‘The Sources of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to the Annals of the 890s’

by John Quanrud, MA

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, December 2013

Abstract

This thesis examines the origins of a set of manuscripts which, for convenience, are known collectively as the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. It will be suggested that a central tenet in traditional Chronicle theory may stand in need of revision. Aspects of the received interpretation are considered and assessed against the evidence, and an alternative is developed and put forward.

Chapter 1 considers a core assumption in Chronicle studies for over a century — that a single Chronicle archetype, compiled in the early 890s, was the source of all ASC-related entries in all works, both vernacular and Latin. Lexical and other evidence is reviewed suggesting a possible break in ASC at annal 878, perhaps marking the end of a 'first Alfredian compilation'. Such a source, if it existed, consisted of ASC-related material, but was not ASC.

Chapter 2 explores other features relating to this type of entry, also ending at annal 878. The combined evidence appears to suggest that a set of texts, antecedent to the Common Stock, was written in south-western Wessex *c*. 878, largely from eyewitness testimony, and for purposes related to King Alfred's presence in the region at that time. I call this hypothetical source 'P'.

Chapter 3 extracts all P-type entries from ASC, and considers the remaining material. Certain unifying features in a majority of these entries may suggest that a set of annals, extending from 449–890 (and possibly earlier), was compiled after P, likely as part of Alfred's programme of spiritual and educational renewal in the 880s and early 890s. I call this text 'Q'. Q's sources include Bede's *Epitome*, P, regnal lists, Easter tables (perhaps), and more. Q dealt only with matters of great import to the Anglo-Saxons, presented as short, concise statements of fact entered year by year. I suggest *SN* derived its ASC-related entries from Q rather than a full Chronicle in the form of the Common Stock.

Chapter 4 suggests that yet another set of annals was written *c*. 892, concerning the activities in England and on the Continent of a viking army which ASC introduces at Fulham in 879. I call this source 'R'. On the basis of my working hypothesis, I suggest that when Asser came to write his *Life of Alfred* in 893, rather than drawing upon PQR individually, a single document was prepared combining entries from PQR for the years 851–890, to aid him in writing his royal biography. I call this compilation 'S', and suggest that Asser, and, later, the Common Stock's authors, drew upon S as their source of these annals.

Chapter 5 begins by suggesting that, alongside his copy of Asser's *Life*, the *SN* compiler also consulted Q in his 851–887 annals, at times interpolating Asser's text, and at times adding entire entries. I then consider *SN* 891–895, proposing it may represent an early (or original) version of this account of Alfred's final wars. ASC 891–896, by comparison, appears a much expanded and far more complex revision of the source behind *SN*'s version. I call *SN*'s 891–895 hypothetical source 'T', and suggest that the Common Stock's authors used T, along with PQRS, to produce their archetype.

Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of the preceding chapters, and offers some suggestions for possible lines of future research.

Contents

Abstract ii

Preface vi

Abbreviations vi

Introduction 1

1. Aim of this thesis 1

2. Approach and conclusions 3

3. Working with the Chronicle 4

4. ASC manuscripts and related sources 5

1: **Concerning the foundations of Chronicle scholarship** 9

1. Plummer's 'Introduction': A Summary 10

2. Beyond Plummer's theory of *Æ* 12

3. Bately 1978: A watershed in Anglo-Saxon Chronicle studies 13

3.1. Bately's conclusions 14

3.2. A possible break at the end of the 870s 15

4. A possible historical context for an original 878 text 17

5. A 'first Alfredian compilation' dating to the late 870s? 19

6. A significant observation: ASC's 'south-western elements' 22

6.1. Questions concerning ASC's place of origin 22

6.2. Stenton's conclusion: ASC originated in south-western Wessex 25

7. Reassessing Stenton's south-western West Saxon theory 26

7.1. Anglo-Saxon England and Alfred's predicament in 878 27

7.2. Summary 29

2: **Evidence for a 'first Alfredian compilation' dating to 878** 31

1. Further defining a 'first Alfredian compilation' *c*. 878 31

2. ASC's annals of the early ninth century 34

3. Distinctive features in the annals from the early ninth century to 878 39

4. The possible significance of the *gefaran* group of entries in ASC 57

4.1. Annal 789 58

4.2. The source of *gefaran*-type entries — oral or written? 58

5. Introducing hypothetical source 'P' 59

3: **Possible implications of source P for Chronicle studies** 60

1. ASC's non-P material to the 890s 60

1.1. The terms *forþferan* and *gefaran* as indicators of authorship 61

1.2. Review of ASC's *forþferan*-type entries to the 890s 62

2. Dating the compilation of ASC's *forþferan*-type entries 63

2.1. ASC's 880s section 64
2.2. The Common Stock's *forþferan* entries 66
3. The *Annals of St Neots* 66
3.1. *SN*'s ASC-related entries (to 851) 67
3.2. *SN*'s use of source texts 70
3.3. Signficant features in *SN*'s ASC-related entries 72
3.4. Comparing *SN* with ASC 74
3.5. Other types of variation between *SN* and ASC 79
4. Possible evidence that the *forþferan*-type entries originated separate from P 83
4.1. *SN*'s source of *forþferan*-type entries — 'Q' 90
4.2. Signs of Q in John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*? 90
4.3. Was P a source in Q? 91
5. Reviewing the case for Q 94
4: **The source(s) of Asser's *Life of Alfred*** 97
1. A third possible pre-Common Stock source from the reign of Alfred? 97
1.1. The 'Fulham army' annals: 879–892 98
1.2. A missing passage in annal 885? 111
1.3. The Fulham army entries: a third Alfredian source? 114
1.4. The building blocks of ASC's early textual history 114
2. The relationship of Asser's *Life of Alfred* to ASC 116
2.1. The authenticity of Asser's *Life of Alfred* 117
2.2. The relationship between the *Life* and ASC 117
2.3. ASC 851, Asser's *Life* and the use of a September Indiction 118
2.4. Possible evidence of Welsh influence in this section of ASC 121
2.5. Introducing hypothetical source 'S' 121
3. Other evidence for separate authorship of the section starting at 851 122
3.1. Annal 851: the end of ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation 123
3.2. The divergence between A and B(CDE) at 851 126
4. Summary of chapter 129
5: **PQRS and ASC's early textual history** 133
1. Did the *SN* compiler use Q in his 851–887 annals? 133
1.1. Stevenson's 'more correct readings' in *SN* over Asser's *Life* 137
1.2. Three entries in *SN* 851–887 which have been attributed to ASC 142
1.3. Entries of unknown provenance in *SN* 851–887 150
1.4. Section summary 153
2. Alfred's last wars: 891–895 154
2.1. *SN* 890, the end of the original Q? 155
3. *SN* 891–895: possible evidence for source in addition to Q? 157
4. Evidence for multiple stages in the development of ASC's 891–896 section 170

4.1. Evidence of T in John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*? 175
6: **Conclusion** 177
1. Summary of hypotheses 183
2. Avenues for future research 188
Bibliography 189

Preface

It is with sincere thanks I acknowledge the help and support of the following persons: David Parsons, my original first supervisor, for overseeing Stage I of this project with singular skill; Jayne Carroll, my subsequent first supervisor, for patiently helping me hammer those Stage I ideas into a form approaching a thesis intended for submission; Christina Lee, for continued encouragement and staying the course in the role of second supervisor; Judith Jesch, for valuable and much-appreciated guidance and advice throughout my time at Nottingham; Paul Cavill, for reading and commenting on some early chapters; Thomas Noble and Robert Walker for generous assistance in bringing several Latin texts to heel in English; Kim Lawson, for her expertise in taking me through the early stages of a dyslexia diagnosis midway through this project; Bernadette Kirwan, for specialist dyslexia support; Stephen Quanrud, for lending an editorial eye at regular intervals, and for sacrificing an entire Christmas holiday to assist me in working though some major structural issues; and Lois Totten, for proofreading a near-final draft of this manuscript.

I also wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the Postgraduate Research Scholarship Committee in the School of English at Nottingham for the generous grant of a PhD Scholarship (School Award).

Finally, special thanks go out to: P-j Charters, Simon Pellew and David Muir, three friends, who, with the patience of Job and none of his companions' less attractive qualities, listened often and long to expositions of Chronicle theory; my parents for their unwavering support over many years; and last, but certainly not least, my wife, Lynne, without whom I would never have undertaken this project, much less seen it through to completion.

Abbreviations

ASC	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
ASCCE	The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
Bately, *MS A*	*MS A*, ed. by Janet Bately, ASCCE, 3 (Cambridge, 1986)
Bately, *TTR*	Janet Bately, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and Textual Relationships* (Reading, 1991)
BEp	Bede's *Epitome*
Bredehoft, *TH*	Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto, 2001)
BT	J. Bosworth and T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898) with *Supplement* by T. N. Toller (1921) and *Revised and Enlarged Addenda* by A. Campbell (1972)
Dumville, WSGRL	David N. Dumville, 'West Saxon Genealogical and Regnal List', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland 4* (1985): 21–66
Earle and Plummer	*Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts From the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition By John Earle*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Osford, 1892–99; repr. with a chronological note by Dorothy Whitelock, 1952)
EMH	*Early Medieval History*
EHD	*English Historical Documents c. 500–1042*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd edn, English Historical Documents, 1 (London, 1979)
EHR	*English Historical Review*
HE	*Historia Ecclesiastica: Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1996)
JMH	*Journal of Medieval History*
Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*	*Alfred the Great: Asser's* Life of King Alfred *and Other Contemporary Sources*, trans. by Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (Harmondsworth, 1983)
LSE	*Leeds Studies in English*
OE	Old English
ON	Old Norse
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*

SN	*The Annals of St Neots*
Stenton, *ASE*	F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1971)
Stevenson, *Asser*	*Asser's Life of King Alfred; together with the Annals of St Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson, new impression with an article by Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford, 1959).
Swanton, ASC	*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*s, trans. and ed. by Michael Swanton, rev. edn. (London, 2000)
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
Whitelock, ASC	*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. and trans. by Dorothy Whitelock, with David C. Douglas and Susie L. Tucker (London, 1961)

Introduction

The ideas developed in this dissertation began with a hunch — a growing suspicion that some of the Chronicle's annals of the 890s seem more suited to the political needs of Edward the Elder in the early 900s than those of his father, Alfred the Great, toward the end of his reign. My aim at the start was to cover the origin of ASC's 'Common Stock' archetype and subsequent continuations to annal 920. It soon became clear, however, that such a target was beyond the limitations of a single doctoral thesis. I reset my sights, therefore, on ASC's textual history to annal 896, which I had begun to regard as the point at which the original Common Stock archetype probably came to an end. This, too, however, proved a step too far. In the end I settled on establishing a case, if possible, for the existence of several Alfredian sources (the last ending at annal 895) which antedate the Common Stock archetype and were used in its compilation. These antecedent texts, here named P, Q, R, S, and T, I suggest, in different ways and to varying degrees, also influenced certain Latin works containing ASC-related material. The evidence of these Latin works, has, for over a century, played a central role in formulations of a textual history for ASC and related works — from establishing a *terminus ante quem* for the Common Stock's compilation, to determining the number of 'lost' manuscripts required to squeeze everything together into a single hypothesis. This thesis proposes that a core assumption, common to all interpretations of ASC's textual history for over a century, may stand in need of revision.

1. Aim of this thesis

In 1899, the second volume of Charles Plummer's revision of John Earle's work on ASC appeared, signalling a revolution in Chronicle studies.[1] Plummer's comprehensive analysis of ASC's texts revealed that the surviving vernacular versions, best known by their sigla, A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, all share a common core of annals extending from 60 B.C. to some point (still contested) in the 890s. Plummer named his hypothetical archetype *æ*, the text of which, he suggested, was compiled, copied, and distributed to centres across England *c*. 892. Such was the influence of his conclusions that scholars have, ever since, based their research on the assumption that all ASC-related entries in all works ultimately derive from a common archetype completed before 893, when, they believe, Asser used a version of the Chronicle. Plummer's theory of a single archetype behind the vernacular versions has been proved beyond doubt. Other matters, however, fundamental to ASC's early textual history, continue to elude consensus.[2]

This thesis aims to investigate Plummer's conclusion that *æ* was the 'first Alfredian compilation', and, as a consquence, the ultimate source of all ASC-related material in all works, both vernacular and Latin. While the apparent simplicity of a single-source hypothesis might appeal to modern scholarship's preference for 'Occam's razor' solutions, several aspects of it rest uneasily with the available evidence. In order to account for the many variant readings between related texts, Plummer proposed the existence of several hypothetical 'lost' manuscripts. He thus explained *SN*'s avoidance of a major chronological dislocation (756–845), affecting ASC and all other related works, by suggesting that *SN*'s version of ASC was earlier and more accurate than that shared by the vernacular versions. This conclusion was widely ac-

---

1. Charles Plummer, ed. *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others: a Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle,* II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899).
2. Janet Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and Textual relationships', *Reading Medieval Studies* 3 (Reading, 1991), p. 1.

cepted until the 1980s, when David Dumville presented a strong case against it.[3] And recent research has thrown up new challenges to Plummer's theory. For example, if Asser's *Life* and Æthelweard's *Chronicon* both derive from *æ*, then how, as Thomas Bredehoft contended, did they come to include genealogical material apparently belonging to an earlier stage than that in the vernacular versions?[4] Or, if Æthelweard's *Chronicon* and *SN* (compiled at different times and in different locations) took their ASC-related texts from *æ*, then why do they share a number of unique features against the texts of the vernacular versions?[5] And, finally, by what process was Æthelweard able to include a passage in his 885 annal which was apparently lost through homoeoteleuton in the vernacular versions and Asser's *Life*?[6]

2. Approach and conclusions

The work of several scholars will be used to establish the foundations of the investigations which follow. ASC has long been the subject of extensive research, its texts approached in different ways, using palaeography, lexicology, chronology, textual history, and the study of regnal lists, to name but a few. In one of the most significant studies since the publication of Plummer's 'Introduction', Janet Bately's lexical analysis suggested a possible break in ASC's texts occurring at annal 878. This obser-

---

3. Dumville suggested that Plummer's *Æ* was an unnecessary construct. He noted that *SN* at times includes reign lengths for West Saxon kings missing from the vernacular versions. Some of these conflict with *SN*'s chronological framework. For example, *SN* 560 states that, *Ceaulin annis .xvii.*, 'Ceawlin reigned 17 years', despite the fact his successor, Ceol, began ruling in 591 — a gap of thirty-one years. ABCD give no reign length for Ceawlin, while EF and FLat assign him a thirty-years. *SN* shares Ceawlin's seventeen-year reign length with 'a tightly defined and secondary group of texts of the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List — in copies of that text, indeed, which are generally associated in their transmission with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'. Dumville concluded that the *SN* compiler had corrected the text of *æ*, either making his own calculations, or using other sources, in *The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, ed. David Dumville and Michael Lapidge, *ASCCE*, vol. 17 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985), pp. xxxv–xxxvi. See also David Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 4 (1985): 21–66, pp. 53–55.

4. Bredehoft wrote of the *Chronicon*, 'The conclusion that Æthelweard's version of the Chronicle preserved an early draft of the chronicler's genealogy of Æthelwulf may well indicate that the other most notable feature of Æthelweard's genealogy (its failure to identify Scef as a son of Noah and to extend the genealogy back to Adam) also reflected the state of the earlier draft', in *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 33–34, and p. 23 concerning the material in Asser's *Life*.

5. Eric E. Barker, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle used by Æthelweard', *Bulletin of Historical Research* 40 (1967): 74-91, p. 79.

6. Frank M. Stenton, *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 112.

vation serves as the launching pad for the hypotheses which follow. Noting several other features in entries also leading up to and concluding at 878, I suggest they originated in the same set of annals, written *c*. 878. Entries from this source, I argue, were later incorporated together with other sources, into Asser's *Life* and the Common Stock archetype. I then consider ASC's entries which lack these distinguishing characteristics, entries which precede, overlap, and follow on from the '878 group'. Noting Janet Bately's observation that the OE terms for 'die', *gefaran* and *forðferan*, never appear together in texts outside of ASC, it is signficant that entries of the '878 group' use *gefaran*, but never *forðferan*, while ASC's entries not included in this group use *forðeran*, but never *gefaran*. This suggests, quite strongly, that the two types of annal do not share the same author. I continue to assess the remaining material in ASC, and suggest, in the end, that at least five separate sources may be discerned in ASC (all produced in Alfred's reign) before their texts were brought together into the Common Stock archetype.

3. Working with the Chronicle

A number of challenges arise for anyone attempting to write about the textual history of ASC and related works. One of these is assigning year numbers to annals which are dated differently in the various versions. In an attempt to avoid confusion in this regard, I have (unless otherwise stated) adopted the convention of using the annal years determined by Whitelock, et al., in their translation of Chronicle, marking any annal thus corrected with a preceding asterisk. So, for example, an annal dated 839 in MS A, but which Whitelock, et al., give as 842, will be presented in this thesis as *842, without further explanation. When citing authors using dates at odds with Whitelock, et al., I correct the date in square brackets in the quote, citing the original date given by the author in a footnote. So, for example, this line from Robert Hodgkin, which reads in the original,

> From the year 823 or thereabouts, that is, from the beginning of the story of Egbert's great victories, a more definite change comes over the Chronicle. The jottings of earlier annalists fade away...

appears in my thesis as,

> From the year 82[5][7] or thereabouts, that is, from the beginning of the story of Egbert's great victories, a more definite change comes over the Chronicle. The jottings of earlier annalists fade away...

Also regarding the translation by Whitelock, et al. (which, unless otherwise stated, is the source of Chronicle translations in this study), I have taken the liberty of replacing their use of 'Danish' for OE *Denisc*, with the more generic 'Scandinavian'. Likewise, their use of 'the Danish army' for the OE *se here*, I give simply as 'the army', or 'the Scandinavian army', if such clarification is necessary to aid comprehension.

4. ASC manuscripts and related sources

And, finally, a brief overview of the various manuscripts referenced in this study. Numerous books and articles are available which describe these sources in detail, including a very useful table recently published by Alice Jorgensen, which I suggest for further reference.[8] For the purposes of this study, I note the following:

ASC's vernacular versions

MS A (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173), also known as the 'Parker Chronicle'. This is the earliest of the surviving vernacular versions with the hand of its first scribe (scribe 1) continuing to annal 891. This manuscript has been dated to the late ninth or early tenth century.

---

7. Hodgkin, 823.
8. Alice Jorgensen, 'Introduction', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History*, ed. Alice Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 6–7. See also Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents, c. 500-1042*, 2nd ed., (London: Routledge, 1979), 109–17.

MS B (London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A VI). Ends with annal 977 and is thought to be a late tenth century production. MS B shares a close textual history with MS C.

MS C (London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B I), also known as the 'Abingdon Chronicle'. The script (in various hands) of C has been dated to the mid eleventh century.

MS D (London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B IV), also known as the 'Worcester Chronicle'. MS D is closely linked to MS E.

MS E (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 636), also known as the 'Peterborough Chronicle'. Containing the Common Stock (concluding at 892) but also interspersed throughout with annals from the so-called 'Northern Recension'.

MS F (London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A VIII), also known as the 'Domitian Bilingual'. Described as 'an abbreviation of √E [a precursor text antecedent to E] supplemented by charters, MS A and other sources'.

MS G (London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B XI). A copy of A made in the eleventh century. It includes a Genealogical Regnal list, but without A's later material.

MS H (London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A IX, fol. 9). Covering the years 1113–1114. Also known as the *Cottonian Fragment*, not enough of this manuscript has survived to establish its relationship to the other versions. Neither G nor H play a part in this thesis.

Three main Latin sources incorporating ASC-related material

Asser's *Life of Alfred*. Asser wrote his *Life of Alfred* in 893. This Latin text combines biographical detail about Alfred with ASC-related entries extend-

ing from 851–887. The earliest manuscript of the *Life* known in modern times was not the original text, but a copy dating to *c*. 1000. This manuscript belonged to the Cotton library, and was lost in the great fire of 1731. Our knowledge of the Cottonian version is dependent upon transcripts and printed editions made before it was destoyed — all of which contain a great many errors.[9] Even Stevenson's 1904 edition, despite its many corrections and high scholarship, was described by Dumville as 'a quite unsatisfactory basis for further research'.[10] It may be possible, however, in certain instances to determine what was likely an original reading, when works which copied from Asser — such as John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*, *Historia Regum*, and *SN* — all agree in a given reading.[11]

Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. Æthelweard, it is generally assumed, was 'none other than the ealdorman of the name who was prominent in the affairs of Wessex in the time of Æthelred the Unready'.[12] His *Chronicon*, written in the second half of the tenth century, is divided into a prologue and four chapters, which Æthelweard calls 'books'. Book i covers the period from Creation to the accession of Æthelfrith in 593; Book ii, from the story about Gregory the Great and the English slave boys to King Bryhtric of Wessex's marriage in 789; Book iii, from the first viking incursion on English soil in 789 to the death of Æthelwulf in 855, and; Book iv, from the accession of Æthelbald in 855 to the death of Eadgar in 975. Æthelweard's text combines material from a variety of sources, at times including detail not found elsewhere, such as a unique series of south-western elements running from 789–878, and Continental entries concerning a specific viking army in the 880s. Æthelweard dedi-

---

9. W. H. Stevenson, ed. *Asser's Life of King Alfred Together With the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), pp. xi–xxxii, li–liv.
10. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xl. This problem was also outlined in some detail by Cyril Hart in 'East Anglian Chronicle', p. 261.
11. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. lvii.
12. Alistair Campbell, (ed. and trans.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi: (The Chronicle of Æthelweard)*, Medieval Texts (London: Nelson, 1962), p. xiii.

cated the *Chronicon* to his cousin, Matilda, the 'abbess of Essen, granddaughter of the Emperor Otho I and his English queen'.[13] Alistair Campbell, editor and translator of the 1962 edition of the work, noted that '[f]amily history and genealogy was clearly one of his main interests'.[14]

The Annals of St Neots. The text of *SN*, written in the first half of the twelfth century,[15] is a Latin compilation drawing on a variety of sources. It opens at annal 60 B.C. with a verbatim quote from Bede *HE*, followed by four more annals from *HE*, at A.D. 46, 156, 189, and 246. Annal 286 introduces a new source, the Norman Annals, with a note concerning the emperors Diocletian and Maximian, followed in the same annal with an entry about the martyrdom of Saint Alban, possibly from Bede, but, if so, not a verbatim citation. Then follows a series of short entries from the Norman Annals, continuing to 455 (with the exception of 409 — again a verbatim quote from Bede) at which point the compiler introduces a new source to his work, containing ASC-related material. From here to the end of *SN* at 914, excerpts from the Norman Annals and this ASC-related text are, in Cyril Hart's words, 'woven together to form the back-drop for our compilation'.[16] The *SN* compilers[17] also draw upon other sources in their work, including Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancto Eadmundi*, Asser's *Life of Alfred*, a *Life of St Neot*, and several vision-texts.[18]

I intend to show that a comparison of these three Latin works with the Common Stock texts of the vernacular versions raises questions about the nature of the ASC-related sources used by each.

---

13. Campbell, *Æthelweard*, p. xii. See also L. Whitbread, 'Æthelweard and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *EHR* 74 (1959): 577–589, at pp. 577ff.
14. Campbell, *Æthelweard*, p. xxxv, see also p. 34.
15. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xvi.
16. Cyril Hart, 'The East Anglian Chronicle', *JMH* 7 (1981): 249–73, p. 251.
17. Two hands have been discerned in *SN*: scribe 1 from the beginning to the end of p. 18, annal 705; scribe 2 from pp. 19–74 at which point the manuscript concludes with annal 914.
18. For comprehensive overviews of the likely sources used in *SN,* see Hart, *East Anglian Chronicle*, pp. 251–67, and Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, pp. xxviii–lxv.

1

Concerning the foundations of Chronicle scholarship

Sir Frank Stenton once wrote that '[t]he criticism of the Chronicle is the basis of Early English historiography', a statement which served as the foundation for much of his life's work.[19] In the introduction to a recent publication concerning various aspects of Chronicle research, its editor, Alice Jorgensen, observed that '[a]ll who work on English history, literature, or language from the Anglo-Saxon period to the Angevin will find themselves sooner or later reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The political narrative and framework of the dates provided in the seven substantial extant manuscripts form a historical backbone for the period; their importance is increased by the relative paucity of other, independent historical sources from eighth- to eleventh-century England'.[20] Of ASC's significance there is little doubt, but a major problem for scholars of any discipline wishing to use it as a source is the fact that more than a century of Chronicle scholarship — dealing with fundamental issues of authorship, provenance and purpose — has resulted, not in consensus, but in considerable disagreement in several key areas.[21] Anyone seeking to answer such questions faces a difficult challenge, however, for determining ASC's origins is an exercise in hypothetical reasoning based, for the most part, on comparative analyses of the texts of the main vernacular versions (commonly referred to as A, B, C, D, E, F and G) and certain Latin works with which these in some way share annalistic material —

---

19. Frank Stenton, 'The South-western Element in the Old English Chronicle', in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to T. F. Tout*, ed. A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke (Manchester, 1925), pp. 15–24; repr. in Stenton, *Preparatory*, pp. 106–115.
20. Jorgensen, 'Introduction', p. 1.
21. Despite the ongoing publication, begun in the 1980s, of a planned 23 volume collaborative edition of Chronicle and related texts by Cambridge University Press, a number of fundamental questions concerning the Chronicle and its origins remain unanswered. See Bately, *TTR*, p. 1. See also Jorgensen, 'Introduction', pp. 1–28.

primarily, Asser's *Life of Alfred*, Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, and the *Annals of St. Neots*.[22] In the words of Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge,

> the proper assessment of the information in the Chronicle depends on the study of the relationship between all the versions, each of which represents a slightly different stage in the development of the text; it is a complex task, made the more uncertain by the knowledge that there were several other copies of the Chronicle of which no trace survived beyond (say) a mention in a medieval library catalogue, any one of which would have affected the reconstruction of the Chronicle textual history in some important way.[23]

The study of the Chronicle is, as Stenton noted, closely linked to the study of pre-Norman English history. This is most significant, perhaps, for the late ninth and early tenth centuries — the period in which the original archetype first came together. And, as Peter Sawyer once observed, when working with ancient texts it is important to know something of an author's purpose, for, 'if the intention of the writer is not understood his words may easily mislead'.[24]

1. Plummer's 'Introduction': A Summary

Modern criticism of ASC began in earnest with the publication, in 1899, of Charles Plummer's revision of John Earle's *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*.[25] Though certain aspects of Plummer's findings have since been revised or discarded, one theory, fundamental to his interpretation of ASC's origins, still prevails. Plummer was

---

22. Charles Plummer outlined his approach to determining the Chronicle's origins as follows: 'Having... described the various MSS., I next proceed to discuss their character and mutual relations. And in dealing with this problem I begin with the latest MSS. and proceed backwards to the earliest, endeavouring thus to track the Chronicles to their common source. When this has been done, we can reverse the process and briefly trace their development from the beginning to the close. This may involve a certain amount of repetition; but it will conduce to clearness', in Earle and Plummer, II, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii. See also Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, eds. *Alfred the Great: Asser's 'Life of King Alfred' and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1983), p. 277; Audrey Meaney, 'St. Neots, Æthelweard and the Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Survey', in *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 193–243; Bately, *TTR*; F. M. Stenton, *ASE*, 3rd ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 689–92. For a recent and comprehensive overview and description of the various manuscripts see Jorgensen, *Introduction*, pp. 4–11.

23. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 277.

