Gesta* were once part of the same book.

There are three possibilities here. First, that the *Gesta* was written after the second part of the *Chronica*, and was bound into *AB* then. Second, that the *Gesta* and second part were produced concurrently, and bound into *AB* at the same time. Finally, the note may be a reference only to the first part of the *Chronica*, and the *Gesta* was later removed from the manuscript to make way for the second. The first suggestion is highly unlikely. As we have seen, the second part of the *Chronica* was completed by early 1251. At around the same time, Matthew was starting work on the *Historia Anglorum*.[[203]](#footnote-204) Matthew used the *Gesta* as a source for the *Historia*, and, in the course of the *Historia*’s text, referred readers to the *Gesta* on several occasions.[[204]](#footnote-205) The earliest such reference is in the annal for 1077.[[205]](#footnote-206) In the manuscript, this is found on only the sixth folio of text.[[206]](#footnote-207) The *Gesta* was likely available to Matthew as soon as work on the *Historia* commenced. Had the former been compiled after the second part of the *Chronica*, it would need to have been written very swiftly indeed.

There are no indications that the *Gesta* formed part of *AB* at the time it had been completed as far as the second part of the *Chronica*, which makes concurrent production unlikely. At some point, Matthew had gone through *AB* and added a number to the final leaf of each quire. Later, when the manuscript was divided into two books, he went back through *B*, removing the old quire numbers and replacing them with new ones. Vaughan discovered that signs of the old numbering survived on most leaves.[[207]](#footnote-208) Matthew certainly extended the numbering beyond the text of the *Chronica* itself, for a quire in the *Liber* was marked in this way while still at the end of *AB*.[[208]](#footnote-209) The *Gesta*’s reference to the *Chronica* indicates clearly that Matthew regarded them as part of the same book, and, had the *Gesta* formed a part of the manuscript after the second part of the *Chronica* had been completed, we might expect to find remnants of this numbering in the manuscript. However, when we inspect the final leaf of each quire in the first part of the *Gesta*,[[209]](#footnote-210) there are no traces of either the old or new numbering on any of them.

We encounter something similar when considering a second instance in the *Gesta* of Matthew directing readers to other texts. Thus, Matthew inserted a passage about various papal privileges obtained during the abbacy of Warin (1183–95),[[210]](#footnote-211) and informed readers that one of them, entitled *Religiosam vitam eligentibus*, ‘is written out above, in the present volume.’[[211]](#footnote-212) This bull, together with a series of other charters and papal privileges, survives today as part of British Library, MS Cotton Nero D I.[[212]](#footnote-213) These documents must have also been bound with the *Chronica* at the same time as the *Gesta*, as the reference to the bull is fully incorporated in that text. However, like the *Gesta*, there are no traces of quire numbering, and no other indication that they were in *AB* when Matthew had completed the chronicle as far as 1250. It would be a remarkable coincidence if both texts had been bound with the *Chronica* in 1251, yet neither retained any vestiges of being so. This seems to indicate that the *Gesta* and associated documents were part of *AB* at an earlier point in its history, probably before work on the second part of the *Chronica* began.

After finishing the revision of Roger of Wendover’s text and its short continuation, Matthew’s attentions thus seem to have turned to compiling the *Gesta*, which was originally bound into the same manuscript as the revision of the *Flores historiarum*. It would be odd had Matthew decided to continue the first part of the *Chronica* as soon as he had completed it, but first written another text. It would be odder still if, having apparently assumed that the *Gesta* would remain in the same book permanently, he had immediately removed it to make way for the second part of the *Chronica*. Matthew evidently did not envisage continuing the first part of the *Chronica* when he completed it, and it appears this was still the case when he wrote the first part of the *Gesta*. This, his contacts with Richard of Argenton and Hubert de Burgh, and the thematic shifts that occur in the second part of the *Chronica*, all strongly suggest that there was a lengthy pause once the *Chronica* had been completed as far as the account of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence’s wedding.