24. P. H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings* (London: Edward Arnold, 1962), p. 13.

25. *Earle and Plummer*, II, xvii–cxxxvii. According to Audrey Meaney, Plummer's research was 'so far ahead of all previous scholars that his achievement made a watershed in Chronicle studies which has not yet been surpassed', in 'St. Neots', p. 193.

convinced that the convergence of various strands of evidence in the annals of the early 890s — palaeographic, lexical, historiographic and more — suggest this was a period of great significance in the Chronicle's development. In Plummer's view, annal 892 marks the end of the 'first chronicle' or the 'Common Stock' of annals, a hypothetical source he named *Æ*, which he described as 'the autograph of the writer who compiled the Chronicle up to that point'.[26] Furthermore, Plummer concluded that a copy was then made of the original *Æ* introducing a number of errors into the text, including a major chronological dislocation running from 756–845. This copy he named, somewhat confusingly, *æ*, and argued that *æ* was 'the common ancestor of all our Chronicles up to 892'.[27] From *æ*, according to his hypothesis, further copies were made and distributed to various centres across Anglo-Saxon England *c*. 892.[28]

In the years since the Plummer first published his conclusions, research has confirmed that the Common Stock annals in the vernacular versions do, indeed, share a common ancestor — one of the few points of general consensus in Chronicle scholarship.[29] Less secure, however, is his assumption that this archetype also served as the ultimate source of the shared annalistic material in the various Latin versions. In Chronicle scholarship of the past century it is not uncommon for Plummer's theories as they relate to *æ* to be treated as facts rather than hypothetical constructs.[30] Janet Bately recognised this problem, reminding colleagues that, '[s]ince the appearance of Plummer's edition, discussion of a 'first chronicle' ending with the annal for 892 has generally started from an assumption of its actuality and then mainly concentrated on

---

26. Earle and Plummer, II, civ.
27. Plummer's arguments are highly complex, as outlined in Earle and Plummer, II, cii–civ.
28. Earle and Plummer, II, cxvii–cxviii.
29. Bately, *TTR,* 1.
30. A recent example is by Thomas Bredehoft, who writes, 'Significantly, of course, the Common Stock was complete in the early 890s and was already being supplemented before Alfred's death', in *Textual Histories*, p. 62. Whitelock's explanation that 'all seems to point to a copying and circulation of manuscripts soon after 890', is slightly more guarded, in *EHD*, 122. Bately wrote that 'The earliest version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that has come down to us ... appears to reflect an act of compilation and circulation of manuscripts round about the year 890', in 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 60 B.C. to A.D. 890: Vocabulary as Evidence', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 64 (1978), p. 96.

the implications of this as accepted fact'.[31] Though Bately here was challenging 'the case for 892 as a break-off point', her argument is equally valid against attempts to restrict the conclusion of the original *æ* to any point in the early 890s.[32]

2. Beyond Plummer's theory of *Æ*

Ever since the publication of Plummer's theories about the Chronicle, scholars have conducted their research assuming an early-890s origin for the vernacular versions' Common Stock texts. Before long, however, several of Plummer's contemporaries took issue with his conclusion that the idea of a national Chronicle should be credited to Alfred the Great.[33] Following on from a suggestion Plummer made that the genealogy of Æthelwulf, as part of annal 855, 'seems to mark the close of an earlier West Saxon Chronicle',[34] they argued that the compilation produced in the early 890s was simply a continuation of a chronicle which had concluded at annal 855 (an annal covering a period of several years).[35] As H. M. Chadwick explained in 1924,

> All the texts which we possess are descended from an archetype which appears to have been written in 891 or 892. The archetype however seems to have been merely an extended form of an older Chronicle, composed probably during the reign of Æthelwulf.[36]

---

31. J. M. Bately, 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Once More', *Leeds Studies in English* 16 (1985), p. 8.
32. To David Dumville's conclusion that MS A is a post-900 manuscript, Bately replied, 'If he is right — and as a non-palaeographer I find his arguments totally convincing — then one of the strongest pieces of evidence for annal 891 as the final entry in the 'first chronicle' is invalidated, and the claims of annals 890, 892 and even 893 to mark the end of the first compilation have to be considered', in 'Compilation, Once More', p. 8.
33. Plummer wrote, 'To whom are we to attribute this earliest form of the national Chronicle? I have no hesitation in declaring that in my opinion the popular answer is in this case the right one: it is the work of Alfred the Great. I do not mean that the actual task of compiling the Chronicle from the earlier materials was necessarily performed by Alfred, though I can well fancy that he may have dictated some of the later annals which describe his own wars. But that the idea of a national Chronicle as opposed to merely local annals was his, that the idea was carried out under his direction and supervision , this I do most firmly believe', in Earle and Plummer, II, civ.
34. Earle and Plummer, II, cxii–cxiii, n. 4.
35. See, for example, F. Liebermann, 'Review of Plummer', *Archiv für das Studium der neuren Sprachen* 104 (1900): 188–99; A. Brandl, 'Geschichte Der Altenglishen Literatur', in *Grundriss Der Germanischen Philologie*, ed. Hermann Paul (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1909), pp. 1054ff; H. M. Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), p. 25. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 98.
36. Chadwick, *Origin*, p. 23.

Proponents of this theory saw Plummer's *æ* as the product of two stages of compilation — the first concluding at annal 855, and the second beginning shortly after Alfred's accession in 872 and continuing to the 890s. Some also suggested that the author of the latter section interpolated a number of entries into the annals at the end of the earlier Chronicle, so as to create a textual bridge between the two sections.

3. Bately 1978: A watershed in Anglo-Saxon Chronicle studies

Various theories purporting the existence of an 855 Æthelwulfian chronicle continued to circulate until the publication, in 1978, of Janet Bately's seminal lexical analysis of ASC entitled, 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 60 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as Evidence'. Two of the questions Bately sought to answer were: (1) whether the '890 Chronicle'[37] had, in fact, incorporated the text of an earlier 855 Æthelwulfian chronicle,[38] and (2) whether King Alfred had himself composed any of the Chronicle's annals.[39] By means of a careful examination of the vocabulary in ASC and by comparing ASC's texts with other Old English works (including those attributed to Alfred the Great), Bately hoped to 'reach certain conclusions about both the compilation and the authorship of the 890 Chronicle'. She wrote,

> a study of the vocabulary of an OE prose text should provide us with information of at least three different kinds, matters of date and dialect apart. It should enable us to to identify positive features of authorship, that is, to identify certain words and collocations as typical of the author of that text; it should enable us to identify negative features of authorship, that is, to draw up a list of words and collocations not typical of the author because rarely or never used by him; and it should enable us to determine whether the text is the work of one author or several.[40]

---

37. In Bately's view, Plummer's *æ* was 'a version which appears to reflect an act of compilation and circulation of manuscripts round about the year 890 and which I shall refer to as the 890 Chronicle', in 'Compilation', p. 96.
38. Bately wrote that she intended 'to examine linguistic evidence both for and against what may be called a unitary, as opposed to a two-stage, chronicle, and for and against the participation of more than one individual in different parts of the compilation', in 'Compilation', p. 100.
39. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 99.
40. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 94.

Bately admitted, however, that a purely lexical approach to ASC had its limitations, for, '[a]t the most, one can hope to identify groups of annals which differ significantly from one another and which could therefore have had different origins, and groups of annals which do not differ in this way and which could thus have been composed, or rewritten, or translated under similar circumstances and possibly by the same person'.[41]

3.1 Bately's conclusions

Starting with the question of whether or not an earlier Æthelwufian chronicle had concluded at annal 855, Bately first considered ASC's annals from 60 B.C. to A.D. 855. In the Chronicle's texts to the early ninth century she found that 'the majority of variations between annals and groups of annals are either paralleled elsewhere in unitary texts or are of a type that is not necessarily incompatible with the theory of a single compiler'.[42] Two possible exceptions were found in (1) a small group of early eighth-century annals which, she suggested, may have been derived from Old English rather than Latin sources, and, (2) annal 755, the lengthy account regarding Cynewulf and Cyneheard, containing 'features that demonstrate clearly that it was added as an afterthought or additional comment to an existing entry'.[43] Evidence for possible variation in the annals of the early 800s (which had been suggested by earlier scholars) Bately deemed to be inconclusive.[44] It is after annal 855 that the theory of a possible Æthelwulfian chronicle runs into trouble, for, rather than variation, the post-855 section shows signs of similarity and continuity with previous annals. Among these are the distinctive collocation of *ymb* with *þæs þy*, which annal 855 shares with those of the 870s, and the expression *þæs/his gefægene wærun* shared by annals 855 and 878.[45] On the basis of these and other findings Bately concluded the

41. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 101.
42. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 103.
43. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 106.
44. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 108.
45. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 112.

lexical evidence does not, in fact, support the hypothesis of the existence of an earlier (or original) chronicle which concluded at annal 855. On this point, she had the support of at least two other scholars, as she explained,

> The annal for 855 is of course the entry which contains the notice of King Æthelwulf's death and which is supposed by the supporters of the theory of a two-stage compilation to form the end of the first stage mainly, though not entirely because of the presence in it of the genealogy of Æthelwulf. The fallaciousness of such arguments has been convincingly demonstrated by Kenneth Sisam in an earlier British Academy lecture and, what is more, Professor Whitelock has shown that there are certain inaccuracies in the information given in the [855] annal which appear to imply that it cannot have been recorded (at least in its present form) in any sense of the word contemporaneously. So neither the presence of the genealogy in this annal nor the nature of the other information in it contradicts the evidence of the vocabulary that its affiliations are with the annals of the time of King Alfred.[46]

In the years following publication of Bately's paper, support for the theory of an original 855 'Æthelwulfian chronicle' waned, and, today, few still hold to it.

As to the question of whether Alfred himself composed any of ASC's annals, Bately could find no evidence to suggest the king's direct involvement.[47]

3.2 A possible break at the end of the 870s

In her analysis of the annals of the late 870s, however, Bately made an unexpected discovery. She wrote,

> there are a number of less obvious but none the less significant lexical variations which do appear to indicate changes of authorship. To take first the annals for 866–90, relating to the reigns of Æthelred and Alfred, the evidence of vocabulary is that these fall into two groups centred on the 870s and 880s respectively. The most striking difference between these groups lies in their choice of words for the concept 'die'. In the annals of the 870s 'die' is

---

46. Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 112–13. In Kenneth Sisam's view, Æthelwulf's genealogy reads 'more like additional material, artlessly tacked on, than the studied close of a work ending at 855', in 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 39 (1953), p. 332. See also Whitelock, *EHD*, pp. 122–23; and Bately, 'Compilation', p. 112, n. 4, where Bately reports from a private communication with Dorothy Whitelock.

47. Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 116–17.

> consistently rendered by *gefaran*; in the annals of the 880s it is rendered no less consistently by *forþferan*.[48]

This and other observations led her to conclude that,

> the evidence of the distribution of lexical items forces us to consider, as an alternative to a single act of compilation by two or more annalists, the possibility that the first Alfredian compilation ended with the annals for the closing years of the 870s (or shortly after), and that the annals for the 880s and 890 which form with it the first known circulated version may be, like the annals that follow, a continuation.[49]

Should Bately's suggestion of a possible break at this point in the Chronicle prove correct and what she describes as 'the first Alfredian compilation' concluded, not with the annals of the early years of the 890s, but with those of 'the closing years of the 870s', it might explain why charting the textual history of ASC and related Latin works has proved so difficult over the past century. Ever since the publication of Plummer's conclusions in 1899 scholars have approached the evidence on the assumption of an original Alfredian compilation dating to the early 890s as the common archetype behind all shared material (vernacular and Latin), and then 'mainly concentrated on the implications of this as accepted fact'. Though Bately's 1978 paper proved a watershed in Chronicle studies, and many of her ideas and conclusions were, and are still, incorporated into the works of others, the possibility of a late-870s 'first Alfredian compilation' and the potential implications this discovery might have on theories regarding the textual history of ASC's Common Stock of annals, have yet to be explored.[50]

---

48. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 109.
49. Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 115–16.
50. Bately later wrote: 'As I have suggested elsewhere, differences of linguistic usage indicate either that the first Alfredian compilation ended with the annals for the closing years of the 870s (or shortly after), and that the annals for the 880s and 890 may be, like the annals that follow, a continuation, or that the 'first chronicle', extending to at least 890, was a collaborative effort and that a new author was responsible for these annals. Linguistic evidence does not allow greater precision than this', in 'Compilation, Once More', 10. Keynes and Lapidge found it 'particularly interesting that the annals centring on the 870s and those centring on the 880s seem to have been written by two different men, though one cannot tell whether the 880s annalist was acting on his own, continuing an earlier compilation, or whether he too was collaborating with the others', in *Asser*, p. 278.

4. A possible historical context for an original 878 text

One of the few references to Bately's possible new discovery was made by R. H. C. Davis, published in 1982, in which he defended an argument he put forward in an earlier paper entitled, 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth'. In the first paper he described the purpose behind the compilation of ASC in its original form as follows,

> What was really needed was some assurance that things might get better, for no people can survive defeat after defeat and continue fighting unless it believes that in the end it will be victorious. At a time when the East Anglians, Northumbrians and Mercians had all submitted to the Danes, and even one of King Alfred's own ealdormen deserted him, it must have been a matter of life and death to persuade the West Saxons that their fate could be different since they had reason to hope for victory. That seems to have been the purpose of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It is not a survey of all Anglo-Saxon history but an account of King Alfred's ancestors, the kings of Wessex; and since it gives a minimum of information about the more unfortunate periods of West Saxon history, it is able to convey the impression that in spite of occasional reverses the house of Cerdic always emerged victorious. It was just what was needed to encourage the faint-hearted in times of defeat; and when the Battle of Edington showed that Alfred was indeed worthy of his ancestors, the fact had to be shouted from the roof-tops.[51]

Davis here echoed the opinion of scholars such as J. M. Wallace-Hadrill and Peter Sawyer.[52] Sawyer, for example, described the Chronicle as 'a piece of propaganda produced at a time of great crisis, when the great *here* came to England from Boulogne'.[53] While Sawyer linked the Chronicle's compilation to the 892 viking invasion from the continent, Davis' reference to 'a time when the East Anglians, Northumbrians and Mercians had all submitted to the Danes' and when the West Saxons needed 'some assurance that things might get better', was left ambiguous. In

---

51. R. H. C. Davis, 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth', *History* 56 (1971), pp. 180–81.
52. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English in the Ninth Century: Some Common Historical Interests', in *Early Medieval History* (1975), pp. 201–16; Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, p. 20.
53. Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, p. 20.

1977, Dorothy Whitelock 'forcefully challenged' the propagandist theory by pointing out that the early-890s Chronicle contained 'a great amount of material completely irrelevant to the purposes of propaganda' and gave 'no impression that it was compiled in haste for immediate use'.[54] Five years later Davis defended his earlier argument, unfortunately in a footnote tucked away in a paper concerning Alfred and Guthrum's frontier. He wrote,

> It is true that the existing manuscripts suggest a first circulation c. 890, and that the general thrust of my argument demands an earlier circulation soon after 878. But the earlier circulation need not have been one of the complete chronicle. The version which we now have would, in my view, be what Alfred had been saying, and circulating, for years and which was now put in its final form. It is interesting to find that M. B. Parkes in 'The Palaeography of the Parker manuscript of the *Chronicle*, Laws and Sedulus [*sic*], and history [*sic* Historiography] at Winchester in the late ninth and tenth centuries' (*Anglo-Saxon England*, 5, ed. P. Clemoes (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 149–72) gives palaeographical reasons for thinking that the Parker MS was written at Winchester, and copied from exemplars which were booklets, and that two individual folios (one of them covering the period from 871 to the beginning of 878) are 'cancels' showing that the text had been revised or rewritten. Some suggestion of an early edition ending in 878 or 879 is given by Janet Bately in 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 66 BC to AD 890: vocabulary as evidence' (*Proc. Brit. Acad.* lxiv (1980 for 1978), 93–129) since she shows that in some respects the vocabulary for the 870s is different from that for the 880s (pp. 110, 115).[55]

Davis' earlier paper appeared several years before the publication of either Parkes' or Bately's research, at a time when there was no evidence with which to counter the opinion of scholars such as J. B. Wynn, who claimed that 'with the exception of this one annal (855) there is no evidence of a change of authorship at any

---

54. Bately, 'Compilation, Once More', p. 9. See also Dorothy Whitelock, *The Importance of the Battle of Edington a.d. 878: a Lecture At the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Edington Priory Church, August 27th, 1977* (London: Friends of Edington Priory Church, 1977), p. 2. I note that the case Whitelock brings against Davis' proposed theory is based on the assumption that the first Alfredian compilation was a full chronicle in the form of *æ* to annal 890 at least. If, however, the first Alfredian compilation was a more limited set of annals than *æ*, compiled *c.* 878, then Whitelock's arguments fail.

55. R. H. C. Davis, 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *EHR* 97 (1982) 803–10, p. 805, n. 1.

point before 891'.[56] Bately's suggestion of a possible change of authorship in the annals of the late 870s is significant in that it opens the way to consider alternative interpretations to Plummer's theory of an original early-890s archetype for ASC. On this basis I will now consider whether there might be other evidence to support Davis' theory that a set of annals which was not 'the complete chronicle' may have been produced *c*. 878, with the possible purpose of persuading the West Saxons 'they had reason to hope for victory'.

5. A 'first Alfredian compilation' dating to the late 870s?

The annals of the early 890s have attracted much attention because of the apparent convergence there of various strands of evidence, though, as mentioned above, scholars have disagreed as to which annal is most significant in this regard.[57] Should, however, the annals of the late 870s be found, similarly, to exhibit signs of convergence this might be seen as support for Bately's suggestion that an original set of annals may once have concluded at this point.

I begin with the question of which annal might have brought a late-870s 'first Alfredian compilation' to a close. Bately's analysis revealed there were,

> other features — and not just features of vocabulary — that appear to distinguish the annals centred on the 870s from those of the 880s. In addition to its selection of *gefaran* not *forþferan* the first group of annals (which I take to extend up to at least 878, the following five annals forming a kind of no man's land, with no significantly distinctive features) is characterized by its use of a variety of words for 'fight' where the second group has only one, its use of *innan* and *into* (each 3X) as well as *on*, *to*, its choice of the collocation *sige niman* (3X), where the second group has *sige habban* (2X), and its fondness for expanded constructions where the second group has only simple verb forms. The second group, extending from at least 885 up to 890 is further differentiated from the first by its range of verbs of motion, its use of *wiþ þa*

56. J. B. Wynn, 'The Beginning of the Year in Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *MÆ* 25 (1956) 71–78, p. 77.
57. Robert H. Hodgkin, 'The Beginning of the Year in the English Chronicle', *EHR* 39 (1924) 497–510, p. 507.

as well as *him wiþ gefuhton*, and its freedom from formulae such as *þær wæs micel wæl geslægen* and *ahton wælstowe gewald*.[58]

Though the vocabulary of the group of five annals from 879 to 883 contains, from a lexical stand-point, 'no significantly distinctive features' to link them to either the preceding or following sections,[59] it is noteworthy that the main subject matter of the group of annals centred on the 880s — the *hloð wicinga*, or 'band of vikings' then encamped at Fulham — is introduced for the first time in annal 879. This was a viking force distinct from the army of Guthrum which was then in Cirencester preparing to depart for East Anglia, Guthrum's new kingdom granted him by Alfred the Great. The five annals from 879 to 883, which Bately described from the lexical evidence as constituting a 'no-man's land', read as follows:[60]

879 Her for se here to Cirenceastre of Cippanhamme 7 sæt þær an gear. 7 þy geare gegadrode on hloþ wicenga 7 gesæt æt Fullanhamme be Temese. 7 þy ilcan geare aþiestrode sio sunne ane tid dæges.

880 Her for se here of Cirenceastre on Eastengle 7 gesæt þæt lond 7 gedęlde. 7 þy ilcan geare for se here ofer sę þe ær on Fullanhomme sæt on Fronclond to Gend 7 sæt þær an gear.

881 Her for se here ufor on Fronclond, 7 þa Francan him wiþ gefuhton, 7 þær þa wearþ se here gehorsod æfter þam gefeohte.

882 Her for se here up onlong Mæse feor on Fronclond 7 þær sæt an gear. 7 þy ilcan geare for Ęlfred cyning mid scipum ut on sę 7 gefeaht wiþ feower sciphlæstas deniscra monna 7 þara scipa tu genam, 7 þa men ofslægene wæron þe ðęron wæron, 7 tuegen scipheras him on hond eodon, 7 þa wæron miclum forslægene 7 forwundode ær hie on hond eodon.

883 Her for se here up on Scald to Cundoþ 7 þær sæt an gear.

879 In this year the army went from Chippenham to Cirencester, and stayed there for one year. And the same year a band of vikings assembled and encamped at Fulham by the Thames. And the same year there was an eclipse of the sun for one hour of the day.

---

58. Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 110–11.
59. Bately notes, however, that 'the annals 882, 883, and 884 resemble the annals that follow in their use of *up on*(*long*),' in 'Compilation', p. 110, n. 3.
60. From Bately, *MS A*, pp. 51–2.

880 In this year the army went from Cirencester into East Anglia, and settled there and shared out the land. And the same year the army which had encamped at Fulham went overseas into the land of the Franks to Ghent and stayed there for a year.

881 In this year the army went further inland into the Frankish empire, and the Franks fought against them; and the Danish army provided itself with horses after that battle.

882 In this year the army went farther into the Frankish empire along the Meuse, and stayed there a year. And the same year King Alfred went out with ships to sea and fought against four crews of Danish men, and captured two of the ships — and the men were killed who were on them — and two crews surrendered to him. And they had great losses in killed or wounded before they surrendered.

883 In this year the army went up the Scheldt to Condé, and stayed there for a year.

Following on from 883, the annals continue to focus largely on the activities of this army to 896, including its return in part in 884/85 to Britain for a brief and unsuccessful spell of fighting.[61] In 892, the entire force, *se micla here, þe we gefyrn ymbe spræcon*, 'the great army, of which we formerly spoke' is reported as sailing, once again, into Britain where, for several years Alfred and his allies engaged it in numerous battles and skirmishes until its final departure for the continent in (according to ASC) 896, after which it is not named again.

Given that the group of annals 879–896 introduce and sustain a new subject of interest, and, as the preceding group of annals contains distinct lexical features which conclude at annal 878, I suggest that annal 878 probably concluded the section which Bately described as 'centred on the 870s'.[62]

---

61. This sustained and detailed interest in the activities of a viking army on the Continent is unprecedented in ASC.

62. Bately wrote that Whitelock 'accepts as plausible my arguments for a new author, responsible for the annals 879 or 880 through to 890, who could be either a collaborator or a continuer', in 'Compilation, Once More', p. 9. Sawyer noted that '[o]nly after [the 'Fulham Army's'] dispersal in the summer of 896 does the Chronicle turn to other subjects... It is as though the break up of the *here* in 896 meant that the Chronicler's immediate purpose had been fulfilled', in *Age of the Vikings*, p. 21.

6. A significant observation: ASC's 'south-western elements'

In considering the possible purpose, extent and subject matter of a set of annals originating *c*. 878, I note an influential paper by Sir Frank Stenton, first published in 1925. In it Stenton called attention to the fact that, compared with earlier annals, 'the annals between 750 and 891 have a different character. At many points they record an amount of local detail which is in strong contrast to their normal brevity'.[63] Stenton suggested these annals 'ought therefore to offer at least a suggestion as to the district in the history of which the successive annalists were especially interested'. He added,

> The persons for whose instruction or entertainment the annals were composed may not be beyond all conjecture. The annals themselves will always remain anonymous, but it may be possible to extract from them some clue as to the particular part of the wide West Saxon kingdom in which they were first set down.[64]

It was Stenton's purpose to reveal, if possible, a patron other than Alfred the Great behind the production of the original Common Stock archetype. I will now consider Stenton's arguments in more detail.

6.1 Questions concerning ASC's place of origin

Scholars have long debated the question of where in England ASC was first written, and the related question of who was behind its compilation. Several argued for a Winchester origin and Alfred the Great's involvement. Stenton, however, drew attention to the fact that to annal 891 there are surprisingly few references to people or places in Winchester or Hampshire — a lack which, he observed, 'contrasts strongly with the abundant information which the Chronicle affords with reference to the country further west', revealing a 'much more definite interest' in Somerset and Dor-

63. Stenton, *Preparatory*, p. 106.
64. Stenton, *Preparatory*, pp. 106–7.

set. 'It cannot be through accident', he argued, 'that when in this period the annals break out into local detail, it never relates to the region of which Winchester is the geographical centre'. Concerning such south-western elements, Stenton wrote,

> They begin with the curious detailed annal for 78[9], which records the first coming of the Danes. Even if stood alone, this annal would prove that the compiler of the Chronicle was drawing on information preserved in the district which the Danes visited, and the still fuller version of the annal preserved by Æthelweard identifies this district with the Dorset coast. No stress can be laid on the annal for 81[4], which records the pilgrimage of Wigbeorht of Sherborne to Rome, and the fights between King Ecgbeorht and the Danes at Carhampton and between the men of Dorset and the Danes at Portland might perhaps have been recorded by an annalist anywhere in the south. But the suspicion that the chronicler's interest lay in the south-western shires is materially strengthened by the annal for 845, which tells how the ealdormen of Somerset and Dorset defeated the Danes at the mouth of the Parret, and by the annal for 851, which opens with the record of a victory won at Wigborough in the west of Somerset by Ceorl the ealdorman of Devon. The suspicion grows when the annal for 867 is compared with the other entries in the Chronicle which relate to similar events. It recites that Bishop Ealhstan had been an important figure in Wessex for a long time, but there was no reason for an annalist who was not much interested in Bishops to record the length of Ealhstan's episcopate, nor need he have gone out of his way to state that the bishop's body lay *on tune*. The only probable explanation of this precision is that the annalist was especially interested in the circumstance of Ealhstan's burial, and that he wished to record that the bishop was buried, not in his cathedral church, but in the enclosure, the *tūn*, which surrounded it. And it may with some confidence be conjectured that an annalist who was careful to preserve this detail did not live many miles from Sherborne.[65]

That ASC reports events from sites as insignificant as Athelney, Aller, Wedmore, *Ecgbryhtes stan* and *Iglea* Stenton regarded as telling. He wrote, '[t]he fact that the annalist chose to record them suggests at once that the names of the places where they occurred were already familiar to him and to the men for whom he was writing, that he knew the west country, and allowed himself to reveal his interest in

---

65. Stenton, *Preparatory*, pp. 108–9. 78[9] = 787; 81[4] = 812.

incidents which happened within the region of which he had personal knowledge'.[66] Stenton also noted that Æthelweard's *Chronicon* includes a number of south-western elements not found in ASC — suggesting, perhaps, 'a version of the Chronicle different from any which is now extant'.[67] Æthelweard, for example, names the king's reeve who lost his life in the first recorded viking raid on English lands in 789 (not given in ASC) as Beaduheard. Similarly, the sustained interest in the succession of Somerset ealdormen in ASC throughout this period is unprecedented. Stenton wrote,

> If the facts recorded by Æthelweard alone — the unique information for instance — come from a version of the Chronicle more nearly original than any that is now extant, it becomes very difficult to frame any intelligible history of the Chronicle which does not imply its origin in one of the south-western shires.[68]

The following list contains the south-western elements in ASC noted by Stenton, with a brief reference as to the subject matter of each:

*789 the arrival of three ships of Northmen, the first 'which sought out the land of the English race', resulting in the murder of the king's reeve (ASC, however, names neither Beaduheard nor Dorchester)

*845 Ealdorman Eanwulf together with the men of Somerset and Bishop Ealhstan and Ealdorman Osric with the men of Dorset defeat, with 'great slaughter', a viking army at the mouth of the Parret

*851 Ealdorman Ceorl, with the men of Devon, defeats the heathens with 'great slaughter' at Wigborough, in western Somerset

*867 death and burial of Ealhstan, who held the bishopric at Sherborne for 50 years

878 the events leading to and following the battle of Edington in which Athelney, Aller, Wedmore, *Ecgbryhtes stan* and *Iglea* are named

Next, the south-western elements in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* which are not found in ASC or any other source:

---

66. Stenton, *Preparatory*, pp. 109–10.
67. Stenton notes Æthelweard's use of south-western material in annals 787, 823, 867, 876, and 878.
68. Stenton, *Preparatory*, p. 113. Whitelock shared Stenton's opinion here, writing, 'Æthelweard, whose additions to this annal sound authentic and may be drawn from the early copy of the Chronicle used by him, calls him Beaduheard, and says he was staying in the town of Dorchester', in *EHD*, p. 166, n. 6.

*789 Beaduheard, the king's reeve, is named, as is Dorcester, in connection with the first viking raid on Britain
*825 death of Hun, ealdorman of Somerset at the battle of Ellandun, and his burial at Winchester
867 death of Ealdorman Eanwulf of Somerset and his burial at Glastonbury
871 Heahmund, bishop of Sherborne, burial specified 'at Keynsham'
876 vikings depopulate the districts around Wareham
878 Odda, ealdorman of Devon, battles vikings, and Æthelnoth, ealdorman of Somerset, also resists viking forces and is later present at Guthrum's chrism-loosing

6.2 Stenton's conclusion: ASC originated in south-western Wessex

In Stenton's view, 'the persons for whose instruction or entertainment the annals were composed' was in all likelihood the south-western West-Saxon nobility — an opinion apparently supported by the fact that ASC omits the conspiracy of Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, against Æthelwulf upon the king's return from a trip abroad in 856, an omission described by Stenton as 'one of the worst enigmas presented by the whole Chronicle'.[69] Stenton regarded the exclusion of this event (known only from Asser's *Life of Alfred*) from the texts of ASC as further support for his theory that these annals were either intended for the south-western West-Saxon nobility (for whom the issue might still have been politically charged) or had been written by, or at the behest of, one of their number.

While Stenton's suggestion of a possible link between south-western elements and the origin of the Chronicle is compelling, it should be noted that the range of dates he established for such elements — 750 to 891 — is not based on their actual occurrence, but on his theories regarding ASC's origins.

69. Stenton, *Preparatory*, pp. 113–14.

7. Reassessing Stenton's south-western West Saxon theory

The last south-western element in ASC (and in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*) appears in annal 878. In Stenton's view, however, annal 878 belongs to a section of annals extending from 865 to 891, probably written by a single author who had carried forward the work of an extant Æthelwulfian compilation.[70] This same author, Stenton suggested, may also have interpolated a number of entries into the earlier Æthelwulfian chronicle, perhaps as far back as *840.[71] Stenton wrote,

> It is highly probable that soon after King Alfred's accession in 871 the archetype of the Chronicle which we possess was brought down to the death of King Æthelwulf in 858, then after a brief interval another hand began the series of entries which end with the annal for 891, and that from this point different copies of the Chronicle developed an independent life which increases the evidence for the history of this period but also greatly complicates its criticism.[72]

Given, however, (1) the complete lack of lexical evidence for an 855 break in ASC, and (2) other arguments put forward against the Æthelwulfian chronicle hypothesis, it is worth noting that Stenton's 750–891 range for ASC's south-western elements is based on a theory that few would today regard as viable. That south-western elements in both ASC and Æthelweard conclude at annal 878 may, on the other hand, add weight to Bately's suggestion of a possible break at annal 878 and to Davis' suggestion that a set of annals in some form may have circulated in Alfred's kingdom 'soon after 878'.[73] It is possible, therefore, that ASC's south-western ele-

---

70. Stenton, *ASE*, p. 692.
71. 'Between 800 and 865 the entries in the *Chronicle* are inconsecutive, and some of them must have been written appreciably later than the events which they relate. It is probable that they are the work of the man who wrote the subsequent 'Alfredian' section from 865–891', Stenton, ASE, p. 692.
72. Stenton, *Preparatory*, p. 106.
73. Tom Shippey noted, '[a]s for Stenton's point about Somerset origins: this, one could say, was true only of the Chronicle's source, the old annals taken over somewhere round the year 891 and transformed into what Plummer had in the first place recognised as a "national Chronicle"', in 'A Missing Army: Some Doubts About the Alfredian Chronicle', *Anglo-Saxon* 1 (2007) 319–38, p. 321.

ments relate, not to an 890s Chronicle archetype, but, to an 878 text which was not 'the complete chronicle'.

7.1 Anglo-Saxon England and Alfred's predicament in 878

Turning to the history of the period it is not difficult to imagine the potential significance in 878 of a set of annals which not only portrayed the south-western West-Saxon nobility and clergy as having played a vital and unrelenting role in the long history of Anglo-Saxon conflicts against the vikings, but which also reminded its audience this same nobility and clergy helped to establish and support Alfred's forebears in their rule. Alfred inherited a kingdom in crisis in 871 — Wessex, the last Anglo-Saxon kingdom still free of viking control — and in his first year fought many battles against the pagan invaders. In 873 the Great Army, which, since its arrival in 865, had so dramatically changed the political face of Anglo-Saxon England, established its base at Torksey in Lincolnshire. In 874 it moved to Repton in Derbyshire. A year later it split up, with King Halfdan heading north to divide and share out Northumbria among his followers, while kings Guthrum, Oscytel and Anund marched with their men into Cambridge. This second army descended on Wareham in 876 from where it harried the surrounding districts. In 877 it moved to Exeter and, later that year, made its base in Gloucester in Mercia. Then, in early January, 878, a large force left Gloucester and, crossing back into Wessex, besieged Chippenham, which soon fell to the invaders. Within a few weeks, according to ASC, the vikings,

> over-rode and occupied the land of Wessex, and drove many of the people across the sea, and the greatest part of the others they over-rode — and they turned to them — except for Alfred the king, and he with a small troop went with difficulty through woods and into swamp-fastnesses.[74]

Alfred now faced a most perilous crisis, with 'every likelihood that before the end of the year Wessex would [be] divided out among the members of a Danish

---

74. M. J. Swanton, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London: Phoenix, 2000), 74.

army'.[75] What happened next is one of the most remarkable reversals in English history. According to Keynes and Lapidge, '[o]ne can only suppose that it soon came to be known that King Alfred was still alive and kicking, and one has to imagine also that the Vikings were not thick enough on the ground to prevent the West Saxons from mustering their forces'.[76] But how did Alfred's people come to know he was 'still alive and kicking'? By what means did he communicate with them? Perhaps it was here, in a desperate situation, camped out in the Somerset marshes with his south-western noblemen having to choose between loyalty and surrender, that Alfred would have benefitted most from a vernacular text which presented the young king as rightful heir and competent ruler, the grandson of Egbert (the eighth *Bretwalda*), the son of Æthelwulf, and, in what seems a close parallel to the Old Testament's story of King David, anointed for the task already in childhood by God's representative on earth (in Alfred's case, the pope of Rome). These annals may also have appealed to the south-western West-Saxon nobles' sense of honour by tracing the first viking incursion against English lands back to the very shores of the south-west and reminding them of the brutal murder of an innocent king's reeve — one of their own whose death was, perhaps, a score as yet unsettled. And not only would such a text have reminded the West Saxons that their fathers resisted the same enemy as they also now faced, but it showed, with examples from their own history, that, although dangerous and deceitful, viking armies were not insurmountable forces and could be defeated in battle. Perhaps a text such a set of annals as this could have been read aloud by a king's messenger to the people of south-western Wessex at special gatherings, with the listeners able to debate its contents.[77]

---

75. Stenton, *ASE*, 255.
76. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 22.
77. 'It is not sufficiently appreciated that vernacular translations, in the first instance, merely allow works to be read to illiterates', Patrick Wormald, 'The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and Its Neighbours', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (1977) 95–114, p. 96. See also Molyneaux, 'Old English Bede', p. 1296.

Davis wrote, 'it seems to me, as I have argued elsewhere, that the Chronicle was produced under the direction of King Alfred for the specific purpose of persuading his subjects that, if they made sufficient effort, they were capable of winning victories which they had previously considered impossible'.[78] Such a purpose seems particularly well suited to a *c*. 878 compilation. A propagandistic text of this type, as Whitelock pointed out (but dismissed as regards an early-890s Chronicle), would, of necessity, have been prepared in some haste and, for this and other reasons which I shall consider in the next chapter, is unlikely to have contained those sections of ASC concerning wider ecclesiastical or secular history, for such would have been of little relevance to Alfred's purposes in 878.

7.2 Summary

The following list may offer some support for Bately's suggestion of a possible 'first Alfredian compilation' ending in the annals of the late 870s:

(a) lexical: Bately's research indicates a possible 'change of authorship' in ASC's annals of the late 870s, and quite possibly at 878;
(b) historical context: Alfred is known to have been in the south-west of his kingdom in 878, facing one of the greatest challenges of his reign — Guthrum and his army in Chippenham in the months before the battle at Edington;
(c) regional: Stenton suggested that the unusual emphasis on names and events in the south-west of Wessex may indicate this section of the Chronicle was written by (or for) the south-western West-Saxon nobility, though, as I have noted, it is an emphasis which concludes at annal 878, and not, as Stenton purported, at 891;
(d) purpose: Alfred was not only present but also closely involved with the drama as it unfolded in the south-west of his kingdom in 878. Whether intended to inspire the south-western West-Saxon nobility to join him in his struggle to drive out the pagan foe, or in commemoration of a great victory after the battle, I suggest that a

78. Davis, 'Alfred', p. 805.

set of annals of the type described above were well-suited to Alfred‘s purposes at that time.

2

Evidence for a 'first Alfredian compilation' dating to 878

In this chapter I continue to approach the early textual history of ASC on the basis of a possible 'first Alfredian compilation' to 878. If such a text did indeed once exist, emphasising Egbert's dynasty, the south-western West Saxons' long-term resistance against the viking invaders, and Alfred, then a number of questions follow, such as: (1) In its original form, how far back into Anglo-Saxon history did this text extend? Did it include all of ASC's early material? (2) What implications might a possible 878 'first Alfredian compilation' have for interpreting ASC's wider textual history? (3) Did Asser use ASC? Or did he have access to texts which antedate the compilation of the Chronicle archetype? (4) Did the authors of the Common Stock draw on an earlier set of annals from Alfred's reign? These and other questions are addressed in the remainder of this thesis.

1. Further defining a 'first Alfredian compilation' *c.* 878

I begin by considering the question of which annals might have been included in an 878 compilation, and how far back into Anglo-Saxon history they are likely to have extended. Janet Bately noted that have scholars observed a change of some kind occuring in ASC's annals in the early ninth century.[79] Explanations as to the possible cause of this change have varied, largely depending upon what theory of ASC's textual history is applied to the evidence.

---

79. For an overview of this issue see Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 107–9.

According to J. B. Wynn 'after 830, or thereabouts', ASC's annals seem to be 'more in the nature of an independent account based on a first-hand knowledge of events' than those of the previous section which were derived from 'a number of older sources, especially Bede's *Historia*, and a series of seventh, eighth and early ninth-century annals'.[80] Though Wynn did not address the question of sources explicitly, his argument implies that the change of style is linked to a change in the type of material available to the Chronicle's authors who, from *c*. 830, no longer appear limited to written sources but begin to draw upon eyewitness accounts and oral traditions. The resulting annals were more of 'an independent account' than the preceding section which was 'a compilation' of earlier written material.[81]

In a paper dealing with issues of dating and chronology, A. J. Thorogood described this shift differently, noting that 'a change of character becomes apparent after the annal for 839. The annals after this date have all the marks of retrospective writing, and seem like stop-gaps to fill in the years between the end of an existing Chronicle and the point, early in Alfred's reign, when contemporary annalistic writing began again'.[82] This argument is similar to Stenton's, in which the change apparent in the annals of the early 800s is seen as the result of a later author adding material to an already existing text (the hypothetical Æthelweard chronicle to annal 855). As stated above, however, subsequent scholarship undermined the theory of an 855 Æthelwulfian chronicle. Also, I will suggest that those entries which Thorogood described as 'retrospective' may in fact antedate the compilation of the annals that drew upon earlier written sources.

R. H. Hodgkin disputed Thorogood's theory that the 'change of character' only occurs in annals 'after 839'. He based his argument on two types of evidence — sub-

80. Wynn, 'Beginning', p. 77.
81. Wynn, 'Beginning', p. 77.
82. A. J. Thorogood, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the Reign of Ecgberht', *EHR* 48 (1933) 353–363, p. 359. Whitelock, though rejecting the theory of an original 'Æthelwulfian chronicle' to annal 855, concluded, in agreement with Stenton and Thorogood, that 'from 840 (for 843?) the annals show retrospective writing and at least by 851 a new method of beginning the year is introduced', in *EHD*, p. 122.

ject matter and language. Though Bately concentrated on the lexical aspects of his study, in his *A History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Hodgkin drew attention to the fact there is a shift of focus in ASC's annals. He wrote,

> From the year 82[5] or thereabouts, that is, from the beginning of the story of Egbert's great victories, a more definite change comes over the Chronicle. The jottings of earlier annalists fade away. Entries which seem to be based on the tradition of the elders or the editor's own remembrances become more frequent. From this point, therefore, it is increasingly evident that the editors — or editor — had some well-defined points of view. They were interested in Viking raids, in their beginnings as well as in their wearisome repetitions... Even more significant are the subjects which they omit; their blindness to the greatness of Offa and of other Mercian kings is easily intelligible... Another subject on which the editors are curiously silent is the doings of Alfred's brothers. Ethelred's campaigns against the Great Army in 868–71 are indeed noticed with unwonted detail, but whenever he is mentioned his brother Alfred is mentioned alongside of him. Ethelred as king could not be ignored, but Alfred remains the hero of the Year of Battles.[83]

In Hodgkin's view, such annals were 'all of a piece' and 'must have been composed by a dependent of Alfred and not of Æthelwulf or any other'.[84] In addition, he asserted that 'the language from 82[5] to 871 and beyond is on the whole Alfredian'.[85] Bately noted that,

> In support of his claim, Hodgkin lists five distinctive features of 'style and phraseology' occurring between 82[5] and 878, which, he says give this section a unity and in varying degrees link it with other Alfredian writings. These are *micel wæl geslægen* (82[5] etc., to 871), *micel wælsliht* (8[42] and 871), *gefægene wærun* (855 and 878), *geþuærnesse* (82[9] and 860), and *micle* (or *lytle*) *werede* (82[5], 871, 878).[86]

Though Bately regarded the absense of these 'five distinctive features' from the earlier sections of ASC as significant, she did not accept them as proof of Alfre-

---

83. Robert H. Hodgkin, *A History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 3 ed., vol. II (Oxford: 1939), pp. 626–27. My 82[5] = Hodgkin's 823.
84. Hodgkin, *History*, p. 627.
85. Hodgkin, *History*, p. 707. My 82[5] = Hodgkin's 823.
86. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 108. Here my 82[5] = Hodgkin's 823; 82[9] = 827; 8[42] = 839.

dian authorship on the grounds that similar features can also be 'found in a range of texts by different authors'.[87]

Despite considerable variation in their overall conclusions, these scholars are all agreed that: (1) those early ninth-century annals, exhibiting certain unique characteristics (in comparison to previous annals in ASC), were produced during the reign of Alfred the Great, and (2) a 'full Chronicle' in the form we now know it, from its earliest annals to either 855 or 891 (depending on which theory of ASC's textual history one holds), had been, from the outset, the original intention of whoever compiled or commissioned it. If, however, as argued in the previous chapter, annal 878 brought the first Alfredian compilation to its conclusion, it may be possible to consider alternative theories as to the origins and early textual history of ASC.

2. ASC's annals of the early-ninth century

To illustrate the nature of the change scholars recognise as occurring in the annals of the early ninth-century section of ASC, the following list includes several texts which neither exhibit a 'change in character' nor seem to have been 'based on a first-hand account of events'. These, instead, share both the style and subject matter of the annals of preceding centuries that were derived largely from written sources.

*804 Her wæs gehadod Beornmod biscep to Hrofesceastre.
*805 Her Ęþelheard ærcebiscep forþferde, 7 Wulfred wæs to ærcebiscepe gehadod; 7 Forþred abbud forþferde.
*806 Her Wulfred ærcebiscep pallium onfeng.
*807 Her Cuþred cyning forþferde on Cantwarum, 7 Ceolburg abbudesse 7 Heabryht aldormon.
*814 Her Carl cyning forþferde 7 he ricsode .xlv. wintra; 7 Wulfred arcebiscep 7 Wigbryht Wesseaxna biscep foron begen to Rome.
*821 Her Cenwulf Miercna cyning forþferde, 7 Ceolwulf feng to rice; 7 Eadbryht aldormon forþferde.[88]

*804 In this year Beornmod was consecrated bishop of Rochester.

87. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 108.
88. Bately, *MS A*, pp. 40–1.

*805 In this year Archbishop Æthelheard died and Wulfred was consecrated archbishop, and Abbot Forthred died.
*806 In this year Archbishop Wulfred received the pallium.
*807 In this year King Cuthred died in Kent, and Abbess Ceolburh and Ealdroman Heahberht.
*814 In this year King Charles died, and he reigned 45 years. And both Archbishop Wulfred and Wigberht, bishop of the West Saxons, went to Rome.
*821 In this year Coenwulf, king of the Mercians, died, and Ceolwulf succeeded to the kingdom. Ealdorman Eadberht died.

The following list of examples from earlier centuries is indeed similar:

485 Her Ęlle gefeaht wiþ Walas neah Mearcrędesburnan stęðe.
488 Her Æsc feng to rice 7 was .xxiiii. wintra Cantwara cyning.
565 Her Columba mæssepreost of Scottum com in Brettas to lærenne Peohtas 7 in Hi þam ealonde mynster worhte.
591 Her Ceolric ricsode .v. gear.
645 Her Cenwalh adrifen wæs from Pendan cyninge.
686 Her Ceadwalla 7 Mul Cent 7 Wieht forhergedon.
*764 Her Iaenbryht aercebiscep onfeng pallium.
*772 Her Milred biscep forþferde.

485 In this year Ælle fought against the Britons near the bank of Mearcredesburna.
488 In this year Æsc succeeded to the kingdom and was king of the people of Kent for 24 years.
565 In this year the priest Columba came from Ireland to Britain, to instruct the Picts, and built a monastery on the Island of Iona.
591 In this year Ceol reigned for five years.
645 In this year Cenwalh was driven out by King Penda.
686 In this year Cædwalla and Mul ravaged Kent and the Isle of Wight.
*764 In this year Jænberht received the pallium.
*772 In this year Bishop Milred died.

Not only do these annals share a style and phraseology spanning the centuries, but they also deal either with high-level ecclesiastical affairs — the deaths and accessions of popes and the occasional archbishop, stories of saints and their missionary endeavours, and the establishment of religious institutions — or matters of general secular history; the deaths and accessions of kings, and reports of great battles and

significant events.[89] As noted above, Hodgkin observed that the change in the nature of the annals of the early 800s coincides with a change in content — from dealing with matters of general ecclesiastical and secular history to dealing with vikings, the establishment of Egbert's dynasty, and Alfred — a change which, for Hodgkin, begins at annal *825. It reads:[90]

> *825 Her wæs Wala gefeoht 7 Defna æt Gafulforda. 7 þy ilcan geare gefeaht Ecbryht cyning 7 Beornwulf cyning on Ellendune, 7 Ecgbryht sige nam, 7 þær wæs micel węl geslægen. Þa sende he Ęþlwulf his sunu of þære fierde, 7 Ealhstan his biscep 7 Wulfheard his aldormon to Cent micle werede, 7 hie Baldred þone cyning norþ ofer Temese adrifon, 7 Cantware him to cirdon 7 Suþrige 7 Suþseaxe 7 Eastseaxe, þy hie from his mægum ær mid unryhte anidde wærun. 7 þy ilcan geare Eastengla cyning 7 seo þeod gesohte Ecgbryht cyning him to friþe 7 to mundboran for Miercna ege. 7 þy geare slogon Eastengle Beornwulf Miercna cyning.
>
> *825 In this year there was a battle between the Britons and the men of Devon at Galford. And the same year King Egbert and Beornwulf, king of the Mercians, fought at Wroughton, and Egbert had the victory and a great slaughter was made there. Then he sent from the army his son Æthelwulf and his bishop Ealhstan and his ealdorman Wulfheard to Kent with a large force, and they drove king Bealdred north over the Thames; and the people of Kent and of Surrey and the South Saxons and the East Saxons submitted to him because they had been wrongly forced away from his kinsmen. And the same year the king of the East Angles and the people appealed to King Egbert for peace and protection, because of their fear of the Mercians. And that same year the East Angles killed Beornwulf, king of the Mercians.

The Egbert section of this annal is longer and includes considerably more detail than the annals preceding it, and, as Hodgkin noted, it introduces a phrase not before seen in the Chronicle, *micel wæl geslægen,* 'great slaughter was made' — one of his five distinctive features of style and phraseology which hereafter occur repeatedly

---

89. See Jacqueline Stodnick, 'Sentence to Story: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Formulary', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History*, ed. Alice Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010) 91–111, pp. 102–3.

90. My *825 is given as 823 by Hodgkin.

in the annals to 878. I would note that the final line of this annal, however, '[a]nd that same year the East Angles killed Beornwulf, king of the Mercians', is different to the Egbert-related entry and could be seen as belonging to the same category of general secular history annals of previous centuries.

The next annal, *826, is barren. Then, once again in the concise style of earlier entries, annal *827 records, in a few words, a royal death and succession in the kingdom of Mercia. It reads:

> *827 Her Ludecan Miercna cyning 7 his .v. aldormen mon ofslog mid him, 7 Wiiglaf feng to rice.
>
> *827 In this year Ludeca, king of the Mercians, was killed, and his 5 ealdormen with him; and Wiglaf succeeded to the kingdom.

Annal *828 is barren. Annal *829 reports on Egbert in the expanded style of annal *825, and in contrast to the annals of earlier sections. Also, like *825, annal *829 includes one of Hodgkin's distinctive features, *geþuærnesse*, 'submission'. The text continues with a famous passage from Bede listing former *Bretwalda*s, and elevating Alfred's grandfather to a position of almost incomparable greatness:[91]

> *829 Her mona aþistrode on middes wintres mæsseniht. 7 þy ilcan geare geeode Ecgbryht cyning Miercna rice 7 al þæt be suþan Humbre wæs, 7 he wæs se eahteþa cyning se þe bretwalda wæs — ærest Ęlle Suþseaxna cyning se þus micel rice hæfde, se æftera wæs Ceawlin Wesseaxna cyning, se þridda wæs Ęþelbryht Cantwara cyning, se feorþa wæs Rędwald Eastengla cyning, fifta was Eadwine Norþanhymbra cyning, siexta wæs Oswald se æfter him ricsode, seofoþa wæs Oswio Oswaldes broþur, eahtoþa wæs Ecgbryht Wesseaxna cyning. 7 se Ecgbryht lędde fierd to Dore wiþ Norþanhymbre, 7 hie him þær eaþmedo budon 7 geþuærnesse, 7 hie on þam tohwurfon.
>
> *829 In this year there was an eclipse of the moon on Christmas eve. And that year King Egbert conquered the kingdom of the Mercians, and everything south of the Humber; and he was the eighth king who was

91. Bately observes that while Egbert's name is here added to Bede's list, 'the great Mercian overlords, Offa and Æthelbald are ignored', in 'Bede', p. 253, n. 63.

> 'Bretwalda'. The first who had so great authority was Ælle, king of the South Saxons, the second was Ceawlin, king of the West Saxons; the third was Ethelbert, king of the people of Kent; the fourth was Rædwald, king of the East Angles, the fifth was Edwin, king of the Northumbrians, the sixth was Oswald who reigned after him, the seventh was Oswiu, Oswald's brother, the eighth was Egbert, king of West Saxons. And this Egbert led an army to Dore, against the Northumbrians, and they offered him submission and peace there, and on that they separated.

The next annal, *830, is again in the style of the annals of earlier centuries, with three entries: one of general secular history, another ecclesiastical history, and the last, about Egbert:

> *830 Her eft Wilaf onfeng Miercna rices; 7 Ęþelwald biscep forþferde. 7 þy ilcan geare lędde Ecgbryht cyning fierd on Norþwalas 7 he hie to eaþmodre hersumnesse gedyde.[92]
>
> *830 In this year Wiglaf again obtained the kingdom of Mercia. And Bishop Æthelwald died. And that same year King Egbert led the army among the Welsh, and he reduced them all to humble submission to him.[93]

Annals *832, *833, and *834 are also similar in style to the earlier annals, and concern matters of ecclesiastical history:

> *832 Her Wulfred ærcebiscep forþferde.
> *833 Her Ceolnoþ wæs gecoren to biscepe 7 gehadod; 7 Feologid abbud forþferde.
> *834 Her Ceolnoþ ærcebiscep onfeng pallium.
>
> *832 In this year Archbishop Wulfred died.
> *833 In this year Ceolnoth was elected bishop and consecrated, and Abbot Feologild died.
> *834 In this year Archbishop Ceolnoth received the *pallium*.

Annal *835 gives a short entry about vikings:

---

92. Bately, *MS A*, p. 42.
93. Whitelock, *ASC*, p. 41.

*835 Her hęþne men oferhergeadon Sceapige.

*835 In this year heathen men ravaged Sheppey.

Annal *836 returns, once again, to news of Egbert, mentioning *Carrum*, 'Carhampton', and including, with *825 and *829, another of Hodgkin's distinctive features, *micel wæl geslægen*, 'great slaughter was made':

*836 Her gefeaht Ecgbryht cyning wiþ .xxxv. sciphlæsta æt Carrum, 7 þær wearþ micel węl geslægen, 7 þa Denescan ahton węlstowe gewald; 7 Hereferþ 7 Wigþen tuegen biscepas forþferdon, 7 Dudda 7 Osmod tuegen aldormen forþferdon.

*836 In this year King Egbert fought against the crews of 35 ships at Carhampton, and a great slaughter was made there, and the Danes had possession of the place of slaughter. And two bishops, Herefrith and Wigthegn, and two ealdormen, Duda and Osmod, died.

3. Distinctive features in the annals from the early-ninth century to 878

Concerning the ninth century annals to 878 I note the lack of any obvious break, but what seems, instead, to be a gradual shift in ASC between those early ninth-century texts which are similar in style and subject matter to the annals preceding them (dealing with wider issues of ecclesiastical or general secular history), and those entries (dealing with vikings, Egbert's dynasty, noblemen, or Alfred) which are different in style from ASC's earlier sections. Fig. 1 illustrates this overlap. Texts concerning matters of ecclesiastical and general secular history are indicated by an 'x' on the lower tier, while those about vikings, Egbert's dynasty, noblemen or Alfred are indicated by an 'o' above. Greyed-out boxes represent barren annals. Certain annals, it should be noted (for example, *802, *815, *825, *829), contain entries relating to both types of text.

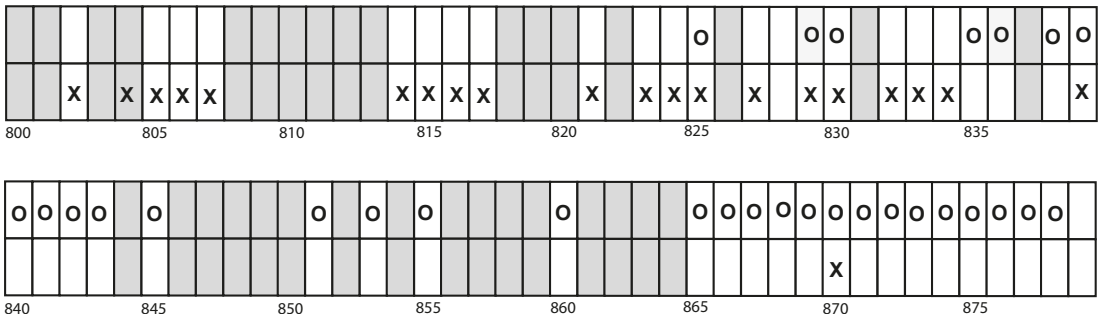


Fig. 1. Graph showing the two different types of entry found in annals 800–878.