**Conclusion: composing the *Chronica majora***

The compositional process of the *Chronica Majora* was more complex than previously thought. At some point, Matthew and the other monks of the St Albans’ scriptorium decided to produce a copy of the *Flores* *historiarum*. At this stage, a long continuation was not envisaged. Once Matthew took over the writing of the chronicle, he introduced much new information probably obtained during the 1230s. Exactly when the first part was completed is unknown, but it seems that Matthew’s attentions next turned to compiling the first part of the *Gesta abbatum*, which was originally bound into the same book as the *Flores* revision. Aside from the probability that production of the *Gesta* intervened between the *Chronica*’s first and second parts, a lengthy pause between the two is also to be inferred from the sudden availability of certain documents as soon as the second part began, an abrupt shift in the prominence given to Richard of Cornwall and certain manuscript evidence.

In 1247, work finally began on expanding this particular rendition of Roger of Wendover’s work into a lengthier chronicle. Such an extension was possible in part because of the donation of at least two significant batches of documents. Much of this was probably not given to Matthew by Alexander of Swereford, but was instead taken from a set of rolls attributed to the exchequer clerk. Matthew also received original correspondence from Richard of Cornwall, and both these donations were used to enliven the chronicle’s narrative. Matthew completed the second part of the *Chronica* sometime in early 1251. Later, he decided to continue, and the chronicle was then extended to Matthew’s death in 1259.

I have not discussed the third part of the *Chronica* in any detail, as I have not found any evidence that would advance our understanding of its compilation beyond the discoveries of Vaughan. He compared the third part of the *Chronica* to the *Historia Anglorum* and found that, while copying the annal for 1253 into the *Historia Anglorum* from the *Chronica*, Matthew had omitted a term implying that Pope Innocent IV was still living.[[213]](#footnote-214) Innocent was likely still alive when Matthew wrote the passage in the latter, and so work on the third part of the *Chronica* was probably under way before December 1254 (when Innocent died).

These conclusions raise further questions and possibilities. Matthew’s revision of Roger of Wendover’s chronicle was initially intended as a standalone text, and only later was it used as the basis for the *Chronica*. It was thus written with an entirely different set of aims to the rest of the chronicle, and gives us a snapshot into Matthew’s attitudes and interests at an earlier stage in his working life. One of the reasons for the *Chronica*’s popularity is the outspokenness of its author. There is a much greater opportunity to see how far Matthew’s outlook on life altered than we previously thought possible. When did Matthew’s hatred of papal authority develop? Did his exasperation with Henry III appear later, or is it consistent throughout his work? How did his portrayal of other characters change? What sources did he use to revise Roger of Wendover’s work, and how were they used when he eventually came to write the second part of the *Chronica*?

Richard Vaughan’s study of Matthew Paris provided foundations for future research, but his findings on the production of the manuscripts are by no means definitive. An increasing number of them are now accessible online, and it is becoming far easier to study and compare them.[[214]](#footnote-215) While studies of Matthew’s worldview are important, this article has demonstrated the rich potential for further work on the manuscripts themselves. It has also clarified some important aspects of how this vital source for thirteenth-century European history was created, and will contribute to the work of those seeking to understand Matthew’s worldview, how it developed over time, and how sections of his great chronicle relate to other parts.

**Note on contributor**

***Nathan Greasley*** received his Ph.D. from Aberystwyth University in 2019. In his thesis, he examined the sources and information gathering processes used by Matthew Paris in the compilation of his *Chronica majora*. Using this text as a case study, he considered the importance of historical writing to our understanding of how news and information spread in the High Middle Ages.