As seen in Fig. 1, the ecclesiastical and general secular history texts predominate to annal *834 (with three annals between *825 and *830 containing both types of entry), after which the annals are of the type dealing with vikings, Egbert's dynasty, noblemen or Alfred. Between annal *825 and 860 it is only those entries dealing with viking troubles, Egbert and the dynasty he established or Alfred which might be regarded as exhibiting a 'change in character'. Before attempting to draw any conclusions from this observation, however, I refer to Fig. 2 in which entries with south-western elements and Hodgkin's 'unifying' features are plotted onto the grid from Fig. 1. Red boxes indicate texts with one or more of Hodgkin's 'unifying' features and blue boxes texts with ASC's 'south-western elements' noted by Stenton. It is significant that those annals with south-western elements in ASC (*845, 851, 867, 878), all share one or more of Hodgkin's features of 'style and phraseology', at times also occurring in the same sentence.

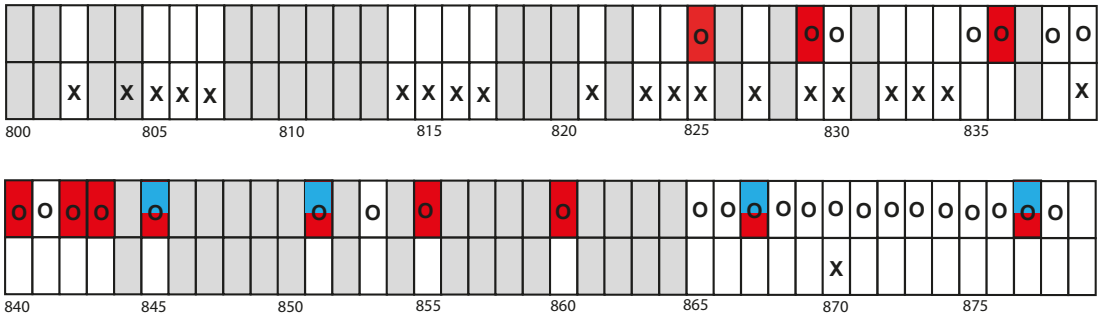


Fig 2. Stenton's 'south-western elements' in blue, Hodgkin's 'distinctive features' in red.

As Fig. 2 demonstrates, Stenton's south-western elements and Hodgkin's distinctive features of style and phraseology never occur in any of the shorter ecclesiast-

ical or general secular history entries, but only in those entries dealing with Egbert and his dynasty, viking troubles, or Alfred. Hodgkin regarded his 'five distinctive features' (beginning at annal *825) as indicative of a unified text, and argued that the annals which followed were 'all of a piece'. The fact that Stenton's south-western elements are also limited to entries of this type further strengthens his case, though Hodgkin may have been correct in part only, for it appears that not all of the annals from *825 were 'of a piece', but only those entries dealing with viking troubles, the establishment of Egbert's dynasty, or Alfred.

As noted above, Hodgkin's purpose in identifying his 'unifying' features was to prove Alfredian authorship in the Chronicle by linking these unique terms and phrases to other texts known to have been written by Alfred. Bately, however, showed that such items are not limited to works by Alfred and so cannot be regarded as proof that the king himself produced any of ASC's annals.[94] Bately also observed, however, 'a number of less obvious but none the less significant lexical variations which do appear to indicate changes of authorship'.[95] In addition to the distinctive use of the verb *gefaran*, 'to die' (as opposed to *forþferan*), Bately noted that the group of annals centred on the 870s is also 'characterised by its use of a variety of words for "fight"', for example *winnende wærun* at 867, *gefuhton* at 868, *feaht* at 870, and *onfeohtende wærun* at 871, as well as the use of *innan* and *into*', and a 'fondness for expanded constructions'.[96] Also, '(*y*)*mb þæs þy* and the adverbial *þæs ymb* are found nine times between 871 and 878, otherwise appearing only here [755] and in the annals for 606 and 855', and 'while though the victorious side is often (though not always) named, it is never described before 800 as having the victory, or before 833 as getting control of the battlefield'.[97] Also,

94. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 127–28.
95. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 109.
96. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 110–11.
97. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 109, n. 1.

> in addition to its use of the expanded form, the annal for 83[8] employs *winnan* and *feran* and disagrees with the annals for the 880s both in these respects and in its use, like the 755 annal, of *feohtan*. The annal for 855 not only has an expanded form and the collocation of *ymb* with *þæs þe*, but employs *gefaran* not *forþferan*, *feran* beside *faran*, and shares with the annal for 878 the expression *þæs/his gefægene wærun* (one of Hodgkin's 'unifying' features), and the preposition *in*, otherwise not found in the Chronicle after the annal for 709.[98]

In the following table all of the features listed by Bately relating to entries of the *gefaran*-type in annals 789–878 are given in the right-hand column, marked out in red bold. The left-hand column contains all *forþferan* entries in this section. Entries which cannot be distinguished on this basis appear in the centre. Also, Stenton's south-western elements are given in blue bold and Hodgkin's 'unifying' features in red bold-underline, but the text below is arranged to illustrate Bately's argument based on the *forþferan* and *gefaran* groups.

'*forþferan*' group	**No distinguishing feature**	**'*gefaran*' group**
	789	
	Her nom Beorhtric cyning Offan dohtor Eadburge.	
	7 on his dagum **cuomon ærest .iii. scipu, 7 þa se gerefa þærto rad 7 hie wolde drifan to þæs cyninges tune þy he nyste hwæt hie wæron, 7 hiene mon ofslog**.	
	Þæt wæron þa ærestan scipu deniscra monna þe Angelcynnes lond gesohton.	
	792	
Her Iaenbryht ærcebiscep **forþferde**;		
	7 þy ilcan geare wæs gecoren Ęþelheard abbud to biscepe.	
	794	
	Her Offa Miercna cyning het Ęþelbryhte rex þæt heafod ofaslean.	

98. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 112.

796		
Her Adrianus papa 7 Offa cyning **forþferdon**;		
	7 Ęþelred Norþanhymbra cyning wæs ofslægen from his agenre þeode;	
	7 Ceolwulf biscep 7 Eadbald biscep of þæm londe aforon;	
7 Ecgferþ feng to Miercna rice 7 þy ilcan geare **forþferde**;		
	7 Eadbryht onfeng rice on Cent þam was oþer noma nemned Præn.	
798		
	Her Ceolwulf Miercna cyning oferhergeade Cantware oþ Mersc,	
	7 gefengun Praen hiera cyning 7 gebundenne hine on Mierce lęddon.	
799		
	Her Romane Leone þæm papan his tungon forcurfon 7 his eagan astungon 7 hine of his setle afliemdon,	
	7 þa sona eft Gode fultomiendum he meahte geseon 7 sprecan 7 eft was papa swa he ær wæs.	
801		
	Her Ęþelheard ærcebiscep 7 Cynebryht Wesseaxna biscep foron to Rome.	
802		
Her Beorhtric cyning **forþferde** 7 Worr aldormon;		
	7 Ecgbryht feng to Wesseaxna rice.	
		7 þy ilcan dæge rad Ęþelmund aldorman of Hwiccium ofer æt Cynemæresforda; þa mette hine Weoxstan aldorman mid Wilsætum. Þær wearþ micel **gefeoht** 7 þær begen ofslægene þa aldormen, 7 Wilsætan **namon sige**.
804		

	Her wæs gehadod Beornmod biscep to Hrofesceastre.	
805		
Her Ęþelheard ærcebiscep **forþferde**,		
	7 Wulfred wæs to ærcebiscepe gehadod;	
7 Forþred abbud **forþferde**.		
806		
	Her Wulfred ærcebiscep pallium onfeng.	
807		
Her Cuþred cyning **forþferde** on Cantwarum, 7 Ceolburg abbudesse 7 Heabryht aldorman.		
814		
Her Carl cyning **forþferde**,		
	7 he ricsode .xlv. wintra;	
	7 Wulfred arcebiscep 7 Wigbryht Wesseaxna biscep foron begen to Rome.	
815		
	Her Wulfred ærcebiscep mid bledsunge þæs papan Leon hwearf eft to his agnum biscepdome.	
	7 þy geare gehergade Ecgbryht cyning on Westwalas from eastewеardum oþ westewearde.	
816		
Her Leo se ęþela papa 7 se halga **forþferde**,		
	7 æfter him Stephanus feng to rice.	
817		
Her Stephanus papa **forþferde**,		
	7 æfter him was Paschalis to papan gehadod;	
	7 þy ilcan geare forborn Ongolcynnes scolu.	

821		
Her Cenwulf Miercna cyning **forþferde**,		
	7 Ceolwulf feng to rice;	
7 Eadbryht aldormon **forþferde**.		
823		
	Her wearþ Ceolwulf his rices besciered.	
824		
	Her tuegen aldormen wurdon ofslægene, Burghelm 7 Muca,	
	7 senoþ wæs æt Clofeshoo.	
825		
		Her wæs Wala **gefeoht** 7 Defna æt Gafulforda.
		7 þy ilcan geare **gefeaht** Ecbryht cyning 7 Beornwulf cyning on Ellendune, 7 Ecgbryht **sige nam**, 7 **þær wæs micel wæl geslægen**.
		Þa sende he Æþelwulf his sunu of þære fierde, 7 Ealhstan his biscep 7 Wulfheard his aldormon to Cent **micle werede**, 7 hie Baldred þone cyning norþ ofer Temese **adrifon**.
	7 Cantware him to cirdon 7 Suþrige 7 Suþseaxe 7 Eastseaxe, þy hie from his mægum ær mid unryhte anidde wærun.	
	7 þy ilcan geare Eastengla cyning 7 seo þeod gesohte Ecgbryht cyning him to friþe 7 to mundboran for Miercna ege.	
	7 þy geare slogon Eastengle Beornwulf Miercna cyning.	
827		
	Her Ludecan Miercna cyning 7 his .v. aldormen mon ofslog mid him, 7 Wiiglaf feng to rice.	
829		

	Her mona aþistrode on middes wintres mæsseniht.	
	7 þy ilcan geare geeode Ecgbryht cyning Miercna rice 7 al þæt be suþan Humbre wæs,	
	7 he wæs se eahteþa cyning se þe Bretwalda wæs — ærest Ęlle Suþseaxna cyning se þus micel rice hæfde, se æftera wæs Ceawlin Wesseaxna cyning, se þridda wæs Ęþelbryht Cantwara cyning, se feorþa wæs Rędwald Eastengla cyning, fifta was Eadwine Norþanhymbra cyning, siexta wæs Oswald se æfter him ricsode, seofoþa wæs Oswio Oswaldes broþur, eahtoþa wæs Ecgbryht Wesseaxna cyning.	
	7 se Ecgbryht lędde fierd to Dore wiþ Norþanhymbre, 7 hie him þær eaþmedo budon 7 **geþuærnesse**, 7 hie on þam tohwurfon.	
830		
	Her eft Wilaf onfeng Miercna rices;	
7 Ęþelwald biscep **forþferde**.		
	7 þy ilcan geare lędde Ecgbryht cyning fierd on Norþwalas 7 he hie to eaþmodre hersumnesse gedyde.	
832		
Her Wulfred ærcebiscep **forþferde**.		
833		
Her Ceolnoþ wæs gecoren to biscepe 7 gehadod 7 Feologid abbud **forþferde**.		
834		
	Her Ceolnoþ ærcebiscep onfeng pallium.	
835		
	Her hęþne men oferhergeadon Sceapige.	
836		

		Her **gefeaht** Ecgbryht cyning wiþ .xxxv. sciphlæsta æt Carrum, 7 **þær wearþ micel węl geslægen**, 7 þa Denescan **ahton węlstowe gewald**;
7 Hereferþ 7 Wigþen tuegen biscepas **forþferdon**,		
7 Dudda 7 Osmod tuegen aldormen **forþferdon**.		
838		
		Her cuom micel sciphere on Westwalas, 7 hie to anum gecierdon 7 wiþ Ecgbryht Westseaxna cyning **winnende wæron**.
		Þa he þæt hierde 7 mid fierde **ferde** 7 him wiþ **feaht** æt Hengestdune 7 þær gefliemde ge þa Walas ge þa Deniscan.
839		
Her Ecgbryht cyning **forþferde**		
	7 hine hæfde ær Offa Miercna cyning 7 Beorhtric Wesseaxna cyning afliemed .iii. gear of Angelcynnes lande on Fronclond ær he cyning wære;	
	7 þy fultomode Beorhtric Offan þy he hæfde his dohtor him to cuene —	
	7 se Ecgbyht ricsode .xxxvii. wintra .vii. Monaþ;	
	7 feng Ęþelwulf Ecgbrehting to Wesseaxna rice,	
	7 he salde his suna Ęþelstane Cantwara rice 7 Eastseaxna 7 Suþrigea 7 Suþseaxna.	
840		
		Her Wulfheard aldormon **gefeaht** æt Hamtune wiþ .xxxiii. sciphlæsta 7 **þær micel węl geslog 7 sige nom**;
7 þy geare **forþferde** Wulfheard.		

		7 þy ilcan geare gefeaht Ęþelhelm dux wiþ deniscne here on Port mid Dornsætum 7 gode hwile þone here gefliemde, 7 þa Deniscan **ahton węlstowe gewald** 7 þone aldormon ofslogon.
841		
	Her Herebryht aldormon wæs ofslægen from hęþnum monnum 7 monige mid him on Merscwarum.	
	7 þy ilcan geare eft on Lindesse 7 on Eastenglum 7 on Cantwarum wurdon monige men ofslægene from þam herige.	
842		
	Her wæs **micel węlsliht** on Lundenne 7 on Cwantawic 7 on Hrofesceastre.	
843		
		Her Ęþelwulf cyning **gefeaht** æt Carrum wiþ .xxxv. schiplæsta, 7 þa Deniscan **ahton węstowe gewald**.
845		
		Her **Eanulf aldorman gefeaht mid Sumursætum**,
		7 **Ealchstan biscep 7 Osric aldorman mid Dornsætum gefuhton æt Pedridan muþan** wiþ deniscne here 7 **þær micel węl geslogon 7 sige namon**.
	þy ilcan geare Ęþelstan rex 7 Ealchere dux micelne here ofslogon æt Sondwic on Kent 7 .viii. scipu gefengon 7 þa oþru geflimdon.	
851		
		Her **Ceorl aldormon gefeaht** wiþ hæþene men **min Defenascire æt Wicganbeorge**, 7 þær **micel wæl geslogon 7 sige namon**.
	7 þy ilcan geare Ęþelstan cyning 7 Ealchere dux micelne here ofslogon æt Sondwic on Cent 7 .ix .scipu gefengun 7 þa oþre gefliemdon,	

	7 hæþne men ærest ofer winter sæton.	
	7 þy ilcan geare cuom feorðe healf hund scipa on Temese muþan 7 brẹcon Contwaraburg 7 Lundenburg 7 gefliemdon Beorhtwulf Miercna cyning mid his fierde 7 foron þa suþ ofer Temese on Suþrige,	
		7 him **gefeaht** wiþ Ęþelwulf cyning 7 Ęþelbald his sunu æt Aclea mid Westseaxna fierde 7 þær þæt **mæste wẹl geslogon** on hẹþnum herige þe we secgan hierdon oþ þisne ondweardan dæg 7 þær **sige namon**.
853		
	Her bẹd Burgred Miercna cyning 7 his wiotan (bædon) Ęþelwulf cyning þæt he (he) him gefultumade þæt him Norþwalas gehiersumade.	
	He þa swa dyde 7 mid fierde for ofer Mierce on Norþwalas 7 hie him alle gehiersume dydon.	
	7 þy ilcan geare sende Ęþelwulf cyning Ęlfred his sunu to Rome.	
	Þa was domne Leo papa on Rome 7 he hine to cyninge gehalgode 7 hiene him to biscepsuna nam.	
		Þa þy ilcan geare Ealhere mid Cantwarum 7 Huda mid Suþrigium **gefuhton** on Tenet wiþ hẹþnum herige 7 ærest **sige namon**, 7 þær wearþ monig mon ofslægen 7 adruncen **on gehwẹþere hond**.
	On þæs ofer Eastron geaf Ęþelwulf cyning his dohtor Burgrede cyninge of Wesseaxum on Merce.	
855		
	Her hẹþne men ærest on Sceapige ofer winter sætun.	
	7 þy ilcan geare gebocude Ęþelwulf cyning teoþan dẹl his londes ofer al his rice Gode to lofe 7 him selfum to ecere hẹlo,	

		7 þy ilcan geare **ferde** to Rome mid micelre weorþnesse 7 þær was .xii. monaþ wuniende 7 þa him hamweard for
	– 7 him þa Carl Francna cyning his dohtor geaf him to cuene —	
		7 æfter þam to his leodum cuom, 7 hie þæs **gefægene wærun**.
		7 **ymb** .ii. gear **þæs ðe** he on Francum com he **gefor**, 7 his lic liþ æt Wintanceastre,
	7 he ricsode nigonteoþe healf gear.	
	On se Ęþelwulf wæs Ecgbrehting, Ecgbryht Ealhmunding, Ealhmund Eafing, Eafa Eopping, Eoppa Ingilding; Ingild wæs Ines broþur Westseaxna cyninges, þæs þe eft ferde to Sancte Petre 7 þær eft his feorh gesealde; 7 hie wæron Cenredes suna, Cenred wæs Ceolwalding, Ceolwald Cuþaing, Cuþa Cuþwining, Cuþwine Ceaulining, Ceawlin Cynricing, Cynric Cerdicing, Cerdic Elesing, Elesa Esling, Esla Giwising, Giwis Wiging, Wig Freawining, Freawine Friþogaring, Friþogar Bronding, Brond Bęldæging, Bęldæg Wodening, Woden Friþowalding, Friþuwald Freawining, Frealaf Friþuwulfing, Friþuwulf Finning, Fin Godwulfing, Godwulf Geating, Geat Tętwaing, Tętwa Beawing, Beaw Sceldwaing, Sceldwea Heremoding, Heremod Itermoning, Itermon Hraþraing, se wæs geboren in þære earce: Noe, Lamach, Matusalem, Enoh, Iaered, Maleel, Camon, Enos, Sed, Adam primus homo; et pater noster est Christus, amen.	
	On þa fengon Ęþelwulfes suna twegen to rice,	
	Ęþelbald to Wesseaxna rice	
	7 Ęþelbryht to Cantwara rice 7 to Eastseaxna rice 7 to Suþrigea 7 to Suþseaxna rice,	
	7 þa ricsode Ęþelbald .v. gear.	
860		

860. Her Ęþelbald cyng **forþferde**, 7 his lic liþ æt Sciraburnan,		
	7 feng Ęþelbyrht to allum þam rice his broþur,	
		7 he hit heold on godre **geþuærnesse** 7 on micelne sibsumnesse.
		7 on his dæge cuom micel sciphere up 7 abręcon Wintanceastre, 7 wiþ þone here **gefuhton** Osric aldorman mid Hamtunscire 7 Ęþelwulf aldormon mid Bearrucscire 7 þone here gefliemdon, 7 **węlstowe gewald ahton**.
	7 se Ęþelbryht ricsode .v. gear 7 his lic liþ æt Scireburnan.	
865		
		Her sæt hęþen here on Tenet, 7 **genamon friþ** wiþ Cantwarum
	– 7 Cantware him feoh geheton wiþ þam friþe	
		– 7 under þam friþe 7 þam feohgehate se here **hiene on niht up bestęl** 7 oferhergeade alle Cent eastewearde.
866		
	Her feng Ęþered Ęþelbryhtes broþur to Wesseaxna rice.	
		7 þy ilcan geare cuom micel here on Angelcynnes lond, 7 wintersetl namon on Eastenglum 7 þær gehorsude wurdon, 7 **hie him friþ wiþ namon**.
867		
	Her for se here of Eastenglum ofer Humbre muþan to Eoforwicceastre on Norþhymbre.	

		7 þær wæs micel **ungeþuærnes** þære þeode betweox him selfum, 7 hie hæfdun hiera cyning aworpenne Osbryht 7 ungecyndne cyning underfengon Ęllan, 7 hie late on geare to þam gecirdon þæt hie wiþ þone here **winnende wærun**, 7 hie þeah micle fierd gegadrodon 7 þone here sohton æt Eoforwicceastre 7 on þa ceastre brȩcon, 7 hie sume inne wurdon, 7 **þær was ungemetlic wæl geslægen** Norþanhymbra, sume binnan, sume butan, 7 þa cyningas begen ofslægene, 7 sio laf wiþ þone here **friþ nam**.
		7 þy ilcan geare **gefor Ealchstan biscep — 7 he hæfde þæt bisceprice .l. wintra æt Scireburnan, 7 his lic liþ þær on tune**.
868		
		Her for se ilca here **innan** Mierce to Snotengaham 7 þær wintersetl namon;
		7 Burgręd Miercna cyning 7 his wiotan bȩdon Ęþered Westseaxna cyning 7 Ęlfred his broþur þæt hie him gefultumadon, þæt hie wiþ þone here **gefuhton**;
		7 þa ferdon hie mid Wesseaxna fierde **innan** Mierce oþ Snotengaham 7 þone here þær metton on þam geweorce, 7 þær nan hefelic **gefeoht** ne wearþ, 7 Mierce **friþ namon** wiþ þone here.
869		
	Her for se here eft to Eoforwicceastre 7 þær sæt .i. gear.	
870		
		Her rad se here ofer Mierce **innan** Eastengle 7 wintersetl namon æt Þeodforda.
		7 þy wintra Eadmund cyning him wiþ **feaht**, 7 þa Deniscan **sige namon** 7 þone cyning ofslogon 7 þæt lond all geeodon.
		7 þy geare **gefor** Ceolnoþ ærcebiscep.

	[7 Æþered Wiltunscire biscop wearþ gecoren to ærcebiscpe to Cantuareberi.]	
871		
		Her cuom se here to Readingum on Westseaxe, 7 **þæs ymb** .iii. niht ridon .ii. eorlas up.
		Þa gemette hie Ęþelwulf aldorman on Englafelda 7 him þær wiþ **gefeaht** 7 **sige nam**;
		Þæs ymb .iiii. niht Ęþered cyning 7 Ęlfred his broþur þær micle fierd to Readingum geleddon 7 wiþ þone here **gefuhton**, 7 **þær wæs micel wæl geslægen on gehwæþre hond**, 7 Ęþelwulf aldormon wearþ ofslægen, 7 þa Deniscan **ahton wælstowe gewald**.
		7 **þæs ymb** .iiii. niht **gefeaht** Ęþered cyning 7 Ęlfred his broþur wiþ alne þone here on Æscesdune, 7 hie wærun on twæm gefylcum; on oþrum wæs Bachsecg 7 Halfdene þa hęþnan cyningas, 7 on oþrum wæron þa eorlas; 7 þa **gefeaht** se cyning Ęþered wiþ þara cyninga getruman, 7 þær wearþ se cyning Bagsecg ofslægen, 7 Ęlfred his broþur wiþ þara eorla getruman, 7 þær wearþ Sidroc eorl ofslægen se alda 7 Sidroc eorl se gioncga 7 Osbearn eorl 7 Fræna eorl 7 Hareld eorl, 7 þa hergas begen gefliemde 7 fela þusenda ofslægenra, 7 **onfeohtende wæron** oþ niht.
		7 **þæs ymb** .xiiii. niht **gefeaht** Ęþered cyning 7 Ęlfred his broður wiþ þone here æt Basengum, 7 þær þa Deniscan **sige namon**.
		7 **þæs ymb** .ii. monaþ **gefeaht** Ęþered cyning 7 Ęlfred his broþur wiþ þone here æt Meretune, 7 hie wærun on tuæm gefylcium, 7 hie butu gefliemdon 7 longe on dæg sige ahton, 7 **þær wearþ micel węlsliht on gehwęþere hond**, 7 þa Deniscan **ahton węlstowe gewald**, 7 þær wearþ Heahmund biscep ofslægen 7 fela godra monna.

		7 æfter þissum **gefeohte** cuom micel sumorlida.
		7 þæs ofer Eastron **gefor** Ęþered cyning, 7 he ricsode .v. gear, 7 his lic liþ æt Winburnan.
		Þa feng Ęlfred Ęþelwulfing his broþur to Wesseaxna rice, 7 **þæs ymb** anne monaþ **gefeaht** Ęlfred cyning wiþ alne þone here **lytle werede** æt Wiltune 7 hine longe on dæg gefliemde, 7 þa Denis-can **ahton węlstowe gewald**.
		7 þæs geares wurdon .viiii. folc **gefeoht gefohten** wiþ þone here on þy cynerice be suþan Temese, 7 butan þam þe him Ęl-fred þæs cyninges broþur 7 an-lipig aldormon 7 cyninges þeg-nas oft rade onridon þe mon na ne rimde, 7 þæs geares wærun ofslægene .viiii. eorlas 7 an cyning; 7 þy geare **namon Westseaxe friþ** wiþ þone here.
872		
	Her for se here to Lundenbyrig from Readingum 7 þær winter-setl nam,	
		7 þa **namon Mierce friþ** wiþ þone here.
873		
		Her for se here on Norþhymbre 7 he nam wintersetl on Lindesse æt Tureces iege, 7 þa **namon Mierce friþ** wiþ þone here.
874		
		Her for se here from Lindesse to Hreopedune 7 þær wintersetl nam 7 þone cyning Burgręd ofer sę **adræfdon ymb** .xxii. wintra **þæs þe** he rice hæfde 7 þæt lond all geeodon;
		7 he for to Rome 7 þær **gesæt**, 7 his lic liþ on Sancta Marian ciricean on Angelcynnes scole.

		7 þy ilcan geare hie sealdon anum unwisum cyninges þegne Miercna rice to haldanne, 7 he him aþas swor 7 gislas salde, þæt he him gearo wære **swa hwelce dæge swa** hie hit habban wolden 7 he gearo wære mid him selfum 7 on allum þam þe him læstan woldon to þæs heres þearfe.
875		
	Her for se here from Hreopedune,	
	7 Healfdene for mid sumum þam here on Norþhymbre 7 nam wintersetl be Tinan þære ei,	
	7 se here þæt lond geeode 7 oft hergade on Peohtas 7 on Stręcledwalas;	
	7 for Godrum 7 Oscytel 7 Anwynd, þa .iii. cyningas, of Hreopedune to Grantebrycge mid micle here 7 sæton þær an gear.	
		7 þy sumera for Ęlfred cyning ut on sę mid sciphere 7 **gefeaht** wiþ .vii. sciphlæstas 7 hiera an gefeng 7 þa oþru gefliemde.
876		
		Her hiene bestęl se here **into** Werham Wesseaxna fierde, 7 wiþ þone here se cyning **friþ nam**, 7 him þa aþas sworon on þam halgan beage, þe hie ær nanre þeode noldon, þæt hie hrędlice of his rice foren, 7 hie þa under þam hie nihtes bestęlon þære fierde se gehorsoda here **into** Escanceaster.
	7 þy geare Healfdene Norþanhymbra lond gedęlde 7 ergende wæron 7 hiera tilgende.	
877		
		Her cuom se here **into** Escanceastre from Werham,
	7 se sciphere sigelede west ymbutan, 7 þa mette hie micel yst on sę, 7 þær forwearþ .cxx. scipa æt Swanawic,	

	7 se cyning Ęlfred æfter þam gehorsudan here mid fierde rad oþ Exanceaster 7 hie hindan ofridan ne meahte ær hie on þam fæstene wæron, þær him mon to ne meahte,	
	7 hie him þær foregislas saldon, swa fela swa he habban wolde 7 micle aþas sworon 7 þa godne friþ heoldon;	
	7 þa on hærfæste gefor se here on Miercna lond 7 hit gedęldon sum 7 sum Ceolwulfe saldon.	
878		
		Her hiene bestęl se here on midne winter ofer tuelftan niht to Cippanhamme 7 geridon Wesseaxna lond 7 gesæton 7 micel þæs folces (7) ofer sę **adræfdon**,
		7 þæs oþres þone mæstan dęl hie geridon 7 him to gecirdon buton þam cyninge Ęlfrede, 7 he **lytle werede** unieþelice æfter wudum for 7 on morfæstenum.
	7 þæs ilcan wintra wæs Inwæres broþur 7 Healfdenes on West-seaxum on Defenascire mid .xxiii. scipum, 7 hiene mon þær ofslog, 7 .dccc. monna mid him 7 .xl. monna his heres.	
		7 þæs on Eastron worhte Ęlfred cyning **lytle werede** geweorc æt Ęþelingaeigge 7 of þam geweorce **was winnende** wiþ þone here 7 Sumursætna se dęl se þær niehst wæs.
		Þa on þære seofoðan wiecan ofer Eastron he gerad to Ecgbryhtes stane be eastan Sealwyda, 7 him to comman þær ongen Sumorsæte alle 7 Wilsætan, 7 Hamtunscir se dęl se hiere behinon sę was 7 his **gefægene wærun**,
		7 he for **ymb** ane niht of þam wicum to **Iglea** 7 **þæs ymb** ane to **Eþandune** 7 þær **gefeaht** wiþ alne þone here, 7 hiene gefliemde, 7 him æfter rad oþ þæt geweorc 7 þær sæt .xiiii. niht;

		7 þa salde se here him foregislas 7 micle aþas, þæt hie of his rice uuoldon 7 him eac geheton þæt hiera kyning fulwihte onfon wolde, 7 hie þæt gelæston swa, 7 **þæs ymb** .iii. wiecan com se cyning to him Godrum þritiga sum þara monna þe in þam here weorþuste wæron æt **Alre**, 7 þæt is wiþ **Ęþelinggaeige**, 7 his se cyning þær onfeng æt fulwihte, 7 his crismlising was æt **Weþmor**,
	7 he was .xii. niht mid þam cyninge, 7 he hine miclum 7 his geferan mid feo weorðude.	

4. The possible significance of the *gefaran* group of entries in ASC

As seen in the above table, entries containing lexical items Bately listed as indicative of the *gefaran* group coincide with the passages containing south-western elements and/or Hodgkin's 'unifying' features of 'style and phraseology'. This further suggests that entries to the right share a common authorship, and the other features related to this *gefaran* group are also distinguishing characteristics of this material's original source. I also note that a number of entries in the centre column, though lacking the distinguishing features *forþferan* or *gefaran*, may, on the basis of subject matter, be placed with some confidence alongside similar material in either the left- or right-hand columns. So, ecclesiastical texts in the centre reporting the ordination of bishops or convocation of synods (but not a death) probably belong in the left-hand column. Similarly, entries in the centre dealing with Egbert or his dynasty, viking troubles, or Alfred may be grouped with other similar entries to the right. When this is done, a clear pattern emerges in the subject matter of the right-hand column. Starting with Egbert's accession in 802, these entries begin to chart his rise to power in 825 and 829 as he subjugates all Anglo-Saxon kingdoms south of the Humber (for which he is named the eighth *bretwalda*), and continue with him reducing the Welsh to 'humble submission' in 830. With Egbert's rule firmly established in the west, annal 835 reports 'heathen men' ravaged Sheppey. This is followed by a series of

entries in which skirmishes and battles with vikings are reported across southern England. Throughout this section the key roles played by ealdormen and clergy in these conflicts is repeatedly emphasised.

4.1 Annal 789

One other ASC entry also likely belongs to the *gefaran* group of texts. Annal *789, though lacking specific lexical features linking it with either the *forþferan* or *gefaran* groups is, as Stenton observed, the first in the Chronicle with a south-western element. Evidence for this comes from Æthelweard's *Chronicon* where, as in ASC's version, it is reported that: (1) three ships took part in the attack, (2) this was the first viking incursion on English soil, and (3) the intruders murdered the reeve. Æthelweard adds, however (with information unique to the *Chronicon*), that the reeve's name was Beaduheard, he was accompanied by companions, and they rode from Dorchester to confront the northmen. Though ASC's version of annal *789 lacks specific south-western elements, given this annal as it stands in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, I suggest it, too, originated with the other *gefaran*-type texts.

4.2 The source of *gefaran*-type entries — oral or written?

One question concerning the *gefaran*-type entries is whether they originated as a written text, or were perhaps transmitted as an oral tradition until the ASC archetype was compiled. The answer cannot be derived from the Chronicle's text alone. However, evidence outside ASC may suggest a written source for the *gefaran*-type entries, only part of which was used in ASC. It is found in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. As noted above, Æthelweard includes not only most of ASC's south-western elements but adds several others not found in the Chronicle or any other source. Regarding the possible provenance of Æthelweard's unique entries Stenton wrote,[99]

> If he had been at pains to discover information not contained in his copy of the Chronicle about south-western ealdormen of the ninth century, he would

[99] Stenton, *Preparatory*, p. 111.

> certainly have found something to relate about the men of his own youth and the previous generation. Dangerous as is the argument from silence, it is strong enough in the present case virtually to prove that Æthelweard made no attempt at independent investigation, that if he tells little of English history in the reigns of Æthelstan and his successors it is because he was relying on a version of the Chronicle which ended or almost ended with the death of Edward the Elder.

If Stenton is correct and Æthelweard 'made no attempt at independent investigation' as he compiled the text of his *Chronicon*, then the presence there of additional south-western elements suggests a written source outside of ASC containing such material. This source would either have been used by Æthelweard himself to augment the text of his version of the Chronicle, or by another scribe who annotated the copy of ASC which came to Æthelweard. Given that Æthelweard was an ealdorman of south-western Wessex who wrote his *Chronicon* to benefit a relative on the Continent, it is not difficult to imagine his potential interest in a source (were it available to him) with additional material specific to the region from which their family originated. The presence of unique south-western elements in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, therefore, fits nicely with the hypothesis that all these entries originated together in a source antecedent to ASC — from which selections were made by the authors of the Common Stock archetype.

5. Introducing hypothetical source 'P'

Taken together, the evidence suggests, as a working hypothesis, that the *gefaran* type entries originated in a single written source *c*. 878, opening with the first viking raid on English lands in the reign of Bryhtric and continuing to the events following Alfred's victory over Guthrum at Edington in 878. For the sake of the discusion which follows, I refer to this hypothetical source (and the entries pertaining to it) as 'P'.

3

Possible implications of source P for Chronicle studies

I have suggested that the text I call P — consisting of annals of the *gefaran*-type, with several other distinctive features of 'style and phraseology' and a south-western West Saxon regional focus (all falling within a range of annals 789–878 in ASC) — originated as a written source *c*. 878. I now consider possible implications of such a hypothesis for interpreting ASC's early textual history. For example, if P was compiled *c*. 878, then what is the textual relationship between P and the non-P entries which precede, overlap with, and continue on from P in ASC? By what process were they combined to form a single text? And might P (or other possible 'non-P' sources) have influenced in some way the textual histories of the Latin works which share annalistic material with the Chronicle — in particular, Asser's *Life*, Æthelweard's *Chronicon* and the *Annals of St Neots* as a separate text?

1. ASC's non-P material to the 890s

If all P-type texts are extracted from ASC, the remaining Common Stock entries which are of the *forþferan*-type begin in the first century and continue to some point (as yet undetermined) in the 890s. These draw, for the most part, upon earlier written sources, and cover events from across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and beyond. When might such a text first have been written? Did a 'national' secular chronicle exist in this form at any time before 878? Bately's lexical analysis revealed no such text nor is there any evidence for it outside ASC. The likelier conclusion, then, is that it was compiled in Alfred's reign. If it is Alfredian, we might ask if it originated as a source

independent of P, or whether P was expanded with *forþferan*-type entries to create a new national Chronicle. This chapter considers these questions.

1.1 The terms *forþferan* and *gefaran* as indicators of authorship

In considering the possible relationship between ASC's P and non-P entries, it is significant to note that in ninth-century texts outside the Chronicle the verbs *gefaran* and *forþferan* 'normally never occur side by side in the same text, exceptions apparently being the result of the insertion of new material or scribal alteration'.[100] The use of *gefaran* or *forþferan*, therefore, usually indicates independent authorship. As to why these terms appear together in the annals of ASC, Bately wrote, '[o]f course it could be due purely to chance that all the surviving ninth-century texts other than the Chronicle are of a type that selects one or other of the two forms never both, though this seems unlikely'.[101] To explain their appearance together in ASC, Bately proposed that one author may have written a set of annals of either the *gefaran-* or *forþferan*-type, and a second author later added entries of the other type to the earlier material.[102]

On the basis of my working hypothesis — that P (using *gefaran*) was written *c.* 878 — I suggest that P was the earlier of the two texts, and that the compilation of ASC's *forþferan*-type entries resulted from a process (or processes) carried out after P was written. Further, I will suggest that the *forþferan*-type entries originated in a text (or texts) separate from P, and that ASC's authors combined entries from P, the *forþferan* source(s), and, possibly, other Alfredian texts to produce their Common Stock archetype.

---

100. Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 109–10.
101. Bately, 'Compilation', p. 110.
102. Bately also noted that 'separate authorship does not, of course, necessarily mean chronologically distinct acts of compilation', in 'Compilation, Once More', 7.

1.2 Review of ASC's *forþferan*-type entries to the 890s

The term *forþferan* first appears in ASC at A.D. 63 and 101 in a section of annals dealing with world history.[103] It is not until annal 534 that *forþferan* predominates in the Chronicle (with *wearð/wæs ofslagen* used for killing or murder), continuing to the ninth century where it overlaps with the *gefaran* entries. Some sources behind the *forþferan*-type annals are known, such as Bede's *Epitome*, while others are less certain, and may include ecclesiastical texts, annalistic collections from individual Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, regnal lists, Easter tables, and more.[104]

A number of studies have dealt with ASC's *forþferan*-type entries. For example, Cecily Clark wrote concerning ASC's earlier sections that,

> Adjectives are sparse, and adverbs rare or... absent; nor is there any complexity of syntax, just a chain of simple sentences rendering a series of simple propositions. Furthermore, with the events noted all falling within a narrow range, vocabulary and phrasing are correspondingly restricted, annal after annal using the same semi-formulaic language.[105]

In another study which considered 'the role of repetitious and limited language within the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle project',[106] and of 'the formulaic use of *forþferan* above other verbs with similar meanings' in particular,[107] Jacqueline Stodnick wrote,

> the fact that regnal, episcopal, and papal succession are not distinguished by distinctive phraseology sets English history, as represented by the sequence of Anglo-Saxon kings and ecclesiastical dignitaries, firmly within Roman Christianity, as represented by the succession of popes. In this way the deliberately limited phraseology for recording succession seems to function as part of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's general objective to incorporate the English within

---

103. I note that in this World History section of ASC (to the 180s), and most unusually for the Common Stock annals, several different verbs used for 'die', including *sweltan*, *þrowian*, and *oftorfian*. See Stodnick, 'Sentence to Story', p. 99.
104. Bately, 'World History', 1988, p. 39; Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 177.
105. Cecily Clark, 'The Narrative Mode of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Before the Conquest', in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. Peter Clemoes, and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971) 215–35, p. 216.
106. Stodnick, 'Sentence to Story', p. 95.
107. Stodnick, 'Sentence to Story', p. 100

> Christian history — manifest, for instance, in the inclusion of the Genealogical Preface from Christ's birth, the partial record of scriptural history given in the World History annals, as well as the decision to use *anno domini* dating. What is achieved at one level of the record by means of ordering and inclusion is therefore reinforced linguistically by the rigorous use of formulaic language, which serves to unify and suggest affinities between disparate material.[108]

This formulaic use of *forþferan* continues from the fifth century throughout the Common Stock, giving further evidence of continuity to this material in its entirety. Also interspersed throughout ASC are some 20 genealogies, half of which are West Saxon, 'including the last and longest of them, Æthelwulf's 855 genealogy'.[109] Thomas Bredehoft concluded 'the prominence of the West Saxon genealogies in the Common Stock thus asserts the depth of the Common Stock's politically motivated interest in Alfred's West Saxon rule'.[110]

2. Dating the compilation of ASC's *forþferan*-type entries

The task of compiling the *forþferan*-type entries in the form in which they appear in ASC — gathering sources, selecting suitable texts, translating into the vernacular, calculating A.D. dates from a variety of dating systems, and bringing it all together as a unified whole — was a feat of considerable scholarship demanding attention of a person (or persons) with the requisite skills, time and resources to carry it out. I suggest that, when taken together, the evidence for a secular pan-Anglo-Saxon text which: (1) sets English history 'firmly within Roman Christianity', (2) reveals a 'politically motivated interest in Alfred's West Saxon rule', (3) was produced by highly competent scholars, and (4) uses recurring formulaic phrases continuing to the end of the Common Stock archetype, points to a compilation produced during

108. Stodnick, 'Sentence to Story', pp. 102–3.
109. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, p. 33.
110. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, p. 33.

Alfred's reign.[111] If this is a viable conclusion, it remains to consider when during that reign (871–899) it was likely written and its possible relationship to P.

In 871 Alfred inherited a kingdom in crisis. His first seven years in power were consumed by war and survival. It is questionable whether any serious academic project would have been carried out in Wessex before Guthrum's defeat at Edington in 878. The high level of scholarship required to produce a work as challenging as the *forþferan*-type entries represents suggests a mid- to late-880s date at the earliest, when scholars from Britain and the Continent joined Alfred's court to pursue his ambitious programme of educational and spiritual renewal.[112] Such a compilation, therefore, seems likely to have been produced after P was written. If this is correct, then a decade or more probably separates P from ASC's *forþferan*-type annals in the form they appear in the Chronicle.

It remains to consider, then, whether *forþferan*-type entries were added to P to produce the Common Stock, or whether they originated separate from P, as a text written with a different purpose and for a wider audience than P.

2.1 ASC's 880s section

Did P serve as the basis of a new national Chronicle project in the years soon after 878? ASC's annal 878 is followed by 879, which reads,

> Her for se here to Cirenceastre of Cippanhamme 7 sæt þær an gear. 7 þy geare gegadrode on hloþ wicenga 7 gesæt æt Fullanhamme be Temese. 7 þy ilcan geare aþiestrode sio sunne ane tid dæges.[113]
>
> In this year the army went from Chippenham to Cirencester, and stayed there for one year. And the same year a band of vikings assembled and encamped at Fulham by the Thames. And the same year there was an eclipse of the sun for one hour of the day.

---

111. Thomas Bredehoft wrote, 'the Common Stock embodies a clear narrative structure, one designed to culminate, as it in fact does, with the rule of Alfred himself' in *Textual Histories*, p. 38.
112. See Alfred's introduction to Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, translated in Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 125. See also Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 225, and Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 75.
113. Bately, *MS A*, p. 51.

Annal 879 may be divided into three parts. The first reports on Guthrum's army and so carries forward the narrative of the previous annal. The second introduces a new Scandinavian force to the Chronicle, described as a *hloþ wicenga*, 'band of vikings', which in 878 set up a temporary base at Fulham (and, according to annal 880 returned to the Continent in late 879). The third part tells of an eclipse such as are commonly recorded throughout the Chronicle.

Parts one and three of annal 879 might arguably, given their subject matter, have been added to P in 879 or shortly thereafter. Part two presents a difficulty, however, with its report of the *hloþ wicenga* encamped at Fulham. The term *wicenga* is very rare in ASC — this is its first occurrence. It is used again in annal 885.[114] From 879 to 892 the movements of the *hloþ wicenga* on the Continent are followed in some detail. Peter Sawyer observed that any number of Scandinavian forces would have been active in and around the British Isles at the time, which led him to ask what in particular about this specific 'army' merited inclusion at this point in the Chronicle. Noting this same force would return in 892 to attack England and engage Alfred in a conflict lasting several years, Sawyer suggested that the *hloð wicenga* at Fulham in 879 would have only been of interest to an Anglo-Saxon audience *after* the 892 invasion. He concluded therefore that annal 879 likely belongs to a set of annals originally extending to 892 at least.[115] This suggestion may find further support in the fact that though much of the Fulham army's activities in the 880s took place on the Continent, they are recorded in ASC — a feature without precedent in the rest of the Chronicle.[116] If Sawyer is correct and the notice concerning the *hloð wicenga* in 879 belongs to a text which originally extended to 892, then several years separate

---

114. Dumville wrote, 'after the First Viking Age, the terminology found in "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" for military forces becomes more complex in its usage. The rare employment of *wicing(as)*, "pirates" (Plummer 1892/9, vol. 1:415), in annals 879, 885 and 917A is a further aspect of this', in 'Vikings in Insular Chronicling', in *The Viking World* (London: Routledge, 2008) 350–367, 355.

115. Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, p. 19.

116. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 137. Davis, 'Propaganda', p. 174; Meaney, 'St. Neots', p. 209. Bately also observed that 'annals 882, 883, and 884 resemble the annals that follow in their use of *up on*(*long*),' in 'Compilation', p. 110, n. 3.

the writing of P from the compilation of the section of annals (879–892) which follows from P in ASC.

2.2 The Common Stock's *forþferan* entries

Given the evidence concerning ASC's *forþferan*-type entries to the end of the ninth century, I suggest that:

1. P and the *forþferan*-type entries were written by different authors for different audiences and served different purposes.
2. The subject matter of ASC's *forþferan*-type entries is suited to a wider audience than P.
3. The *forþferan*-type entries, as compiled in ASC, were likely written a decade or more after P.
4. The additional P-type entries in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* not found in ASC may be seen to indicate that the Common Stock authors did not include all of P's texts in their archetype.
5. And, finally, P was not simply added to so as to create the Common Stock archetype, but was instead one of the sources used by the authors of that text.

Evidence related to one Latin work with ASC-related entries may suggest that the *forþferan*-type entries once circulated as a text in their own right. It is the *Annals of St Neots*.

3. The *Annals of St Neots*

SN's ASC-related entries have influenced Chronicle studies for over a century.[117] On the basis of *SN*'s evidence Plummer concluded that the Common Stock archetype of

---

[117] Thomas Gale published an edition of *SN* containing many errors in 1691. Hart noted that Stevenson, in his 1904 edition of Asser's *Life of Alfred*, had 'printed those parts not dependent on a known primary source', resulting in a text which was, 'fairly reliable, but it reproduces less than half the manuscript' and so was not 'definitive, nor was it ever intended to be', in 'East Anglian Chronicle', p. 250. Dumville and Lapidge published their full edition of *SN* in 1983.

the vernacular versions (*æ*) was an imperfect copy of an earlier and more accurate version of the same text. He named this hypothetical original archetype *Æ*.[118] The variation between *SN* and the vernacular versions of the Chronicle, he argued, indicated that *SN*'s compilers used a version of *Æ* rather than *æ* or any of its error-ridden descendants. Given the possibility suggested above that the *forþferan*-type entries may have originated as a set of annals separate from P, however, I now consider whether *SN*'s ASC-related texts might reflect this earlier, more limited source, rather than the Common Stock of the Chronicle in its final form.

3.1 *SN*'s ASC-related entries (to 851)

Compared to a full version of the Chronicle, *SN*'s ASC-related entries are limited in number and offer 'a rather slender textual basis from which to recreate a picture of the source-text'.[119] Dumville and Lapidge list the following annals as possibly or certainly containing material derived from ASC: 455, 488, 495, 519, 534, 560, 565, 591, 597, 611, 616, 633, 634, 636, 642, 644, 654, 655, 664, 672, 673, 674, 676, 679, 680, 703, 705, 709, 714, 726, 729, 731, 734, 740, 756, 757, 786, 789, 794, 796, 799, 802, 816, 825, 827, 839, 842, 877, 878, 879, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, and 895.[120]

The table below contains all of *SN*'s ASC-related entries to annal 842, after which *SN* picks ups with Asser's *Life of Alfred* to annal 887.[121]

Annals of St Neots	**Anglo-Saxon Chronicle**
455. bellum apud Cantiam, in loco qui dicitur Aegelesthrep, contra Bryttones et regem Brittonum Guirthegirnum in quo cecidit Horsa; et frater eius Hencgistus regnum suscepit — cum filio Oisc — apud Cantuarios.	455. Her Hengest 7 Horsa fuhton wiþ Wyrtgeorne þam cyninge, in þære stowe þe is gecueden Agęlesþrep, 7 his broþur Horsan man ofslog; 7 æfter þam Hengest feng to rice 7 Æsc his sunu.
488. Oisc filius Hencgisti cepit regnare super Cantuarios, et regnauit .xxiiii. annis.	488. Her Æsc feng to rice 7 was .xxiiii. wintra Cantwara cyning.

118. Earle and Plummer, II, p. civ.
119. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xxxii. Bately agreed, writing, '[t]he precise relationship of the *Annals of St Neots* (to 891) to the other texts is impossible to define, since the compiler made use of very few passages from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *TTR*, p. 61.
120. This list continues to the end of the ninth century only, approximating ASC's Common Stock.
121. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, pp. lxvii-lxx, and xxxiv. Only the ASC-related portion of any given annal is presented here.

495. uenere in Brittanniam duo duces, uidelicet Cęrdic et Kynricus filius eius, cum .v. nauibus in loco qui dicitur Cęrdicesora, et statim die eodem pugnauerunt cum Bryttonibus et acceperunt uictoriam.	495. Her cuomon twegen aldormen on Bretene, Cerdic 7 Cynric his sunu, mid .v. scipum in þone stede þe is gecueden Cerdicesora 7 þy ilcan dæge gefuhtun wiþ Walum.
519. Regnauit Cęrdic rex .i^{mus}. Occidentalium Saxonum annis .xv.	519. Her Cerdic 7 Cynric rice onfengan, 7 þy ilcan geare hie gefuhtan wiþ Bryttas þær man nemneþ Cerdicesford
534. Kynricus annis .xxvii..	534. Her Cerdic forþferde, 7 Cynric his sunu ricsode forþ .xxvi. wintra; 7 hie saldon hiera tuæm nefum Stufe 7 Wihtgare eall Wiehte ealond.
560. Ceaulin annis .xvii.	560. Her Ceawlin feng to rice on Wesseaxum, 7 Ęlle feng to Norþanhymbra rice 7 heold .xxx.wintra.
565. Anno eodem Æthelbrihtus rex Cantuariorum regnum optinuit, et gubernauit annis .liii.	565. Her feng Æðelbriht to Cantwara rice 7 heold .liii. wintra. [*MS E only*]
591. Ceol annis .vi.	591. Her Ceolric ricsode .v. gear.
597. Ceoluulfus annis .xiiii.	597. Her ongon Ceolwulf ricsian on Wesseaxum, 7 simle he feaht 7 won, oþþe wiþ Angelcyn, oþþe uuiþ Walas, oþþe wiþ Peohtas, oþþe wiþ Scottas; se wæs Cuþaing.
611. Kynegylsus rex Occidentalium Saxonum primus christianus regnauit annis .xxxi. Baptizatus est apud Dorcaçęstram a sancto Byrino episcopo, suscepitque eum de sacro fonte sanctus Osuualdus Nordanimbrorum rex.	611. Her Cynegils feng to rice on Wesseaxum 7 heold .xxxi. wintra. (635. Her Cynegils wæs gefulwad from Birino þæm biscep in Dorkeceastre, 7 Oswold his onfeng.)
616. sanctus Æthelbryhtus rex Cantuariorum migrauit ad Christum.	616. Her Ęþelbryht Contwara cyning forþferde...
633. Eduuinus Nordanhymbrorum rex occisus est.	633. Her Edwine wæs ofslægen...
634. sanctus Byrinus episcopus predicauit Occidentales Saxones.	634. Her Birinus biscep bodude West Seaxum fulwuht.
636. predicauit apud Orientales Anglos sanctus Felix episcopus.	636. Felix biscep bodade East Englum Cristes geleafan.
642. Koenuualch regnauit .xxxi. annis. Anno primo regni sui occisus est sanctus rex Osuualdus.	642. Her Oswald Norþanhymbra cyning ofslægen wæs. (MS A 643. Her Cenwalh feng to Wesseaxna rice 7 heold .xxxi. Wintra)
644. Sanctus episcopus Paulinus quondam Eboraci archipresul, sed tunc Rofensis antistes, migrauit ad Dominum.	644. Her Paulinus forþferde se was ærcebiscep on Eoforwicceastre 7 eft on Hrofesceastre.
654. Anna, rex Orientalium Anglorum, a Penda regem Merciorum occisus est; et sanctus Botulfus abbas fabricauit monasterium apud Ycanhó.	654. Her Onna cyning wearþ ofslægen, 7 Botulf ongon mynster timbran æt Icanho.
655. Penda periit, et Merci facti sunt christiani.	655. Her Penda forwearþ, 7 Mierce wurdon Cristne.
664. Et anno eadem sanctus Deusdedit archiepiscopus transiit.	664. 7 þy ilcan geare Deusdedit forþferde.
672. Sexburch regina ipsius Koenuualchi regnauit annum unum.	672. Her forþferde Cenwalh 7 Seaxburg an gear ricsode his cuen æfter him.
673. sancta uirgo Christi Ætheldritha et regina cepit ędificare monasterium apud Elig.	673. Sancte Ęþeldryht ongon þæt mynstær æt Elige.