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   The following abbreviations are used in this article: BL: London, British Library; *CM*: Henry Richards Luard, ed., *Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora*. Rolls series, 57. 7 vols. (London: Longman, 1872–83); *HA*: Frederic Madden, ed., *Matthaei Parisiensis Historia Anglorum: sive, ut vulgo dicitur, Historia minor: item, ejusdem Abbreviatio chronicorum Angliae*. Rolls series, 44. 3 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1866–9); *GA*: Henry T. Riley, ed., *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani, a Thoma Walsingham, regnante Ricardo Secundo, ejusdem ecclesiæ præcentore, compilate*. Rolls series, 28. 3 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1867–9); *Red Book*: Hubert Hall, ed., *Red Book of the Exchequer*. Rolls series, 99. 3 vols. (London: H.M.S.O., 1896); *VDO*: Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., *Lives of the Two Offas* (Exeter: Medieval Press, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Useful introductions to Matthew Paris are Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Suzanne Lewis, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Björn Weiler, ‘Matthew Paris on the Writing of History’, *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 254–78. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. V.H. Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris* (Glasgow: Jackson, Son & Company, 1944), 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *CM*, 5: 191–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. In 2003, long after it had been assigned the siglum *B*, MS. 16 was divided into two parts. MS 16 I now contains prefatory materials, and MS 16 II contains the *Chronica* itself. References to *B* in this article refer to MS 16 II. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. A list can be found in Richard Vaughan, ‘The Handwriting of Matthew Paris’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 1 (1953): 390. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. It is found today in London, British Library, MS Royal 14 C VII, with the third part of the *Chronica*. On their relationship, see Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 49–77. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Matthew’s *Gesta* remains unedited. However, it was used by Thomas Walsingham in his own fourteenth-century rendition, and this was edited for the Rolls Series. See Mark Hagger, ‘The *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani:* litigation and history at St. Albans’, *Historical Research* 81 (2008), 373. For discussion of Matthew’s text, see Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 85–9; 182–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. For more on which, see Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 78–91. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Vaughan, ‘Handwriting’, 376–94. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 49–77. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 125–58. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Björn Weiler, ‘Matthew Paris on the Writing of History’. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Björn Weiler, ‘Historical Writing and the Experience of Europeanisation: The View from St Albans’, in *“The Making of Europe”. Essays in honour of Robert Bartlett*, eds. Sally Crumplin and John Hudson (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 205–42. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Björn Weiler, ‘History, Prophecy and the Apocalypse in the Chronicles of Matthew Paris’, *English Historical Review* 133 (2018): 253–83. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Björn Weiler, ‘Matthew Paris in Norway’, *Revue Bénédictine* 122 (2012): 153–81. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Hans-Eberhard Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe in den Chronica Majora des Matthaeus Paris* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. David Carpenter, ‘Chronology and Truth: Matthew Paris and the Chronica Majora’, at https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/redist/pdf/Chronologyandtruth3.pdf (accessed 27 November 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. P.D.A Harvey, ‘Matthew Paris’s Maps of Britain’, in *Thirteenth Century England IV*, eds. P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 109–21; Michael Gaudio, ‘Matthew Paris and the Cartography of the Margins’, *Gesta* 39 (2000): 50–9. P.D.A Harvey, ‘Matthew Paris’s Maps of Palestine’, in *Thirteenth Century England VIII*, eds. M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 165–77; Daniel K. Connolly, *The Maps of Matthew Paris: Medieval Journeys through Time, Space and Liturgy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009); Salvatore Sansone, *Tra cartografia politica e immaginario figurativo: Matthew Paris e l’Iter de Londino in Terram Sanctam* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Judith Collard, ‘Matthew Paris, Brother William and the Franciscans’, in *Interpreting Francis and Clare of Assisi: From the Middles Ages to the Present*, eds. Constant J. Mews and Claire Renkin (Melbourne: Broughton Publishing, 2010), 92–110; eadem, ‘Art and Science in the Manuscripts of Matthew Paris’, in *The Medieval Chronicle IX*, eds. Erik Kooper and Sjoerd Levelt (Amsterdam: Brill, 2014), 79–116; eadem, ‘Matthew Paris’s “Self-Portrait with the Virgin Mary” in the *Historia Anglorum*’, *Parergon* 32 (2015): 151–82. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Manuel Muñoz García, ‘The Script of Matthew Paris and His Collaborators: A Digital Approach’ (Ph.D. diss., King’s College London, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 127–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. Miriam Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora des Matthaeus Parisiensis* (Trier: Kliomedia, 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 15–27, 61–5, 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 71–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 138–9; Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 176–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. David Carpenter, ‘The Pershore *Flores Historiarum*: An Unrecognised Chronicle from the Period of Reform and Rebellion in England, 1258–65’, *English Historical Review* 127 (2012): 1343–66. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Ian Stone, ‘The Rebel Barons of 1264 and the Commune of London: An Oath of Mutual Aid’, *English Historical Review* 129 (2014), 1–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Stone, ‘Rebel Barons’, 4–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Stone, ‘Rebel Barons’, 13–15. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 60–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 180–200. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 30–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. For which see Carpenter, ‘Chronology’. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 8–9, 59–61; Carpenter, ‘Chronology’, 3–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. *CM*: 3, 488. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 59, and see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 31–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. *CM*, 4: 268. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. *CM*, 3: 368–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. *CM*, 4: 43–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. *CM*, 4: 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. *CM*, 4: 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. *CM*, 4: 144–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. *CM*, 4: 138–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. *CM*, 4: 166–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. *CM*, 4: 229, 562–3; 5: 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. *CM*, 3: 475–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. *CM*, 4: 486–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. *CM*, 4: 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. See *Red Book*. On Swereford, see Nicholas Vincent, ‘New Light on Master Alexander of Swerford (d. 1246): The Career and Connections of an Oxfordshire Civil Servant’, *Oxoniensia* 61 (1996): 297–309. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. *CM*, 6: 519, n. 1. ‘Secundum assertionem magistri Alexandri de Suereford, in historiis periti et excercitati, rex Offa habuit sub sua ditione in principio suae dominationis tantum novem provincias quas Angli siras appellant, antequam adquireret sibi totam Britannie monarchiam. Contulit autem Romanae scolae ad peregrinorum praecipue Anglorum sustentationem de novem sires censum annum quod vocatur Romscot.’ The note is found BL, MS Cotton Nero D I, f. 185r. On the ‘English School’, which apparently existed in part to provide hospitality for visitors to Rome, see Rory Naismith and Francesca Tinti, ‘The Origins of Peter’s Pence’, *English Historical Review* (2019): 527, n.29. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. *Red Book*, 1: xxix–xxx; Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 13; Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 51–2; Weiler, ‘View from St Albans’, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. BL, MS Cotton Nero D I, f. 185r. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. Weiler, ‘Writing of History’, 262–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. *CM*, 5: 627. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. *CM*, 4: 587–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. R.E. Latham and others, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1975–2013), *s.v*. assertio. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. Offa of Mercia is also mentioned in Dublin, Trinity College MS 177 (containing Matthew’s *Life of St Alban*), in a treatise on the invention of St Alban, ff. 52v–62v, and in charters purportedly granted to St Albans by its founder, ff. 63r–66r. The treatise and charters appear to be later additions to this manuscript associated with the *VDO*. See Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 197–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. *CM*, 1: 342–64. The additions Matthew later made to the text in this section is distinguished by its larger typeface. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. *GA*, 1: 4–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. *VDO*. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. *VDO*, 119–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. BL, MS Cotton Nero D I, f. 155v. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. Cynthia Hahn, ‘The Limits of Text and Image? Matthew Paris’s Final Project, the *Vitae duorum Offarum*, as a Historical Romance’, in *Excavating the Medieval Image: Manuscripts, Artists and Audiences. Essays in Honor of Sandra Hindman*, eds. David S. Areford and Nina Rowe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 37–58. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. Björn Weiler, ‘Monastic Historical Culture and the Utility of a Remote Past: The Case of Matthew Paris’, in *How the Past was Used: Historical Cultures, c.750–2000*, eds. Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017), 117–18. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 89–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. *VDO*, 123–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. I am grateful to Manuel Muñoz García for his advice on this. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. For a detailed description of Matthew’s hand and the evolution of it, see Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 83–145. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 91, n. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. *HA*, 2: 162: ‘Respice rotulum de Scaccario Magistri Alexandri de Swereford.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. *HA*, 2: 182: ‘Incipe in primo rotulo scripto inter rotulos parvos magistri Alexandri de Swereford, clerici de scaccario.