674. Æscuuine annis .ii. regnauit.	674. Her feng Æscwine to rice on Wesseaxum...
676. Kentuuine regnauit annis .ix.	676. 7 Centwine feng to rice...
679. sancta regina et uirga Christi Ætheldrytha migrauit ad Dominum.	679. ...7 Sancte Ęþelþryþ forþferde.
680. sancta Hilda abbatissa obiit apud Streanesheala.	680. ...7 þy geare forþferde Hild abbodesse on Streonesheale.
703. sanctus Hedda episcopus transiit.	703. Her Hedde biscep forþferde...
705. obiit Sexuulfus episcopus, fundator monasterii apud Medeshamstede quod Burh uocatur. Anno eodem obiit Aldfridus monachus, olim rex Nordanhymbrorum.	705. Her Aldferþ Norþanhymbra cyning forþferde 7 Seaxuulf biscep.
709. sanctus Aldhelmus episcopus transiit. Anno eodem rex Merciorum Kenred, cum rege Orientalium Saxonum Offa, perrexit ad Romam. Ibi ambo attonsi monachi effecti atque ibi migrauerunt ad Dominum.	709. Her Aldhelm biscep forþferde, se wæs be westan wuda biscep; 7 wæs todęled in foreweardum Danieles dagum in tua biscepscira Westseaxna lond 7 ær hit wæs an; oþer heold Daniel, oþer Aldhelm. Æfter Aldhelme feng Forþhere to. 7 Ceolred feng to Miercna rice, 7 Coenred for to Rome 7 Offa mid him.
714. sanctus Guthlacus anachorita transiit.	714. Her forþferde Guþlac se halga.
726. hoc anno Ine rex Occidentalium Saxonum .xxxviii. anno regni sui, monasterium constructum atque dedicatum apud Glastoniam, regnum reliquit. Romam perrexit et ibi uitam presentem honorifice finiens, celestem patriam cum Christo regnaturus adiit. Cui successit in regnum Æthelherdus, regnauitque annis .xiiii.	726. þy geare gefuhton Ęþelheard 7 Oswald se ęþeling (MS A 728: Her Ine ferde to Rome.; Bede *HE* V.7: 'Qui [*sc*. Ini] cum .xxxvii. annis imperium tenuisset gentis illius, et ipse, relicto regno ac iuuenioribus commendato, ad limina..profectus est..').
729. cometa apparuit; et sanctus Egbrychtus transiit.	729. Her cometa se steorra hiene oþiewde, 7 Sanctus Ecgbryht forþferde.
731. Ceoluulfus rex Nordanhymbrorum cepit regnare — et regnauit annis . vii.	731. ...7 feng Ceoluulf to þam rice, 7 heold .viii. gear...
734. Eodem anno migrauerunt ad Dominum sanctus TATVVinus archiepiscopus Dorobernie et sanctus BEDA uenerabilis presbyter.	734. ...7 ferdon forþ Tatwine 7 Bieda.
740. Cuthred rex regnauit annis .xvi.	*740. ...7 feng Cuþręd to Wesseaxna rice.
756. Sigebrychtus regnauit annum unum.	*756. Her Cuþred forþferde... 7 Sigebryht feng to Wesseaxna rice 7 heold an gear.
757. Kyneuulfus regnauit annis .xxix.	*757. Her Cynewulf benam Sigebryht his rices...
786. Brichtricus rex Occidentalium Saxonum regnauit annis .xvi.	*786. ...þa onfeng Beorhtric Wesseaxna rices, 7 he ricsode .xvi. gear...
789. hoc anno Brychtricus rex accepit Eadburgam filiam Offæ regis Merciorum in matrimonium. Et eo etiam tempore primum .iii. naues Normannorum, 'id est Danorum', applicuerunt in insula quę dicitur Portland.	*789. Her nom Beorhtric cyning Offan dohtor Eadburge. 7 on his dagum cuomon ærest .iii. scipu, 7 þa se gerefa þærto rad 7 hie wolde drifan to þæs cyninges tune þy he nyste hwæt hie wæron, 7 hiene mon ofslog. Þæt wæron þa ærestan scipu deniscra monna þe Angelcynnes lond gesohton.
794. sanctus AETHELBRIHTVS Orientalium Anglorum rex innocenter sub pacis federe occisus est ab Offa rege Merciorum perfidissimo.	*794. Her Offa Miercna cyning het Ęþelbryhte rex þæt heafod ofaslean.

796. Adrianus papa obiit. Eodem anno Offa perfidus rex Merciorum obiit, anno .xxxix. regni sui. Regnauitque Ecgfridus filius ipsius post illum diebus centum quadraginta uno.	*796. Her Adrianus papa 7 Offa cyning forþferdon; 7 Ęþelred Norþanhymbra cyning wæs ofslægen from his agenre þeode; 7 Ceolwulf biscep 7 Eadbald biscep of þæm londe aforon...
799. sanctus Leo papa a Romanis de sede sua est expulsus et oculis euulsis ac lingua prȩcisa; sed Deo iuuante uisum recepit et loquelam sed et sedem propriam.	*799. Her Romane Leone þæm papan his tungon forcurfon 7 his eagan astungon 7 hine of his setle afliemdon, 7 þa sona eft Gode fultomiendum he meahte geseon 7 sprecan 7 eft was papa swa he ær wæs.
802. Ecgbrychtus rex Occidentalium Saxonum regnauit annis .xxxvii., mensibus .vii.	*802. ...7 Ecgbryht feng to Wesseaxna rice.
816. dompnus papa Leo migrauit ad Dominum.	*816. Her Leo se ęþela papa 7 se halga forþferde, 7 æfter him Stephanus feng to rice.
825. Beornulfus rex Merciorum in bello occiditur ab Orientalibus Anglis.	*825. þy geare slogon Eastengle Beornwulf Miercna cyning.
827. Ludecan Merciorum rex, dum suum praedecessorem atgue propinguum ulcisci uellet, ab eisdem Eastanglis occiditur, ‘et’ .v. Comites cum eo.	*827. Her Ludecan Miercna cyning 7 his .v. aldormen mon ofslog mid him, 7 Wiiglaf feng to rice.
839. mortuo Ecgbrychto rege nobili, regnauit Adheluulfus rex Ocidentalium Saxonum filius eius pro eo, regnauitque annos .xviii. et dimidium.	*839. Her Ecgbryht cyning forþferde…feng Ęþelwulf Ecgbrehting to Wesseaxna rice.
842. ipso anno bellum contra paganos Nordmannos apud Lundoniam, et item apud Quantauuic, et rursum apud Hrofescestram.	*842. Her wæs micel wæsliht on Lundenne 7 on Cwantawic 7 on Hrofesceastre.

3.2 *SN*’s use of source texts

Before comparing *SN* with ASC, I note first what appears a consistent feature on the part of *SN*’s compiler as he incorporated entries from the various sources into his compilation. Dumville wrote,

> As far as we can judge, extreme fidelity to the wording of his sources seems to have been an abiding principle of the Compiler’s activity. Often we are hampered in pressing a firm conclusion on this point by our ignorance of the detail of the text-history of source-texts. Such alterations as seem certain to be the Compiler’s own are restricted to adapting the source to its immediate context and in rewording to effect smooth joins between excerpts from the same source. Occasionally, verbal bridges are built between different sources... In general, the Compiler appears as an accurate user of his sources.[122]

122. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. lxiv.

Stevenson had, in 1904, made a similar observation, though he was far more critical of the approach. Of the compiler he wrote, '[h]e commences his work abruptly by an extract from Beda without explaining the object of his work. A lack of literary feeling on the part of the compiler is revealed throughout the compilation. He displays so little intelligence in piecing together his extracts that he transcribes passages in which the authors of the matter conveyed by him refer to themselves or their times, and, as he does not mention the sources whence he derived the passages, he thus makes himself the witness of events that happened many centuries before his birth'.[123]

An example of this 'extreme fidelity to the wording of his sources' may be seen in the following excerpt from Bede *HE*, 3.19 in which the compiler (left-hand column) copied his source (centre) verbatim, thus making himself appear as a member of the monastery at Jarrow and contemporary of a seventh century monk (a translation of Bede is to the right).[124]

***SN* 651**	**Bede 3, 19**	**Bede 3, 19 (Keynes/Lapidge)**
Superest adhuc frater quidam senior monasterii nostri..	Superest adhuc frater quidam senior monasterii nostri..	An aged brother is still living in our monastery..

Similar examples are found in Asser's *Life of Alfred*.[125]

***SN* 855**	**Asser 13, 32**	**Asser 13, 32 (Keynes/Lapidge)**
Quod a domino meo Aelfredo, Angulo-saxonum rege ueridico, etiam sepe michi referente audiui..	Quod a domino meo Ælfredo, Angul-saxonum rege veredico, etiam saepe mihi referente, audivi..	I have heard the explanation from my lord the truthful Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, who still often tells me about it..

***SN* 871**	**Asser 37, 13**	**Asser 37, 13 (Keynes/Lapidge)**
Sed Aelfredus citius et promptius cum sius, sicut ab his, qui uiderunt, ueredicis referentibus audiuimus, ad locum prelii aduenit.	Sed Ælfred citius et promptius cum sius, sicut ab his, qui viderunt, veredicis referentibus audivimus, ad locum proelii advenit..	But as I have heard from truthful authorities who saw it, Alfred and his men reached the battlefield sooner and in better order..

123. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 98.
124. The Latin texts of Asser's *Life* are from Stevenson, *Asser*. The translation of Bede is from Bertram Colgrave, and R. A. B. Mynors, eds. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p, 275.
125. The Latin texts of Asser's *Life of Alfred* are from Stevenson, *Asser*. English translations of the *Life* are from Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*.

SN 871	Asser 39, 6	Asser 39, 6 (translation)
Erat quoque in eodem loco unica spinosa arbor, breuis admodum, quam nos ipsi nostris propriis oculis uidimus, circa quam ergo hostiles inter se acies..	Erat quoque in eodem loco unica spinosa arbor, brevis admodum, quam nos ipsi nostris propriis oculis vidimus, circa quam ergo hostiles inter se acies..	A rather small and solitary thorn-tree (which I have seen for myself with my own eyes) grew there, around which the opposing armies clashed violently..

Not only in these examples, however, but wherever *SN*'s text may be compared to an original source the near-slavish nature by which the *SN* compiler transcribed his texts is revealed. Despite an obvious disdain for the practice, Stevenson admitted that '[a]s the compiler adhered very closely to his MS., apart from the alterations necessitated by the plan of his work, his evidence is important'.[126]

3.3 Signficant features in *SN*'s ASC-related entries

A number of features in *SN*'s ASC-related entries have caused scholars to suggest that *SN*'s source may have been earlier and more accurate than the Common Stock archetype behind the vernacular version.[127] According to Dumville, there are,

> three features which suggest that the Compiler's source may have been textually nearer to the original than any surviving copy of the *Chronicle*. At 642 and 672 the form *Koenuualch* is older than the *Cenwalh* of all the vernacular texts and it is difficult to see from what other source the Compiler could have drawn this. His annal for 642 provides further possible evidence. It reads as follows: 'Anno Christi .dcxlii. Koenuualch regnauit .xxxi. annis. Anno primo regni sui occisus est sanctus rex Osuualdus.' This may be an indication that the source preserved the hypothetically original union of these entries which became separated in the course of the Chronicle's text-history. And thirdly, there is the question of the Annals' lack of chronological dislocation in the years 756–842.[128]

Similarly, Stevenson wrote, '[t]hat the copy from which the Latin was translated was an ancient one is proved by the reproduction of the old spelling

---

126. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. lviii.
127. See Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 106; Meaney, 'St. Neots', p. 201; Bately, *TTR,* p. 31; Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xxxv; Kenneth Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History, to a.d. 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 133. Bately notes that 'the Annals of St Neots... is usually free from any errors that may have arisen in the course of transmission [of any vernacular version]', in *TTR*, p. 41.
128. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xxxv.

Koenuualch in 642 and 672, where the existing copies have the later form *Cen-*. In like manner the early form *Oisc* occurs under 455, as in Beda, for which the extant MSS. of the Chronicle have wrongly substituted *Æsc*, which was more intelligible to the copyists... It would therefore seem that, as with the Life, the MS. of the Chronicle used by the compiler was nearer to the original than any extant copy'.[129] The question of the source of *SN*'s *Oisc* remains unresolved.[130] It was, however, *SN*'s lack of ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation which led Plummer to conclude that *æ* was an imperfect copy of an earlier and more accurate version of the same text. He wrote,

> the fact that [the chronological dislocation] runs though all our Chronicles shows that it must already have existed in the common original from which they all in this part ultimately spring. But the mistake was due to a copyist, and not to the original compiler of this part of the Chronicle. The proof of this lies in the fact that we have evidence of the existence of a Chronicle in which this dislocation had not taken place. This evidence is to be found in the so-called... Annals of St. Neot.[131]

This is Plummer's first reference of any substance to *SN*, and it comes very late in the introduction to his 1899 edition of ASC. Concerning *SN*'s ASC-related annals, Plummer concluded that they,

> are of great importance for the criticism of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; for, while founded largely on that Chronicle, they have preserved the true chronology, which in all our MSS. is disjointed... It follows therefore that behind the MS. æ, the common ancestor of all our Chronicles up to 892, we discern another MS. Æ, extending to the same date, the autograph of the writer who compiled the Chronicle up to that point.[132]

He summarised his theory as follows,

> Starting from the autograph of the original Chronicle up to 892, Æ, we have seen that all our MSS. ultimately come from a transcript, æ, extending to the same point, but faulty in having a dislocated chronology caused by the inadvertence of the scribe. That at least one other transcript existed in which

---

129. Stevenson, *Asser*, pp. 105–6.
130. For the case against Bede as the source in this instance, see Harrison, *Framework*, p. 133. Bately, however, argued for the link with Bede, in *TTR*, pp. 31–32.
131. Earle and Plummer, II, p. ciii.
132. Earle and Plummer, II, pp. ciii–civ.

> this error did not occur, is proved by the fact that the correct chronology is found in the Annals of St. Neot, though they are evidently derived ultimately from the Saxon Chronicle.[133]

A question to consider, however, is this: how do we know the *SN* compiler drew his annals from ASC? The fact that two works share material does not require one to have copied the other. It is also possible that both drew from the same source — an alternative apparently not considered by Plummer. If *SN* is indeed based on ASC, then, given the *SN* compiler's careful use of his sources it seems reasonable to expect *SN*'s texts would fairly closely follow the wording and structure of the vernacular versions. A comparison of *SN* and ASC, however, reveals this is often not the case.

3.4 Comparing *SN* with ASC

At annal 455, the *SN* compiler introduces a new source to his work with entries dealing primarily with Anglo-Saxon events. Annal 455 reads in the two versions:[134]

***SN* 455**	**MS A 455**
bellum apud Cantiam, in loco qui dicitur Aegelesthrep, contra Bryttones et regem Brittonum Guirthegirnum in quo cecidit Horsa; et frater eius Hencgistus regnum suscepit — cum filio Oisc — apud Cantuarios.	Her Hengest 7 Horsa fuhton wiþ Wyrtgeorne þam cyninge, in þære stowe þe is gecueden Agęlesþrep, 7 his broþur Horsan man ofslog; 7 æfter þam Hengest feng to rice 7 Æsc his sunu.
war in Kent, in the place which is called Ægelesthrep, against the Britons and the British King Guirthegirn, in which Horsa was killed, after which his brother, Hengest, and his son Oisc, succeeded to the kingdom of Kent.	In this year Hengest and Horsa fought against King Vortigern at the place which is called Ægelesthrep, and his brother Horsa was killed there; and after that Hengest and his son Æsc succeeded to the kingdom.

At first glance these texts appear quite similar, for they report the same events. A more careful reading, however, reveals several points of variation, which are at times significant. I note the following:

1. *SN*'s opening *bellum apud Cantiam* has no equivalent in ASC.

---

133. Earle and Plummer, II, p. cxvii.
134. Contrast *SN* 455 with the version in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* which is much closer to that in ASC. Æthelweard's version reads, *Anno in sexto post, inierunt bellum Hengest et Horsa contra Vuirthgernum in campo Egelesthrip. Ibi interficitur Horsa, et Hengest cepit regnum,* 'In the sixth year after that, Hengest and Horsa opened hostility against Vortigern on the field of Aylesford[?]. There Horsa was killed, and Hengest began to rule'.

2. ASC's opening phrase *Hengest 7 Horsa* is missing from *SN*.[135]
3. *SN*'s *contra Bryttones et regem Brittonum Guirthegirnum*, describing 'the Britons' as combatants and Vortigern as 'the British king' is different from ASC's *fuhton wiþ Wyrtgeorne þam cyninge*, in which Vortigern is 'king' but not 'of the Britons' and 'Britons' are not named as participating in the battle.
4. *SN*'s spelling of *Guirthegirnum* for Vortigern is unique to all manuscript traditions.
5. *SN* gives Horsa as the brother of Hengist — reversing the order in ASC.
6. *SN* describes Hengist and *Oisc*'s royal succession as *apud Cantuarios*, while in ASC they *feng to rice*.
7. *SN*'s *Oisc* is an older and more accurate form of this name than ASC's *Æsc*.

What caused this variation? Did the *SN* compiler struggle to render his Old English text into Latin? If so, then he invented the opening line, *bellum apud Cantiam*, and changed much of the rest of the annal, thus breaking with his otherwise consistent practice of carefully copying from his source texts.[136] David Dumville observed what may be a significant palaeographical feature at this point in the *SN* manuscript. *SN* 449 is a direct quote from Bede. It is followed by annal 450, a text from the Norman Annals, concerning the reign of Childeric, the father of the first Christian Merovingian king, Clovis. Dumville noted that,[137]

> After the annal for 450 had been written, scribe 1 followed with that for 473, drawn from the same text (the Norman Annals). However, this annal for 473 was crossed out, and an annal for 455 (from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) immediately supplied instead. The Norman Annals were then returned to for

---

135. The phrase *Hengist and Horsa* is also used in Bede and Æthelweard's *Chronicon*.
136. Contrast *SN* 455 with Æthelweard's version of the same annal. It reads: *Anno in sexto post, inierunt bellum Hengest et Horsa contra Vuirthgernum in campo Egelesthrip. Ibi interficitur Horsa, et Hengest cepit regnum,* 'In the sixth year after that, Hengest and Horsa opened hostility against Vortigern on the field of Aylesford[?]. There Horsa was killed, and Hengest began to rule'.
137. Scholars recognise two hands in the composition of *St Neots*. Scribe 1 wrote from the beginning of the manuscript to p. 18 (the middle of the long annal 705). From p. 19, scribe 2 took over and carried on to the end. For a full description of the manuscript, see Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xv.

> the 473-annal, but this time it was entered with a different introductory formula in order to express its relationship to the contents of the annal for 455. The only satisfactory explanation of this feature is that the scribe was a Compiler who had forgotten to check his other main source before proceeding to incorporate the next annal from the source he had just used.[138]

This resulted in a crossed-out line of text in this section of *SN*, which would have appeared as follows:

> [449] Anno Domini .ccccxlix. Marcianus cum Valentiniano imperium suscipiens .vii. annis tenuit, quorum tempore Angli a Brytonibus accersiti Bryttanniam adierunt.
>
> [450] Anno Christi .ccclv. Childericus .iiii^{tus}. rex Francorum.
>
> ~~[473] Anno Christi .cccclxxiii. Clodoueus .v^{tus}. rex Francorum.~~
>
> [455] Anno .ccclv.: bellum apud Cantiam, in loco qui dicitur Aegelesthrep, contra Bryttones et regem Brittonum Guirthegirnum in quo cecidit Horsa; et frater eius Hencgistus regnum suscepit — cum filio Oisc — apud Cantuarios.
>
> [473] Eo tempore, anno .cccclxxiii. Clodoueus .v^{tus}. rex Francorum.

Could it be that the 'other main source', which the *SN* compiler 'had forgotten to consult', was a new source which opened with annals starting in the mid-fifth century? If so, then perhaps the awkward opening in *SN* 455 reflects the original link back to the previous annal 449 in that source. In ASC the first half of 449 is similar to the first half of *BEp* 449, and seems likely to have been based on that text. MS A 449 begins,

> Her Mauricius 7 Ualentines onfengon rice 7 ricsodon .vii. winter.
>
> In this year Mauritius and Valentinus succeeded to the throne and ruled for seven years.

Similarly, *BEp* 449 opens with,

> Marcianus cum Valentiniano imperium suscipiens .vii. annis tenuit.
>
> Marcianus and Valentinianus ruled as co-emperors for seven years.

However, *BEp* 449 continues,

> quorum tempore Angli a Brytonibus accersiti Bryttanniam adierunt.

---

138. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xvii.

> In their time the English came to Britain on the invitation of the Britons.

At this point, ASC 449 diverges from *BEp*, offering a more detailed account of Hengest and Horsa's arrival in Kent. MS A 449 continues,

> On hiera dagum Hengest 7 Horsa from Wyrtgeorne geleaþade Bretta kyninge gesohton Bretene on þam staþe þe is genemned Ypwinesfleot, ærest Brettum to fultume, ac hie eft on hie fuhton.
>
> In their days Hengest and Horsa, invited by Vortigern, king of the Britons, came to Britain at the place which is called Ebbsfleet, first to the help of the Britons, but afterwards fought against them.

In *BEp* annal 449 is followed by 538, whereas in ASC annal 449 is followed by 455, which carries forward the narrative of ASC's alternative conclusion to *BEp* 449. MS A 455 reads,

> Her Hengest 7 Horsa fuhton wiþ Wyrtgeorne þam cyninge, in þære stowe þe is gecueden Agęlesþrep,
>
> In this year Hengest and Horsa fought against King Vortigern at the place which is called Ægelesthrep.

In response to this problem, I propose that *SN* 455 may reflect the original source behind both ASC and *SN*. According to this hypothesis, having copied the whole of *BEp* 449 (the beginning of which was the same as the beginning of annal 449 in his new Anglo-Saxon source), the *SN* compiler then copied the two texts from the Norman Annals for 450 and 473. Turning to his new Anglo-Saxon source, the *SN* compiler realised that its next annal was 455, and that the second half of annal 449 in this version was different to the text he copied from *BEp*. To fully correct this error would require either replacing the entire folio or crossing out several lines of text. The compiler chose, instead, to cross out only the 473 Norman Annal entry and, while keeping to his principle of copying from his sources with great care, then added a close translation of the text of 455 from his new source beneath the line of crossed out text. This would have broken the original link between 449 and 455 in his new Anglo-Saxon source, resulting in the awkward beginning to *SN*'s version of

annal 455. The variation between *SN* and ASC 455 is thus explained if both are seen as sharing the same source, with ASC's authors innovating with its text while the *SN* compiler remained faithful to the original wording. Whatever the case, however, I note that *SN* 455 does not require us to conclude that the *SN* compiler drew this annal from ASC.

SN and ASC share two other fifth-century annals, at 488 and 495. They read:

***SN* 488**	**MS A 488**
Oisc filius Hencgisti cepit regnare super Cantuarios, et regnauit .xxiiii. annis.	Her Æsc feng to rice 7 was .xxiiii. wintra Cantwara cyning.
Oisc, the son of Hengest, succeeded to the kingdom of the people of Kent, and reigned for 24 years.	In this year Æsc succeeded to the kingdom and was king of the people of Kent for 24 years.

***SN* 495**	**MS A 495**
uenere in Brittanniam duo duces, uidelicet Cerdic et Kynricus filius eius, cum .v. nauibus in loco qui dicitur Cerdicesora, et statim die eodem pugnauerunt cum Bryttonibus et acceperunt uictoriam.	Her cuomon twegen aldormen on Bretene, Cerdic 7 Cynric his sunu, mid .v. scipum in þone stede þe is gecueden Cerdicesora 7 þy ilcan dæge gefuhtun wiþ Walum.
two chieftains came to Britain, Cerdic and his son, Kynric, with five ships, to the place which is called Cerdicesora, and they fought against the Britons on the same day and gained the victory.	In this year two chieftains, Cerdic and his son Cynric, came with five ships to Britain at the place which is called Cerdicesora, and they fought against the Britons on the same day.

In contrast to 455, annals 488 and 495 are quite similar in the two versions. *SN* 488 again uses the *Oisc* spelling, but describes him as *filius Hencgisti*, 'son of Hengist', a phrase not found in ASC. *SN* 495 concludes with the statement that Cerdic and Cynric *acceperunt uictoriam*, 'gained the victory', this phrase also missing from ASC. Though such variation might seem inconsequential, its potential significance is increased by the fact that Æthelweard's *Chronicon* shares very similar readings with *SN* in these annals against ASC.[139] The *Chronicon* reads:

> 488 Deinde triennio impleto Æsc filius Hengest coepit regnum in Cent.[140]
> 495 Percurso itaque triennio Cerdic et Cinric filius suus cum quincque carinis aduecti Brittanniam in portum qui Cerdicesoran nuncupatur in

139. E. E. Barker 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Used By Æthelweard'. *Bulletin of Historical Research* 40 (1967): 74–91, 79

140. 'Then after three years Æsc, the son of Hengest, began his reign in Kent'.

ipsa die bellum commisere Brittannos aduersus, et ipsi post in fine fuere uictores.

488 Then after three years Æsc, the son of Hengest, began his reign in Kent.

495 After the lapse of three years, Cerdic and his son Cynric, having arived in Britain with five ships at the port which is called *Cerdicesora*, joined battle against the Britons the same day, and they were victors in the end.

The possible cause of these and several other variant readings, which Æthelweard's *Chronicon* and *SN* share against ASC, are considered more fully below. Here I note simply that if ASC was indeed the source of these annals in *SN* and Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, it is surprising that both Latin authors should — working separately, at different times and in different places — make similar additions to these texts against the 'original' version.[141] Such evidence suggests that the perceived simplicity of Plummer's single source hypothesis (based on his Common Stock archetype *œ*) may, in fact, mask a rather more complex reality which exists between the related texts of the various works.

3.5 Other types of variation between *SN* and ASC

Further comparison of the shared texts in *SN* and ASC to the mid-ninth century (at which point *SN* begins copying from Asser's *Life*) reveals considerable variation between them. The variation in *SN* is not limited to a specific type, but includes spellings, additional detail, chronology, reign lengths, shorter (and possibly summarised) entries, and more. As noted above, *SN*'s spelling *Koenuualch*, at 642 and 672, is (as with the *Oisc* of 455 and 488) an older and more accurate than the *Cen-* of the vernacular and other versions.[142] Also, ASC's annals are generally longer and more detailed than their *SN* counterparts, including information about bishops, nobles, and events of lesser significance than those *SN* reports. Further, *SN* gives several reign

141. Bately attributed the variation in *SN* 495 to 'intelligent guess-work', but without explaining how Æthelweard came to share this element with *SN*, in *TTR,* p. 90, n. 278.
142. Hart, 'East Anglian Chronicle', p. 254.

lengths for West Saxon kings which are not made explicit in ASC.[143] Dumville suggested some of these may have been calculated by the compiler 'counting the annals from one accession-notice to the next'.[144] Occasionally, however, *SN*'s stated reign lengths defy ASC's chronological framework. In such cases Dumville proposed that *SN*'s compiler may have used a version of the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List (WSGRL) which disagreed with ASC. So, for example, *SN* 560, 'the most problematic in our sources',[145] gives Ceawlin a reign of seventeen years, a number not allowed by ASC's narrative, as Dumville explained,

> The clearest indication that a regnal list was used by the Compiler may be found *s.a.* 560 where the beginning of Ceawlin's reign is announced. That king is assigned a reign of seventeen years. This figure uniquely contradicts the evidence of the annalistic frame which places the accession of the next king, Ceol, *s.a.* 591. No known version of the *Chronicle* contains such a reign-length. It is to be found solely in a tightly defined and secondary group of texts of the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal list — in copies of that text, indeed, which are generally associated in their transmission with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This evidence makes it certain that the Compiler drew on the List, gives definition to the nature of the copy of the List, and suggests (although it does not prove) that he gained the List with the *Chronicle*.[146]

Noting that *SN* 611 (which apparently incorporates ASC 635) 'may also point to the use of the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List', Dumville concluded, '[t]hereafter we often find the Compiler looking back and forth through his own developing text and his sources for greater precision of contextual information and chronology'.[147] This hypothesis assumes the compiler's source of ASC-related

---

143. Dumville deals with this issue in two works, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia* 4 (1985), pp. 21–66; and *St Neots*, pp. xxviii–xxix. Regarding his use of the term 'West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List', Dumville wrote that 'Regnal lists of the kings of Wessex exist in various manifestations, and this heading is intended to include them all', in *St Neots*, p. xxviii.
144. Dumville, 'WSGRL Chronology', p. 55.
145. Dumville, 'WSGRL Chronology', p. 39.
146. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xxix.
147. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xxix.

entries was a version of ASC 'generally related to the tradition of the *Chronicle* from which A diverged'.[148]

Dumville argued that the evidence suggests ASC's authors were aware of the problems presented by certain reign lengths in WSGRL, and so 'discarded its reign-lengths when their adoption would prove embarrassing in the light of the chronology of his own annalistic framework which was evidently already in existence'. He wrote,

> We should face two difficulties in assuming that the chronology of the Chronicle was originally based on that represented by the List but was subsequently modified and corrupted. First, it would be necessary to assume that the Chronicle-archetype already embodied a whole series of chronological dislocations which rendered many of the stated reign-lengths inaccurate. (A modified version of this argument could be mounted from the Annals of St Neots but, as will appear, it is not convincing.) Secondly, on the evidence of the Annals of St Neots one would have to argue that Ceawlin was originally assigned a seventeen-year reign by the archetype; but, as the Annals of St Neots themselves constitute a major control over readings hypothesised to be archetypal, and since it is plain that their chronology does not allow Ceawlin such a relatively short reign, the hypothesis is profoundly uneconomical.

Dumville here exposes a major weakness in Plummer's theory of *Æ* as an earlier and more accurate version of the *æ* of MSS ABCDEFG, for that would require the original archetype to have 'contained for all kings reign-lengths which were subsequently lost from the other witnesses because of the chronological dislocation in their hyparchetype'.[149] In the case of Ceawlin, for example,

> We should have to suppose that the Chronicle-archetype read '17', that this was lost or discarded from the hyparchetype (the ancestor of all the surviving vernacular texts and of Æthelweard) though not before influencing a hypothetical (and rather unlikely) exclusive mutual ancestor of List-texts P and TU[150] (which ancestor's reading was therefore altered from '7' to '17', presumably after it had failed at this point — unlike at every other, on this hypothesis —

148. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. xxxvi.
149. Dumville, 'WSGRL Chronology', p. 54.
150. These *sigla* describe texts in Dumville's proposed scheme of the textual history of WSGRL.

> to influence the Chronicle-archetype), with the *Annals of St Neots* alone then transmitted the figure to posterity. To postulate, on the available evidence, such an extravagant and unlikely hypothesis would be folly.[151]

It is a valid objection and one Bately also accepted. If *SN* reflects ASC in its earliest form, then the authors of that archetype knowingly included reign lengths which were inconsistent with the chronological framework of the text they produced. For this reason Dumville rejected Plummer's theory of *Æ*. He wrote,

> We must conclude therefore that the Compiler of the Annals of St Neots inherited with his texts of the Chronicle an incomplete and to him apparently corrupt series of reign-lengths which he sought to complete and mend by the joint approaches of employing a regnal list and counting the annals from one accession-notice to the text.[152]

Dumville's alternative to Plummer's theory places the responsibility for the variation between *SN* and ASC squarely on the *SN* compiler's shoulders, including: calculating reign lengths, correcting chronological dislocations, replacing later spellings with earlier forms, condensing entries, and numerous other changes. If this is correct, then almost every revision made by the *SN* compiler resulted in an improvement over the original source, as Bately noted,

> It would appear... that the Chronicle-text which formed one of the primary sources of the *Annals of St Neots* was a direct descendent of none of the surviving manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. If it is safe to reach any conclusion at all from the very scanty evidence provided, it is that wherever these chronicle texts diverge, the *Annals of St Neots* generally agrees with whichever of them it is that preserves the reading of the original, that is to say, it is usually free from any errors that may have arisen in the course of transmission.[153]

Such a feat would indeed be remarkable for a twelfth-century compiler working in Norman England with an Old English text at least two centuries old. Perhaps too remarkable to credit. On the basis of my working hypothesis — that ASC's

---

151. Dumville, 'WSGRL Chronology', p. 55 n. 92.
152. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. 55.
153. Bately, *TTR,* p. 41.

forþferan-type entries originated in a text once separate from P — I suggest, alternatively, that *SN*'s ASC-related source was not a full Chronicle, but a limited set of annals of the *forþferan*-type, compiled in Alfred's reign and antedating the Common Stock archetype. This source probably contained the spellings *Oisc* and *Koenuualch*, was unaffected by ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation, and likely lacked the more general information about bishops and nobles found in ASC. It gave a version of Anglo-Saxon history told in a wide, sweeping narrative through the lives and deaths of kings, popes, and saints and the great events of English and Christian history. It was also either the source of *SN*'s additional reign lengths for several West Saxon kings, or it circulated with an early version of WSGRL.

4. Possible evidence that the *forþferan*-type entries originated separate from P

A comparison of the texts of *SN*, ASC, Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, and Asser's *Life* from 789 to 878 may further suggest that P and the *forþferan*-type entries originated in separate sources. I begin with annals 789–842, which reflect the *SN* compiler's ASC-related source before he takes up with Asser's *Life* at 851. In the following table, the texts of MS A and *SN* 789–842 appear in their original languages, while Æthelweard's *Chronicon* (which uses the most obscure Latin) is given in translation. Stenton's 'south-western elements', where they appear in the texts, are highlighted in bold, and Hodgkin's 'distinctive features of style and phraseology' in bold-underline.

MS A	**Æthelweard**	***St Neots***
*789. Her nom Beorhtric cyning Offan dohtor Eadburge.	*789 When the very pious King Byrhtric was ruling over the domains of the West Saxons, the people spread over their fields were then making furrows in the grimy earth in serene tranquillity, and the burden-bearing frames [lit. sides] of the oxen placed their necks under the yoke in nearest love.	789. hoc anno Brychtricus rex accepit Eadburgam filiam Offæ regis Merciorum in matrimonium.

7 on his dagum cuomon ærest .iii. scipu, 7 þa se gerefa þærto rad 7 hie wolde drifan to þæs cyninges tune þy he nyste hwæt hie wæron, 7 hiene mon ofslog. Þæt wæron þa ærestan scipu deniscra monna þe Angelcynnes lond gesohton.	Suddenly a not very large fleet of the Danes arrived, speedy vessels to the number of three: that was their first arrival.	Et eo etiam tempore primum .iii. naues Normannorum, 'id est Danorum', applicuerunt in insula quę dicitur Portland.
	At the report the king's reeve, who was then in the town called **Dorchester**, leapt on his horse, sped to the harbour with a few men (for he thought they were merchants rather than marauders), and admonishing them in an authoritative manner, gave orders that they should be driven to the royal town. And he and his companions were killed by them on the spot. The name of the reeve was **Beaduheard**. And then the number of years was more than 334 from when Hengest and Horsa reached Britain, and in that year Byrhtric married the daughter of King Offa.	
*792. Her Iaenbryht ærcebiscep forþferde; 7 þy ilcan geare wæs gecoren Ęþelheard abbud to biscepe.		
*794. Her Offa Miercna cyning het Ęþelbryhte rex þæt heafod ofaslean.	*794. And after the fifth year from that time, Offa ordered the head of King Æthelbyrht to be cut off.	794. sanctus AETHELBRIHT-VS Orientalium Anglorum rex innocenter sub pacis federe occisus est ab Offa rege Merciorum perfidissimo.
*796 Her Adrianus papa 7 Offa cyning forþferdon; 7 Ęþelred Norþanhymbra cyning wæs ofslægen from his agenre þeode; 7 Ceolwulf biscep 7 Eadbald biscep of þæm londe aforon; 7 Ecgferþ feng to Miercna rice 7 þy ilcan geare forþferde; 7 Eadbryht onfeng rice on Cent þam was oþer noma nemned Præn.	*796. and at the end of two years he died himself, and Ecgferth, his son, succeeded to the kingdom, and he died in the same year. The blessed Pope Adrian also died in that year. Æthelred, king of the Northumbrians, was killed by his own people.	796 Adrianus papa obiit. Eodem anno Offa perfidus rex Merciorum obiit, anno .xxxix. regni sui. Regnauitque Ecgfridus filius ipsius post illum diebus centum quadraginta uno.
*798. Her Ceolwulf Miercna cyning oferhergeade Cantware oþ Mersc, 7 gefengun Praen hiera cyning 7 gebundenne hine on Mierce lędon.	*798 Then after a period of two years Ceolwulf, king of the Mercians, ravaged Kent, and the province called Romney Marsh, and Prend, the king of those people was captured, and they led him loaded with gyves all the way to Mercia.	

*799. Her Romane Leone þæm papan his tungon forcurfon 7 his eagan astungon 7 hine of his setle afliemdon, 7 þa sona eft Gode fultomiendum he meahte geseon 7 sprecan 7 eft was papa swa he ær wæs.	*799 After a year, the very savage people of Rome were stirred by madness and cut out the tongue of the blessed Pope Leo, and at the same time put out his eyes, and also expelled him from the apostolic chair. But suddenly by the help of Christ, who is ever wondrous in his works, he was given the sight of things, and a tongue flowing with eloquence, and he received the chair of the apostolate again as before.	799 sanctus Leo papa a Romanis de sede sua est expulsus et oculis euulsis ac lingua prȩcisa; sed Deo iuuante uisum recepit et loquelam sed et sedem propriam.
*801. Her Ẹþelheard ærcebiscep 7 Cynebryht Wesseaxna biscep foron to Rome.		
*802. Her Beorhtric cyning forþferde 7 Worr aldormon; 7 Ecgbryht feng to Wesseaxna rice. 7 þy ilcan dæge rad Ẹþelmund aldorman of Hwiccium ofer æt Cynemæresforda; þa mette hine Weoxstan aldorman mid Wilsætum. Þær wearþ micel gefeoht 7 þær begen ofslægene þa aldormen, 7 Wilsætan namon sige.	*802. As a period of three years was expiring, King Byrhtric died. And so Ecgbyrht was placed in the government over the West Saxons, And on that day Æthelmund was crossing a territory, which is called the land of the Hwicce, desiring to reach the ford called Kempsford, and there Ealderman Weohstan met him with troops of the people of Wiltshire. Battle was joined and both [leaders] fell, but the Wiltshire men were victors,	802. Ecgbrychtus rex Occidentalium Saxonum regnauit annis .xxxvii., mensibus .vii.
	[Calculated] from the time when King Ecgbyrht began his reign, the years completed since the beginning of the world were by number 6000 except for 5, and since the Lord's incarnation 800, and from the arrival of Hengest and Horsa in Britain 350; from the reign of Cerdic, who was King Ecgbyrht's tenth ancestor, 300 years elapsed (reckoned from when he conquered the western area of Britain), and from the arrival of Augustine who was sent by blessed Pope Gregory with baptism to the nation of the English, 204, In the tenth year after that mission Pope Gregory died.	
*804. Her wæs gehadod Beornmod biscep to Hrofesceastre.		
*805. Her Ẹþelheard ærcebiscep forþferde, 7 Wulfred wæs to ærcebiscepe gehadod; 7 Forþred abbud forþferde.		
*806. Her Wulfred ærcebiscep pallium onfeng.		

*807. Her Cuþred cyning forþferde on Cantwarum, 7 Ceolburg abbudesse 7 Heabryht aldorman.	*807. After a period of five years of Ecgbyrht's rule, Cuthred, king of the people of Kent, died,	
*814. Her Carl cyning forþferde, 7 he ricsode .xlv. wintra; 7 Wulfred arcebiscep 7 Wigbryht Wesseaxna biscep foron begen to Rome.	*814. In the seventh year Charles, king of the Franks, died.	
*815. Her Wulfred ærcebiscep mid bledsunge þæs papan Leon hwearf eft to his agnum biscepdome. 7 þy geare gehergade Ecgbryht cyning on Westwalas from eastewearum oþ westewearde.		
*816. Her Leo se ęþela papa 7 se halga forþferde, 7 æfter him Stephanus feng to rice.	*816. At the end of a period of two years Leo, the blessed pope, passed from virtue to virtue.	816. dompnus papa Leo migrauit ad Dominum.
*817. Her Stephanus papa forþferde, 7 æfter him was Paschalis to papan gehadod; 7 þy ilcan geare forborn Ongolcynnes scolu.		
*821. Her Cenwulf Miercna cyning forþferde, 7 Ceolwulf feng to rice; 7 Eadbryht aldormon forþferde.	*821. After a period of five years, Cynewulf, king of the Mercians, died; his successor was Ceolwulf, and	
*823. Her wearþ Ceolwulf his rices besciered.	*823. after a period of two years the kingdom was taken from him.	
*824. Her tuegen aldormen wurdon ofslægene, Burghelm 7 Muca, 7 senoþ wæs æt Clofeshoo.	*824. After a lapse of a year a great synod was held in the place called Clofeshoh, and two ealdormen, Burghelm and Muca, were killed at the same time.	
*825. Her wæs Wala gefeoht 7 Defna æt Gafulforda.	*825. After a year, battle was joined against the Britons in Devonshire at the place called Galford.	825. Beornulfus rex Merciorum in bello occiditur ab Orientalibus Anglis.
7 þy ilcan geare gefeaht Ecbryht cyning 7 Beornwulf cyning on Ellendune, 7 Ecgbryht **sige nam,** 7 þær wæs **micel węl geslægen**.	In the same year King Ecgbyrht gave batt1e to Beornwulf, king of the Mercians, at Ellendun, and Ecgbyrht **was victor**. There was, however, **heavy loss** on both sides, **and Hun, ealdorman of Somerset, was killed there, and he rests now in the city of Winchester.**	

Þa sende he Ęþlwulf his sunu of þære fierde, 7 Ealhstan his biscep 7 Wulfheard his aldormon to Cent **micle werede**, 7 hie Baldred þone cyning norþ ofer Temese adrifon, 7 Cantware him to cirdon 7 Suþrige 7 Suþseaxe 7 Eastseaxe, þy hie from his mægum ær mid unryhte anidde wærun. 7 þy ilcan geare Eastengla cyning 7 seo þeod gesohte Ecgbryht cyning him to friþe 7 to mundboran for Miercna ege. 7 þy geare slogon Eastengle Beornwulf Miercna cyning.	Then king Ecgbyrht sent his son Æthelwulf into Kent **with an army**, and with him Bishop Ealhstan, and Ealdorman Wulfheard at the same time, and they pursued Baldred, the king of those people [i.e. the Kentishmen J, across the river Thames to the north, after defeating his army. And afterwards the people of Kent submitted to them, and so did Surrey and Sussex, that is to say the Middle Saxons and the South Saxons. And in the course of the same year, the king of the East Angles with the nobles of his kingdom approached Ecgbyrht to get peace and protection, because they feared the Mercians. In the course of that year the East Angles we have mentioned took the field against Beornwulf, king of the Mercians, and killed him, after defeating his army.	
*827. Her Ludecan Miercna cyning 7 his .v. aldormen mon ofslog mid him, 7 Wiiglaf feng to rice.	*827. ... and five ealdormen with him. His successor was Wiglaf.	827. Ludecan Merciorum rex, dum suum praedecessorem atgue propinguum ulcisci uellet, ab eisdem Eastanglis occiditur, ‘et’ .v. comites cum eo.
*829. Her mona aþistrode on middes wintres mæsseniht. 7 þy ilcan geare geeode Ecgbryht cyning Miercna rice 7 al þæt be suþan Humbre wæs, 7 he wæs se eahteþa cyning se þe Bretwalda wæs — ærest Ęlle Suþseaxna cyning se þus micel rice hæfde, se æftera wæs Ceawlin Wesseaxna cyning, se þridda wæs Ęþelbryht Cantwara cyning, se feorþa wæs Rędwald Eastengla cyning, fifta was Eadwine Norþanhymbra cyning, siexta wæs Oswald se æfter him ricsode, seofoþa wæs Oswio Oswaldes broþur, eahtoþa wæs Ecgbryht Wesseaxna cyning. 7 se Ecgbryht lędde fierd to Dore wiþ Norþanhymbre, 7 hie him þær eaþmedo budon 7 **geþuærnesse**, 7 hie on þam tohwurfon.	*829. At the end of a period of two years, the light of the moon failed in the very night of Christ‘s nativity. And in that year Ecgbyrht, king of the Mercians, brought into his power the whole kingdom lying south of the river Humber. He was the eighth king who was masterful in his power in Britain. For the first to be possessor of a jurisdiction as great as that of Ecgbyrht was Ælle, king of the South Saxons. The second was Ceawlin, king of the West Saxons, the third Æthelbyrht, king of the people of Kent, the fourth Rædwald, king of the East [Angles], the fifth Eadwine, king of the Northumbrians, the sixth Oswald, the seventh Osweo, brother of Oswald, and after him Ecgbyrht, whom we mentioned above, was the eighth. And he led an army against the Northumbrians, and **they submitted to him in humility**.	

*830. Her eft Wilaf onfeng Miercna rices; 7 Ęþelwald biscep forþferde. 7 þy ilcan geare lędde Ecgbryht cyning fierd on Norþwalas 7 he hie to eaþmodre hersumnesse gedyde.	*830. At the conclusion of a year Wiglaf began ruling again. At that time king Ecgbyrht led an army against the Welsh, and returned in peace when they were all subdued.	
*832. Her Wulfred ærcebiscep forþferde.		
*833. Her Ceolnoþ wæs gecoren to biscepe 7 gehadod; 7 Feologid abbud forþferde.		
*834. Her Ceolnoþ ærcebiscep onfeng pallium.		
*835. Her hęþne men ofer-hergeadon Sceapige.	*835. After a period of four years, the pagans wasted the territories in the place called Sheppey.	
*836. Her gefeaht Ecgbryht cyning wiþ .xxxv. sciphlæsta æt **Carrum**, 7 þær wearþ **micel węl geslægen**, 7 þa Denescan ahton węlstowe gewald; 7 Hereferþ 7 Wigþen tuegen biscepas forþferdon, 7 Dudda 7 Osmod tuegen aldormen forþferdon.	*836. And after the lapse one year, King Ecgbyrht fought with a pagan fleet of the number of thirty-five ships in **Carhampton**. The Danes **won the victory** in the end.	
*838. Her cuom micel sciphere on Westwalas, 7 hie to anum gecierdon 7 wiþ Ecgbryht Westseaxna cyning winnende wæron. Þa he þæt hierde 7 mid fierde ferde 7 him wiþ feaht æt Hengestdune 7 þær gefliemde ge þa Walas ge þa Deniscan.	*838. Then after a period of three years, a fleet arrived in force at the shores of the Britons of Cornwall. They concentrated into one force without delay, directing their attack against Ecgbyrht, king of the English. The king, when he learned that he was so situated, summoned his army and went into battle against the two peoples at Hingston Down, and both took to flight.	
*839. Her Ecgbryht cyning forþferde — 7 hine hæfde ær Offa Miercna cyning 7 Beorhtric Wesseaxna cyning afliemed .iii. gear of Angelcynnes lande on Fronclond ær he cyning wære; 7 þy fultomode Beorhtric Offan þy he hæfde his dohtor him to cuene — 7 se Ecgbyht ricsode .xxxvii. wintra .vii. monaþ; 7 feng Ęþelwulf Ecgbrehting to Wesseaxna rice, 7 he salde his suna Ęþelstane Cantwara rice 7 Eastseaxna 7 Suþrigea 7 Suþseaxna.	*839. When the course of one year was run, Ecgbyrht, that very powerful king, died. (4) Then Æthelwulf succeeded to the kingdom of his father Ecgbyrht after his death, and he gave the kingdom of Kent to his son Æthelstan, and Essex, Sussex and Surrey, that is the eastern, southern and middle areas.	839. mortuo Ecgbrychto rege nobili, regnauit Adheluulfus rex Ocidentalium Saxonum filius eius pro eo, regnauitque annos .xviii. et dimidium.

*840. Her Wulfheard aldormon gefeaht æt Hamtune wiþ .xxxiii. sciphlæsta 7 þær **micel węl geslog** 7 sige nom; 7 þy geare forþferde Wulfheard. 7 þy ilcan geare gefeaht **Ęþelhelm dux wiþ deniscne here on Port mid Dornsætum** 7 gode hwile þone here gefliemde, 7 þa Deniscan ahton węlstowe gewald 7 þone aldormon ofslogon.	*840. A year later Ealdorman Wulfheard fought against a pagan fleet off Southampton, and was the victor after **many men had been killed**. The numbers of that fleet were thirty-three ships. And after these events the ealdorman died a natural death. In the same year Ealdorman **Æthelhelm renewed hostility against the army of the pagans with a force from Dorset at Portland**, and for some time he pursued them. However, the Danes were afterwards victors, and slew the ealdorman and his companions with him.	
*841. Her Herebryht aldormon wæs ofslægen from hęþnum monnum 7 monige mid him on Merscwarum. 7 þy ilcan geare eft on Lindesse 7 on Eastenglum 7 on Cantwarum wurdon monige men ofslægene from þam herige.	*841. Then after a year Ealdorman Herebyrht was killed by Danes among the dwellers in the Marsh. In the same year great slaughter was made by the same forces in Lindsey, the province of Kent, and East Anglia.	
*842. Her wæs **micel węlsliht** on Lundenne 7 on Cwantawic 7 on Hrofesceastre.	*842. So a year later **the same thing happened** in the city of London, in Cwantawic, and in the town of Rochester.	842. ... ipso anna **bellum** contra paganos Nordmannos apud Lundoniam, et item apud Quantauuic, et rursum apud Hrofescestram.

I note that of *SN*'s ten annals in this section only two are of the P-type — at 789 and 842. The other eight are either neutral or *forþferan*-type entries. *SN* 789 gives an abbreviated account of the first viking raid on English soil, omitting any detail about the king's reeve. Also, *SN* is the only source to name Portland in 789. Annal 842, reporting the viking raids on London, *Cwantawic* and Rochester, contains (in ASC) the distinguishing feature *micel wæsliht*, though *SN* adds that the battle was fought *contra paganos Nordmannos*, a phrase not found in ASC or Æthelweard. There are no other P-type entries in *SN* 789–842, and in this entire section *SN* shares no south-western element with either Æthelweard's *Chronicon* or ASC. This may be interpreted in one of two ways. Either the *SN* compiler revised annal 789, added the phrase *contra paganos Nordmannos* to annal 842, and otherwise intentionally omitted every other P-type reference in this section from his work, or *SN* 789–842 reflects the compiler's source of ASC-related material. Though both options are possible, the plausibility of the former is lessened by the fact that at annal 851 the *SN* compiler be-

gins to include almost every south-western element (and other distinguishing feature related to P) which Asser's *Life* shares with ASC. If the compiler had so carefully excluded all south-western elements in his source to 842, then surely he would have continued the practice when drawing upon Asser's *Life*. The second option, therefore, appears the likelier of the two.

4.1 *SN*'s source of *forþferan*-type entries — 'Q'

On the basis of the evidence considered above, I suggest that *SN*'s source of ASC-related entries was a set of *forþferan*-type annals, compiled some time after P, but before the Common Stock archetype was written (at which time entries of both types were first combined). I call this hypothetical source 'Q'. According to this hypothesis, Q, in its original form, is best represented by *SN*, whose compilers copied (translated?) its texts with great care and attention to detail. Given that *SN*'s Q-type entries start at 455, it may be that Q opened with the Anglo-Saxons' arrival in Britain in the mid-fifth century, though the point is not essential to my overall theory. A point of some significance, however, and one I consider in the next chapter, is that Asser's *Life of Alfred* contains Q-type material. Asser tells us he was working on his *Life* in 893. If Asser used P and Q instead of ASC, then a post-893 date may be postulated for the Common Stock archetype, and could even push the compilation of the Chronicle beyond the reign of Alfred.

4.2 Signs of Q in John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*?

In a paper published in 1981 (in which *SN* is called the '*East Anglian chronicle'*), Cyril Hart included a comparison of *SN*'s ASC-related texts with John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*. He noted that,

> There is a concordance between the two chronicles for annal 654, where both vary from the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle* in ascribing the killing of King Anna of East Anglia to King Penda of Mercia, and in describing Botulf, the builder of *Icanho*, as *Sanctus*. Then under the year 734, where both chroniclers apply the epithet *venerabilis* to Bede, and the East Anglian chronicler proceeds to give the text of Cuthbert's letter *De obitu Bedae* verbatim, the Worcester

> chronicler himself refers to Cuthbert's letter specifically; this is surely more than a mere coincidence. Next we must note the statement by both chroniclers under the years 827 and 825 respectively that King Ludeca of Mercia died while trying to avenge the death of his predecessor; this is not to be found in any surviving text of the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle*, nor in any other early source.[154]

Following a review of a large number other features which *SN* and John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis* share, Hart concluded, '[t]hese unique concordances are not to be found elsewhere in any surviving source, and they establish conclusively a relationship between the two texts. It would be hazardous to conclude, however, that either one borrowed from the other, for both might depend on a common source now lost'. Given that *SN* and the *Chronicon ex chronicis* both start using their ASC-related sources in the mid fifth century, further research into John of Worcester's texts could help to determine if the 'common source now lost' which they may have shared was indeed Q.

4.3 Was P a source in Q?

If P antedates Q, then Q's authors may have used P as a source of annalistic material in their work. As noted above, the text of annal 789 is different in ASC, Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, and *SN*. The following table compares the three versions:

Æthelweard *789	***SN* 789**	**MS A *789**
	Brychtricus rex accepit Eadburgam filiam Offæ regis Merciorum in matrimonium.	Her nom Beorhtric cyning Offan dohtor Eadburge;
Regnante Byrhtrico piisimo super partes Anglorum occidentales,	Et eo etiam tempore	7 on his dagum
iam innocentia protensi populi aruis serena cum tranquillitate dabant squalidis sulcos,		
et oneriferæ boum costæ proximo amore colla iugo subdebant.		
Aduecta est subito Danorum ardua non nimia classis,		

154. Cyril Hart, 'East Anglian chronicle', p. 272.

dromones number tres: ipsa et aduectio erat prima.	primum .iii. naues Norman-norum, applicuerunt	cuomon ærest .iii. scipu [BCDE add *Norðmanna*; DE *Norð-manna of Hæreðalande*]
Audito etiam, exactor regis iam morans		7 þa se gerefa
in oppido quod Dorceastre		
nuncupator equo insiluit,		þærto rad,
cum paucis præcurrit ad portum,		
	in insula quę dicitur Portland.	
putans eos magis negotiatores esse quam hostes, et præcipiens eos imperio ad regiam uillam pelli iussit. A quibus ibidem occiditur ipse, et qui cum eo erant.		þy he nyste hwæt hie wæron; 7 hie wolde drifan to þæs cyn-inges tune 7 hiene mon ofslog;
Nomen quippe exactoris erat Beaduheard.		
		Þæt wæron þa ærestan scipu Deniscra monna þe Angel-cynnes lond gesohton.
Impletusque est tum numerus annorum trecentesimus et supra trigesimus quartus, ex quo Hengest et Horsa Brittanniam aduecti sunt,		
in quo et Byrhtric in matrimonium duxit Offæ filiam regis.		

Æthelweard *789	***SN* 789**	**MS A *789**
	King Bryhtric married Eadburh, the daughter of Offa, king of the Mercians.	In this year King Brihtric married Offa's daughter Eadburh.
When the very pious King Byrhtric was ruling over the domains of the West Saxons,	And also in his time	And in his days
the people spread over their fields were then making furrows in the grimy earth in serene tranquillity,		
and the burden-bearing frames [lit. sides] of the oxen placed their necks under the yoke in nearest love.		
Suddenly a not very large fleet of the Danes arrived,		
speedy vessels to the number of three: that was their first arrival. (Aduecta est subito Danorum ardua non nimia classis, dromones numero tres: ipsa et aduectio erat prima.)	the first three ships of Northmen landed	there came for the first time three ships [BCDE add 'of Northmen'; DE add 'from Hord-aland']
At the report the king's reeve,		and then the reeve
who was then in the town called Dorchester,		
leapt on his horse,		rode to them

sped to the harbour		
	on the island which is called Portland.	
with a few men,		
(for he thought they were merchants rather than marauders), and admonishing them in an authoritative manner, gave orders that they should be driven to the royal town.		and wished to force them to the king's residence, for he did not know what they were;
And he and his companions		
were killed by them on the spot.		and they slew him.
The name of the reeve was Beaduheard.		
		Those were the first ships of Danish men which came to the land of the English.
And then the number of years was more than 334 from when Hengest and Horsa reached Britain,		
and in that year Byrhtric married the daughter of King Offa.		