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. *CM*, 4: 575–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. This estimate is based on the time with which it took Matthew to learn of Emperor Frederick II’s death in the south of Italy, in 1250. The emperor died on 13 December, and Matthew seems to have found out about it in late January or early February of the following year. See Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 60–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. David Crook, ‘Swerford, Alexander of (b. before 1180, d. 1246)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online at https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/26826 (accessed 23 October 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. Kew, The National Archives, E 164/2. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 14; Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. A full list of which may be found in *Red Book*, 1: lxv–cxlviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. *Red Book*, 1: ci. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. *CM*, 3: 323–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. *CM*, 3: 338. Matthew acknowledged the use of the exchequer’s account of the wedding with the following marginal note: ‘Haec omnia in consuetudinario scaccarii melius et plenius reperientur.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. See the italicised marginal note in *CM*, 3: 338. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. *B*, ff. 98r–99r. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. Michael Gullick, ‘How Fast Did Scribes Write? Evidence from Romanesque Manuscripts’, in *History of the Book in the West: A Library of Critical Essays: 400AD–1455*, eds. Pamela Robinson and Jane Roberts (Farnham: Routledge, 2010), 227–46. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. *Red Book*, 1: xcix–c. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 132–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. *CM*, 3: 458–69. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. Matthew occasionally added documents to the margins of the *Chronica*. See, for instance, *A*, f. 53r, where a letter of Charlemagne to Offa of Mercia has been copied by Matthew at the foot of the leaf. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. *CM*, 3: 446–7, 469–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. *CM*, 2: 296. ‘Haec est forma cartae revera, quae est in thesauro …’ [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. *B*, f. 127r. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. *CM*, 3: 173–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. The illustration can be found on f. 76v of *B*. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 100–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. *CM*, 3: 176: ‘Ex una parte bullae imperialis imago regia, et scriptum in circuitu, “Frethericus Dei gratia Romanorum imperator et semper Augustus”. Ex alia parte bullae insculpitur quaedam civitas, scilicet Roma, et scribitur in circuitu, “Roma caput mundi tenet orbis fraena rotundi.” Erat autem bulla aliquantulum major bulla papae. Ex una parte regalis imaginis, scilicet super dextrum humerum, scriptum est, “Rex Jerusalem”. Ex alia parte ejusdem imaginis, scilicet super sinistrum humerum, inscriptum est, “Rex Siciliae”.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. All mentions of Richard of Cornwall are indexed in *CM*, 7: 475–83. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. Nicholas Vincent, ‘Henry of Almain [Henry of Cornwall] (1235–1271)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. Matthew and Harrison, at https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12958 (accessed 21 June 2020). References to Henry are indexed in *CM*, 7: 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. *CM*, 4: 568–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. *CM*, 3: 91–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. *B*, f. 64r. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. *CM*, 1: 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. *HA*, 1: xxxi–xxxii, n. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 213, 214–15; Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 394–6, 406–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 213–14; Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 406–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 397–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. Sonia Patterson, ‘An Attempt to Identify Matthew Paris as a Flourisher’, *Library* 32 (1977): 367–70. I do not agree with Patterson that no evidence exists to suggest Matthew himself undertook this kind of decoration. Patterson’s ‘Hand 1’ flourished manuscripts written throughout Matthew’s career. The work of Muñoz García has shown that, with one possible exception, Matthew’s scribal assistants tended to collaborate in the writing of manuscripts during relatively brief stints: Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 240–54. The same is likely true for monks co-operating in decoration, making it probable that Hand 1 at least is Matthew Paris himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 211; Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 19–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. *B*, ff. 39v, 41v, 48v, 56v, 58r, 66r, 68v, 71v, 75r, 79r, 80v, 82r, 86r, 89v, 95v, 99r. I include the beginning of the annal for 1236 as part of the first part: see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. *B*, ff. 104v, 114v, 119v, 132v, 141v, 154r, 162r, 168r, 184r, 197v, 209v, 218r, 224r, 230v. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. This occurs on *B*, f. 98r. I am grateful to Robert Ireland for his advice on the following. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. *CM*, 3: xii. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. *B*, f. 99r. In the printed edition, see *CM*, 3: 334–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. *Red Book*, 2: 755–60. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 2–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. In the printed edition, the second part of the *Chronica majora* commences on *CM*, 3: 337, with the sentence ‘Magnates autem, quae sua erant ex antiqua consuetudine et jure antiquo in regum coronationibus, exercebant.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. Hans Plehn, ‘Der politische Charakter von Matheus Parisiensis’, *Staats- und socialwissenschafliche Forschungen* 14 (1897): 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 31–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 59–60. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 379–80. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. For more on this process, see Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 64–5. A second set of marginal notes, marking passages irrelevant to English history, were made in connection with the compilation of the *Historia Anglorum*. This second set of marginal directions are not followed by the scribe of *C*, and extend beyond the annal for 1246. *CM*, 4: 634. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 176–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
133. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
134. *CM*, 5: 5–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
135. *CM*, 5:128–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
136. *CM*, 5: 130: ‘Sed dictorum ac promissorum memoria cum sonitu pertransivit.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
137. Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 141–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
138. Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
139. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 65–71. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
140. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 66, 211. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
141. *CM*, 4: 619. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
142. *B*, f. 213v. The reference is found on the forty-sixth line of the left-hand column beginning from ‘Siquis’. This text is written in a lighter tone of ink than that immediately preceding it. I am grateful to Björn Weiler for his advice on this point. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
143. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 68–70. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
144. Muñoz García, ‘Script of Matthew Paris’, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
145. For example, see BL, MS Cotton Nero D I, ff. 89r, 92v, 94r. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
146. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 91, n. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
147. *CM*, 6: 497, n. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
148. *CM*, 6: 75–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
149. *CM*, 6: 94–9. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
150. *CM*, 6: 112–13. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
151. *CM*, 6: 92–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
152. *CM*, 6: 120–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
153. Weiler, ‘History, Prophecy and the Apocalypse’, 277. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
154. *CM*, 3: 488–9, 639; *CM*, 4: 76–7, 298. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
155. *CM*, 4: 400–1, 426–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
156. *CM*, 4: 474–8 [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
157. *CM*, 4: 378. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
158. *CM*, 4: 586. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
159. The annal for 1250 occupies 104 pages. See *CM*, 5: 94–198. The average annal length was calculated by David Carpenter in *Henry III, 1207–1258: The Rise to Power and Personal Rule* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2020), 171. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
160. *CM*, 4: 640–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
161. I have taken this translation from Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood: Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
162. Björn Weiler, ‘Historical Writing in Medieval Britain: The Case of Matthew Paris’, in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500–1500*, eds. J. Jahner, E. Steiner and E.M. Tyler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
163. Weiss, *Die Chronica maiora*, 71–84. Matthew named himself as the writer of the work once in the first part, at *CM*, 2: 564; though, as Weiss notes, *Die Chronica maiora*, 64, here only his first name is given. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
164. *CM*, 4: 650–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
165. *CM*, 5: 35–6, 42–5, 46, 128–30, 136, 197–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
166. Weiler, ‘Case of Matthew Paris’, 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
167. *CM*, 4: 644–5; *CM*, 5: 128–30. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
168. *CM*, 5: 35–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
169. *CM*, 5: 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
170. *CM*, 5: 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
171. *CM*, 4: 344–5. A few marginal additions were made later to the second part based on information provided by a named contact. See *CM*, 3: 368; *CM*, 4: 428. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
172. Lewis, *Art of Matthew Paris*, 380. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
173. Weiler, ‘History, Prophecy and the Apocalypse’, 274. For the content and chronology of the annal for 1247, see Björn Weiler, ‘How Unusual was Matthew Paris? The Writing of Universal History in Angevin England’, in *Universal Chronicles in the High Middle Ages*, eds. Michele Campopiano and Henry Bainton (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2017), 206–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
174. *CM*, 4: 650–2. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
175. These are the reports of the conversion to Christianity by the king of the Mongols, *CM*, 6: 163–5; and the letter of Queen Blanche of Castile to Henry III on the French capture of Damietta, *CM*, 6: 165–7. These are referenced in quick succession during the annal for 1249, *CM*, 5: 80–1. Immediately preceding them in the *Liber* are papal decretals dating from 1250, *CM*, 6: 188–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
176. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 52–61. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
177. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 60–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
178. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
179. On Henry of Avranches, see Josiah Cox Russell and John P. Heironimus, *The Shorter Latin Poems of Master Henry of Avranches Relating to England* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1935), 18–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
180. *CM*, 3: 189–90: ‘Rex largitur opes, fert praesul opem, lapicidae. Dant operam; tribus hiis est opus ut stet opus.’ I am grateful to Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn for his assistance in translating this verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
181. Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe*, 33–5. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
182. *CM*, 6: 62–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
183. *CM*, 6: 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
184. Russel and Heironimus, *Shorter Latin Poems*, 110–16. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
185. Russel and Heironimus, *Shorter Latin Poems*, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
186. The variant of the *Chronica* is copied into the margins in MS Dd.11.78. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
187. David Townsend and A.G. Rigg, ‘Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (v): Matthew Paris’ Anthology of Henry of Avranches (Cambridge University Library Ms Dd.11.78)’, *Mediaeval Studies* 49 (1987): 352–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
188. Townsend and Rigg, ‘Paris’ Anthology’, 388. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
189. *CM*, 3: 161–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
190. *CM*, 3: 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
191. *CM*, 4: 547. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
192. On whom see F.J. West, ‘Burgh, Hubert de, Earl of Kent (*c*.1170–1243)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds. Matthew and Harrison, at https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3991 (accessed 22 October 2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
193. *HA*, 2: 359, n. 1: ‘Hoc michi hoc scribenti enarravit ipse Hubertus Londoniis, coram Laurentio, clerico suo.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
194. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
195. *CM*, 4: 243–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
196. West, ‘Burgh, Hubert de’. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
197. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 103–6. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
198. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Thelma S. Fenster, eds. and trans., *The Life of St Alban by Matthew Paris*, trans (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010). The date of this manuscript is controversial. For a summary of the theories, see Christopher Baswell, ‘The Manuscript Context’, in *Life of St Alban*, 171–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
199. Paul Binski, ‘Abbot Berkyng's Tapestries and Matthew Paris’s Life of St Edward the Confessor’, *Archaeologia* 109 (1991): 81–100. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
200. BL, Cotton MS Nero D I, f. 49v: ‘Cujus inventionis seriem si quis videre desiderat, revolvat Chronica praesentis libri, usque ad annum Gratiae millesimum centesimum septaugesimum octavum, ubi ipsam plenius descriptam poterit reperire.’ The same text was also copied by Thomas Walsingham in his version of the *Gesta*, which was written in the final years of the fourteenth century. See *GA*, 1: 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
201. *CM*, 2: 301–8. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
202. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
203. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
204. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
205. *HA*, 1: 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
206. *R*, f. 12r. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
207. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 56–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
208. In *B*, Matthew incorporated red quire numbers with blue decoration. A few red and blue specs are still visible at the foot of f. 100v of BL, MS Cotton Nero D I where this decoration once was. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
209. BL, MS Cotton Nero D I, ff. 42v, 52v and 63v. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
210. BL, MS Cotton Nero D I, f. 50v. It is included in Walsingham’s version: *GA*, 1: 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
211. I have taken this translation from Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
212. These are found today between ff. 149r and 161v. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
213. Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
214. The following is a list of Matthew Paris manuscripts available online: *A*, *B* and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 385 (containing a copy of William of Conches’ *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, Matthew being responsible for many of the captions and diagrams) are now available through the Parker Library on the Web, at <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker>. BL, MS Royal 14 C VII (containing the *Historia Anglorum* and the third part of the *Chronica*), MS Cotton Nero D I (containing the *Liber Additamentorum*, the *Gesta Abbatum* and the *Vitae duorum Offarum*), MS Cotton Claudius D VI and MS Cotton Claudius D VI/1 (the former containing the *Abbreviatio Chronicorum*, the latter an illustrated royal genealogy and Matthew’s most famous map of Britain) are all available through the British Library’s website, <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts>. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Ashmole 304 (containing a series of fortune-telling tracts copied by Matthew) can be accessed at <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)