SN (with ASC) opens with a notice about Bryhtric's marriage to Offa's daughter, Eadburh. This is followed in *SN* by a highly abridged account of the first reported viking raid on English lands. *SN*'s version omits Æthelweard's depiction of West Saxon rural life, the names Dorchester and Beaduheard, and any reference to the king's reeve, his companions, or their ill-fated trip to the harbour. Nevertheless, *SN* 789 follows the basic structure of Æthelweard's account, and appears as a summary of this text. For example, *SN*'s line, *[e]t eo etiam tempore*, 'also in his time', reflects Æthelweard's, *[r]egnante Byrhtrico rege piissimo super partes Anglorum occidentales*, 'when the very pious King Byrhtric was ruling over the domains of the West Saxons'. *SN*'s *primum .iii. naues Normannorum, applicuerunt in insula quę dicitur Portland*, is similar to Æthelweard's, *[a]duecta est subito Danorum ardua non nimia classis, dromones numero tres: ipsa et aduectio erat prima,* '[s]uddenly a not very large fleet of the Danes arrived, speedy vessels to the number of three: that was

their first arrival'.[155] *SN*'s conclusion to annal 789, however, in which Portland is named in place of Dorchester, marks a departure from Æthelweard's version. This is explained if the author(s) of Q, drawing from P, judged Beaduheard's plight as unsuited to a sweeping history about kings, popes, and events of great significance to the Anglo-Saxon peoples. If the story concerning Beaduheard was omitted from Q, then mention of Dorchester, from whence he departed for the harbour, is rendered superfluous. Portland, however, the landing place of the vikings, was a relevant detail easily deduced by the authors of Q from P's context. Given the events which played out in the ninth century, news of the first viking incursion on English soil would be a most appropriate detail to include in a general history text such as Q, even if Beaduheard's murder was not.

I suggest, then, that *SN* 789 reflects Q, and that Q 789, in its turn, gave a highly abridged version of P's account of the first viking incursion against English lands. The reworked text from P was entered in Q after the notice of Bryhtric's marriage in annal 789. As Bryhtric had already been mentioned in that annal, P's opening line, similar to Æthelweard's '[w]hen the very pious King Byrhtric was ruling over the domains of the West Saxons', was rewritten as *on his dagum*, 'in his days'. ASC's version, however, appears to draw upon both P and Q.

Finally, I note that in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, annal 789 begins with the story of the first recorded viking invasion on English soil and ends with the notice concerning Byrhtric's marriage to Eadburh. This marks a reversal of the order found in *SN* and ASC and may suggest that Æthelweard started his annal *789 using P, after which he added the notice about Byrhtric's marriage from his ASC source at the end of the annal.

---

155. MSS BCDE also refer to these ships as *Norðmanni*.

5. Reviewing the case for Q

In this chapter, having extracted all P-type entries from the Chronicle text, I considered the nature of ASC's non-P material. I noted that, in contrast to P, ASC's non-P entries use *forþferan* rather than *gefaran* for 'die'. I also noted Bately's observation that in ninth-century texts outside ASC *forþferan* and *gefaran* never appear together, and, therefore, normally indicate separate authorship. The high level of scholarship required to produce the *forþferan*-type entries, together with their pan-Anglo-Saxon coverage and the fact they continue into Alfred's reign, combine to suggest a date of compilation no earlier than the late 880s. To consider whether these *forþferan*-type entries might have been added to P directly, or if they originated in a text separate from P, I looked to the textual evidence of *SN*. Scholars have long recognised in *SN*'s ASC-related entries a number of unique (and often superior) readings, including archaic name forms, a lack of ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation, and more. Such features in *SN* led Plummer and others to argue that the compiler's ASC-related source was a version of the Chronicle earlier and more accurate than the Common Stock archetype. Dumville's research into WSGRL exposed a number of weaknesses in this hypothesis. Noting the limited number of entries *SN* shares with ASC, and the considerable variation between them, I compared the 789–845 section in ASC, *SN* and Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. Here *SN* contains only two P-type entries, at 789 and 842. The south-western elements explicit in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* *789 (concerning Beaduheard and Dorchester) and implicit in ASC's version of this annal are missing in *SN*. Further, *SN* omits all south-western elements before annal 851. From 851, however, at which point the *SN* compiler takes up with Asser's *Life*, he includes all south-western elements and other P-type features which the *Life* shares with ASC to 878. On this basis I suggested that *SN*'s ASC-related source did not contain such entries. I also suggested this source's annals were of the *forþferan*-type and included

SN's archaic name forms, lacked ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation, and most of the other unique readings in *SN*'s version. I call this source 'Q'.

In my next chapter I consider the theory of P and Q as it might pertain to Asser's *Life of Alfred*. If, as he claims in his text, Asser was working on his royal biography in 893, then what source (or sources) provided him with his ASC-related entries? This question, I will show, could have serious repercussions for interpreting the textual history of ASC and related works.

4

The source(s) of Asser's *Life of Alfred*

Debates concerning the authenticity of Asser's *Life of Alfred* rumbled on throughout the twentieth century.[156] Two features related to the *Life* have greatly influenced Chronicle research. First, it shares a run of annals with ASC from 851–887. Second, its texts include the claim that Asser wrote the *Life* in 893.[157] If Asser's source of ASC-related entries was (as most scholars assume) the Chronicle itself, then, should the *Life* prove authentic, it establishes a *terminus ante quem* of 893 for the Common Stock archetype. In this chapter, however, and against received opinion, I suggest, instead, that: (1) the Chronicle was not Asser's source of ASC-related material in the *Life* for it had not yet been compiled in 893; (2) entries were instead drawn *c.* 893 from P, Q, and another Alfredian source (which I define) to form a 'working copy' of annalistic material to facilitate Asser in writing the *Life*; and (3) it was this compilation which later formed the basis of ASC's 851–890 section.

1. A third possible pre-Common Stock source from the reign of Alfred?

From 879 and continuing into the 890s ASC's annals follow closely the activities in Britain and on the Continent of the *hloð wicinga*, 'company of vikings', first introduced in annal 879 as having established a temporary camp at Fulham. For convenience, I refer to this force throughout as the 'Fulham army'. ASC 880 tells of its

---

156. For a review of the various arguments see Richard P. Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval World (London: Longman, 1998), 319–24.

157. In his chapter 91, Asser writes of Alfred's forty-fifth year, 'which is now in course', Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 101.

return to the Continent, following up with a series of regular reports concerning its activities there. Then, some 12 years later, this army arrived in England once again in full force, intent upon overthrowing Alfred and conquering the territories under his rule. In a previous chapter I agreed with Peter Sawyer's suggestion that this particular army would have been of interest to a West Saxon audience only after the 892 invasion. For this reason it seems most likely that the section of annals reporting its activites was written after 892. Bately observed a number of lexical features in the annals centered on the 880s which appear to distinguish them from the preceding section.[158] She wrote, 'differences of linguistic usage indicate either that the first Alfredian compilation ended with the annals for the closing years of the 870s (or shortly after), and that the annals for the 880s and 890 may be, like the annals that follow, a continuation'.[159] Bately regarded the annals of the 880s as being all of a piece. I will suggest, however, it may be possible to discern within the 880s section a set of annals which, like P and Q, might also have originated as a separate and distinct source antedating the Common Stock's compilation.

1.1 The 'Fulham army' annals: 879–892

To consider this hypothesis, in the following table ASC's annals 879–892 are divided in two groups. Entries dealing with the Fulham army are in the left-hand column, with the other entries from this section to the right. Verbs for 'die' are highlighted in bold. (A Modern English translation of the table follows below.)

ASC's 'Fulham army' entries	ASC's Non-'Fulham army' entries
879	
	Her for se here to Cirenceastre of Cippanhamme. 7 sæt þær an gear.
7 þy geare gegadrode on hloþ wicenga 7 gesæt æt Fullanhamme be Temese.	
	7 þy ilcan geare aþiestrode sio sunne ane tid dæges.

158. Bately, 'Compilation', pp. 110-11.
159. Bately, 'Compilation, Once More', p. 10.

880	
	Her for se here of Cirenceastre on Eastengle 7 gesæt þæt lond 7 gedęlde.
7 þy ilcan geare for se here ofer sę þe ær on Fullanhomme sæt on Fronclond to Gend 7 sæt þær an gear.	
881	
Her for se here ufor on Fronclond, 7 þa Francan him wiþ gefuhton, 7 þær þa wearþ se here gehorsod æfter þam gefeohte.	
882	
Her for se here up onlong Mæse feor on Fronclond 7 þær sæt an gear.	
	7 þy ilcan geare for Ęlfred cyning mid scipum ut on sę 7 gefeaht wiþ feower sciphlæstas deniscra monna 7 þara scipa tu genam, 7 þa men **ofslægene wæron** þe ðęron wæron, 7 tuegen scipheras him on hond eodon, 7 þa wæron miclum forslægene 7 forwundode ær hie on hond eodon.
883	
Her for se here up on Scald to Cundoþ 7 þær sæt an gear.	
884	
Her for se here up on Sunnan to Embenum 7 þær sæt an gear.	
885	
Her todęlde se foresprecena here on tu, oþer dęl east, oþer dęl to Hrofesceastre, 7 ymbsæton ða ceastre 7 worhton oþer fæsten ymb hie selfe,	
7 hie þeah þa ceastre aweredon oþþæt Ęlfred com utan mid fierde. Þa eode se here to hiera scipum 7 forlet þæt geweorc, 7 hie wurdon þær behorsude 7 sona þy ilcan sumere ofer sę gewiton.	
	7 þy ilcan geare sende Aelfred cyning sciphere on Eastengle. Sona swa hie comon on Stufe muþan, þa metton hie .xvi. scipu wicenga 7 wiþ ða gefuhton 7 þa scipo alle geręhton 7 þa men **ofslogon**. Þa hie þa hamweard wendon mid þære herehyþe, þa metton hie micelne sciphere wicenga 7 þa wiþ þa gefuhton þy ilcan dæge 7 þa Deniscan ahton sige.

	Þy ilcan geare ær middum wintra **forþferde** Carl Francna cyning, 7 hiene **ofslog** an efor, 7 ane geare ær his broður **forþferde**, se hæfde eac þæt westrice, 7 hie wæron begen Hloþwiges suna, se hæfde eac þæt westrice 7 **forþferde** þy geare þe sio sunne aþiestrode; se wæs Karles sunu þe Ęþelwulf Westseaxna cyning his dohtor hæfde him to cuene.
	7 þy ilcan geare gegadrode micel sciphere on Aldseaxum, 7 þær wearþ micel gefeoht tua on geare, 7 þa Seaxan hæfdun sige, 7 þær wæron Frisan mid.[160]
	Þy ilcan geare feng Carl to þam westrice 7 to allum þam westrice behienan Wendelsę 7 begeondan þisse sę swa hit his þridda fęder hæfde butan Lidwiccium; se Carl was Hloþwiges sunu; se Hloþwig was Carles broþur, se wæs Iuþyttan fęder þe Ęþelwulf cyning hæfde, 7 hie wæron Hloþwiges suna — se Hloþwig was þæs aldan Carles sunu, se Carl was Pippenes sunu.
	7 þy ilcan geare **forþferde** se goda papa Marinus, se gefreode Ongelcynnes scole be Ęlfredes bene Westseaxna cyninges, 7 he sende him micla gifa 7 þære rode dęl þe Crist on **þrowude**.
	7 þy ilcan geare se here on Eastenglum bręc friþ wiþ Ęlfred cyning.
886	
Her for se here eft west þe ær east gelende 7 þa up on Sigene 7 þær wintersetl namon.	
	Þy ilcan geare gesette Ęlfred cyning Lundenburg, 7 him all Angelcyn to cirde þæt buton deniscra monna hæftniede was; 7 hie þa befæste þa burg Ęþerede aldormen to haldonne.
887	
Her for se here up þurh þa brycge æt Paris 7 þa up andlang Sigene oþ Mæterne, oþ Cariei, 7 þa sæton þara 7 innan Ionan tu winter on þam twam stedum.	
	7 þy ilcan geare **forþferde** Karl Francna cyning, 7 Earnulf his broþur sunu hine .vi. wicum ær he **forþferde** berædne æt þæm rice, 7 þa wearþ þæt rice todęled on .v. 7 .v. kyningas to gehalgode. Þæt wæs þeah mid Earnulfes geþafunge, 7 hi cuędon þæt hie þæt to his honda healdan sceoldon forþæm hira nan næs on fędren healfe to geboren buton him anum.

160. Keynes and Lapidge wrote, '[t]hese battles involved an army (or armies) of Vikings different from the one mentioned previously', in *Asser*, p. 253, n. 132.

	Earnulf þa wunode on þęm londe be eastan Rin, 7 Roþulf þa feng to þæm middelrice 7 Oda to þæm westdęle, 7 Beorngar 7 Wiþa to Longbeardna londe 7 to þæm londum on þa healfe muntes, 7 þæt heoldun mid micelre unsibbe 7 tu folcgefeoht gefuhton 7 þæt lond oft 7 gelome forhergodon, 7 æghwęþer oþerne oftrędlice ut dræfde. 7 þy ilcan geare þe se here for forþ up ofer þa brycge æt Paris,
	Ęþelhelm aldormon lędde Wesseaxna ęlmessan 7 Ęlfredes cyninges to Rome.
888	
	Her lędde Beocca aldormon Wesseaxna ęlmessan 7 Ęlfredes cyninges to Rome.
	7 Ęþelswiþ cuen, sio wæs Ęlfredes sweostor cyninges, **forþferde**, 7 hire lic liþ æt Pafian.
	7 þy ilcan geare Ęþelred ercebiscep 7 Ęþelwold aldormon **forþferdon** on anum monþe.
889	
	On þissum geare næs nan fęreld to Rome, buton tuegen hleaperas Ęlfred cyning sende mid gewritum.
890	
	Her lędde Beornhelm abbud Westseaxna ęlmessan to Rome 7 Ęlfredes cyninges;
	7 Godrum se norþerna cyning **forþferde**, þæs fulluhtnama wæs Ęþelstan, se wæs Ęlfredes cyninges godsunu, 7 he bude on Eastenglum 7 þæt lond ærest gesæt.
7 þy ilcan geare for se here of Sigene to Sant Laudan, þæt is betueoh Brettum 7 Francum, 7 Brettas him wiþ gefuhton 7 hæfdon sige 7 hie bedrifon ut on ane ea 7 monige **adrencton**.	
891	
Her for se here east, 7 Earnulf cyning gefeaht wiđ đæm rędhere, ær þa scipu cuomon, mid Eastfrancum 7 Seaxum 7 Bægerum 7 hine gefliemde.	
	7 þrie Scottas comon to Ęlfrede cyninge on anum bate butan ęlcum gereþrum of Hibernia, þonon hi hi bestęlon, forþon þe hi woldon for Godes lufan on elþiodignesse beon, hi ne rohton hwær. Se bat wæs geworht of þriddan healfre hyde þe hi on foron, 7 hi namon mid him þæt hi hæfdun to seofon nihtum mete, 7 þa comon hie ymb .vii. niht to londe on Cornwalum 7 foron þa sona to Ęlfrede cyninge. Þus hie wæron genemnde, Dubslane 7 Maccbethu 7 Maelinmun
	7 Swifneh, se betsta lareow þe on Scottum wæs, **gefor**.

	7 þy ilcan geare ofer Eastron, ymbe gang dagas oþþe ær, æteowde se steorra þe mon on boclæden hæt cometa: sume men cweþaþ on Englisc þæt hit sie feaxede steorra, forþæm þær stent lang leoma of, hwilum on ane healfe, hwilum on ælce healfe.
892	
Her on þysum geare for se micla here þe we gefyrn ymbe spræcon eft of þæm eastrice westweard to Bunann 7 þær wurdon gescipode swa þæt hie asettan him on anne siþ ofer mid horsum mid ealle 7 þa comon up on Limene muþan mid .ccl. (hunde) scipa. Se muþa is on easte weardre Cent æt þæs miclam wuda eastende þe we Andred hatað. Se wudu is eastlang 7 westlang hund twelftiges mila lang oþþe lengra 7 þritiges mila brad; seo ea þe we ær ymbe spræcon lið ut of þæm wealda. On þa ea hi tugon up hiora scipu oþ þone weald .iiii. mila fram þæm muþan uteweardum 7 þær abræcon an geweorc inne on þæm fenne; sæton feawa cirlisce men on 7 wæs samworht.	
Þa sona æfter þæm com Hæsten mid .lxxx. scipa up on Temese muðan 7 worhte him geweorc æt Middeltune 7 se oþer here æt Apuldre.	

ASC's 'Fulham army' entries	ASC's Non-'Fulham army' entries
879	
	In this year the army went from Chippenham to Cirencester, and stayed there for one year.
And the same year a band of vikings assembled and encamped at Fulham by the Thames.	
	And the same year there was an eclipse of the sun for one hour of the day.
880	
	In this year the army went from Cirencester into East Anglia, and settled there and shared out the land.
And the same year the army which had encamped at Fulham went overseas into the Frankish empire to Ghent and stayed there for a year.	
881	
In this year the army went further inland into the Frankish empire, and the Franks fought against them; and the Danish army provided itself with horses after that battle.	
882	
In this year the army went farther into the Frankish empire along the Meuse, and stayed there a year.	

	And the same year King Alfred went out with ships to sea and fought against four crews of Danish men, and captured two of the ships — and the men **were killed** who were on them — and two crews surrendered to him. And they had great losses in killed or wounded before they surrendered.
883	
In this year the army went up the Scheldt to Condé, and stayed there for a year.	
884	
In this year the army went up the Somme to Amiens, and stayed there a year.	
885	
In this year the aforesaid army divided into two [one part going east], the other part to Rochester, where they besieged the city and made other fortifications round themselves.	
And nevertheless the English defended the city until King Alfred came up with his army. Then the enemy went to their ships and abandoned their fortification, and they were deprived of their horses there, and immediately that same summer they went back across the sea.	
	That same year King Alfred went a naval force from Kent into East Anglia. Immediately they came into the mouth of the Stour they encountered 16 ships of vikings and fought against them, and seized all the ships and **killed** the men. When they turned homeward with the booty, they met a large naval force of vikings and fought against them on the same day, and the Scandinavians had the victory.[161]
	That same year before Christmas, Charles, king of the Franks **died**. He was killed by a boar, and a year previously his brother, who had also held the western kingdom, **had died**. They were both sons of Louis, who **died** in the year of the eclipse of the sun. He was the son of that Charles whose daughter Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons had married.
	That same year a large naval force assembled among the Old Saxons and twice in the year there occurred a great battle, and the Saxons had the victory, and with them were the Frisians.

161. See note 160 above.

	That same year Charles succeeded to the western kingdom and to all the kingdom on this side of the Mediterranean and beyond this sea, as his great-grandfather had held it, except for Britanny. This Charles was the son of Louis, the brother of Charles who was the father of Judith whom King Æthelwulf married; and they were sons of Louis. This Louis was the son of the old Charles. This Charles was Pippin's son.
	That same year there **died** the good pope, Marinus, who had freed from taxation the English quarter at the request of Alfred, king [of the West Saxons]. And he had sent him great gifts, including part of the cross on which Christ **suffered**.
	And that same year the Danish army in East Anglia violated their peace with King Alfred.
886	
In this year the Danish army which had gone east went west again, and then up the Seine, and made their winter quarters there at the town of Paris.	
	That same year King Alfred occupied London; and all the English people that were not under subjection to the Danes submitted to him. And he then entrusted the borough to the control of Ealdorman Ethelred.
887	
In this year the Danish army went up past the bridge at Paris, then up along the Seine to the Marne, and then up the Marne as far as Chézy, and stayed there and in the Yonne area, spending two winters in those two places.	
	And the same year Charles, king of the Franks, **died**; and six weeks before he **died** his brother's son Arnulf had deprived him of the kingdom. The kingdom was then divided into five, and five kings were consecrated to it. It was done, however, with Arnulf's consent and they said that they would hold it under him, for not one of them was born to it in the male line but him alone. Arnulf then lived in the land east of the Rhine, and Rudolf succeeded to the middle kingdom and Odo to the western portion; and Berengar and Guido to Lombardy and the lands on that side of the Alps; and they held it with much discord and fought two general engagements, and ravaged the land again and again, and each repeatedly drove out the other.
	And the same year in which the army went up beyond the bridge at Paris, Ealdorman Æthelhelm took to Rome the alms of King Alfred and the West Saxons.
888	
	In this year Ealdorman Beocca took to Rome the alms of the West Saxons and of King Alfred.

	And Queen Æthelswith, who was King Alfred's sister, **died**, and her body is buried in Pavia.
	And the same year Archbishop Ethelred and Ealdorman Æthelwold **died** in the same month.
889	
	There was no expedition to Rome in this year, but King Alfred sent two couriers with letters.
890	
	In this year Abbot Beornhelm took to Rome the alms of the West Saxons and of King Alfred.
	And the northern king, Guthrum, whose baptismal name was Athelstan, **died**. He was King Alfred's godson, and he lived in East Anglia and he was the first to settle that land.
And the same year the Danish army went from the Seine to St Lô, which lies between Brittany and France; and the Bretons fought against them and had the victory, and drove them into a river and **drowned** many of them.	
891	
In this year the Danish army went east, and King Arnulf with the East Franks, the Saxons and Bavarians fought against the mounted force before the ships arrived, and put it to flight.	
	And three Scots came to King Alfred in a boat without any oars from Ireland, which they had left secretly, because they wished for the love of God to be in foreign lands, they cared not where. The boat in which they travelled was made of two and a half hides, and they took with them enough food for seven days. And after seven days they came to land in Cornwall, and went immediately to King Alfred. Their names were as follows: Dubslane, Machbethu and Maelinmum.
	And Swifneh, the best scholar among the Scots, **died**.
	And the same year after Easter, at the Rogation days or before, there appeared the star which is called in Latin cometa. Some men say that it is in English the long-haired star, for there shines a long ray from it, sometimes on one side, sometimes on every side.
892	
In this year the great Danish army, which we have spoken about before, went back from the eastern kingdom westard to Bologne, and they were provided with ships there, so that they crossed in one journey, horses and all, and then came up into the estuary of the Lympne with 200 [and 50] ships.	

That estuary is in East Kent, at the east end of that great wood which we call Andred. The wood is from east to west 120 miles long, or longer, and 30 miles broad. The river, of which we spoke before, comes out of the Weald. They rowed their ships up the river as far as the Weald, four miles from the mouth of the estuary, and there they stormed a fortress. Inside that fortification there were a few peasants, and it was only half made.	
Then immediately afterwards Hæsten came with 80 ships up the Thames estuary and made himself a fortress at Milton, and the other army made one at Appledore.	

Owing to their Continental focus, the Fulham army entries constitute a most unusual set of texts within the Chronicle. R. H. C. Davis described them as 'remarkable… giving an overall picture which is unrivalled in the chronicles of Europe'. He suggested these 'terse but precise statements read almost like Intelligence Reports… written or compiled… for the military headquarters of the king'.[162] Audrey Meaney agreed with this idea, adding, '[t]his may well be so… but no doubt these reports would have been sent on by the king to the ealdormen in order to prepare them, too'.[163] The unusual nature of the subject matter in this material may be significant.

Another unique feature related to entries of this type was noted by Dorothy Whitelock. She observed that Æthelweard's *Chronicon* contains in its corresponding passages additional detail concerning the Fulham army not found in ASC. For example, Æthelweard adds in annal 881 that the Franks 'enjoyed the blessing of victory' and put 'the Barbarian army to flight', in annal 882 that the vikings camped at Elsloo,[164] and in annal 885 that they went to Louvain.[165] Alistair Campbell also noted in Æthelweard's annal 887 that, 'the form for Chézy is *Catsig*, an improvement on [ASC]... the Danes have three (not two) camps near Chézy; Charles the Fat is said to have been deposed seven (not six) weeks before he died'.[166] Comparing the unique information in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* with Frankish annals, Whitelock concluded

162. Davis, 'Propaganda', p. 174.
163. Meaney, 'St. Neots', p. 209.
164. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 197, nn. 1 and 2.
165. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 137.
166. Alistair Campbell, ed. *Chronicon Æthelweardi: (the Chronicle of Æthelweard)*, Medieval Texts (London: Nelson, 1962), xxv.

he had 'reliable material before him'. 'It is possible', she suggested, 'that the version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which he used had more detail than any surviving text'.[167] I note that the additional material in this section listed by Whitelock and Campbell in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* relates only to the Fulham army.

In the table below, ASC's Fulham army entries have been extracted from the other annals in this section and appear in the column to the left. To the right are equivalent passages from Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. The additional detail in the *Chronicon* is given in bold text.

'Fulham army' entries: ASC	**'Fulham army' entries: Æthelweard's *Chronicon***
879	
7 þy geare gegadrode on hloþ wicenga 7 gesæt æt Fullanhamme be Temese.	
880	
7 þy ilcan geare for se here ofer sę þe ær on Fullanhomme sæt on Fronclond to Gend 7 sæt þær an gear.	Porro in eodem anno, postquam subiecta esset eis tellus prædicta, artemone petunt Gallias partes, statum firmant in Gent loco con dicto ipsi eidem qui castra metabantur quondam in loco Fullanhamme.
881	
Her for se here ufor on Fronclond, 7 þa Francan him wiþ gefuhton, 7 þær þa wearþ se here gehorsod æfter þam gefeohte.	Scilicet post annum ulterius progredi petunt, agmina Francorum e contra insiliunt armis, **uictoriæque funguntur numen**, **barbaro exercitu fugato.**
882	
Her for se here up onlong Mæse feor on Fronclond 7 þær sæt an gear.	Postque circulum unius anni transiit prædictus exercitus in superiora territorii Mæsæ, **et castra metati sunt in loco Escelun**.
883	
Her for se here up on Scald to Cundoþ 7 þær sæt an gear.	Anno igitur transeunte profectus est supra dictus exercitus supra in Scald parrochias ad locum Cundað, ibique hiemale sumunt metatum.
884	
Her for se here up on Sunnan to Embenum 7 þær sæt an gear.	Impletaque serie anni unius, abrumpitur opposita supra dicti clades exercitus in superiora Sunnan turmæ in loco Embenum, ibique castra metatur spatio hibernali.

167. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 137.

885	
Her todælde se foresprecena here on tu, oþer dæl east, oþer dæl to Hrofesceastre, 7 ymbsæton ða ceastre 7 worhton oþer fæsten ymb hie selfe,	Ergo post annum partiuntur in sortem sibi arua telluris ipsius in duas partes, **unam ad Lofenum**, alteram ad Hrofecestre partem uidelicet pertinentem, obsederuntque oppida prædicta. Nec non alia sibi struunt uilia castra.
7 hie þeah þa ceastre aweredon oþþæt Ęlfred com utan mid fierde. Þa eode se here to hiera scipum 7 forlet þæt geweorc, 7 hie wurdon þær behorsude 7 sona þy ilcan sumere ofer sę gewiton.	Et iam defectus dominatur accolis priscis, usque dum aduenisset rex Ælfred occidentali cum manu. Superata tandem lues inmunda; auxilia quærunt, rex iussit Sarauara duci, equis non exiguis littora petunt, proprias sedes. Quidam eorum ultra petunt marinas partes.
	Cursu in eiusdem anni præsentis obsidatum cum renouant Anglis omissi, bisque numerant fraude prædas in anna telluris in condenso adhærenti notheas fluuio partes Tamesi. Petias sub dant plebs immunda quæ tum Orientales continebat Anglos, repente extraneum petunt uestigio cursum ad locum Beamfleote. Ibique lurido motu paritutur socia manus, quidam manent, quidam petunt ultra partes marinas.
886	
Her for se here eft west þe ær east gelende 7 þa up on Sigene 7 þær wintersetl namon.	Denique post annum inferiores partes Gallias petunt, continuopue sedilia cudunt iuxta fluuium Signæ præ temestate hiberna.
887	
Her for se here up þurh þa brycge æt Paris 7 þa up andlang Sigene oþ Mæterne, oþ Cariei, 7 þa sæton þara 7 innan Ionan tu winter on þam twam stedum.	Siquidem exercitus qui tum populabatur Gallias partes uestigia secant per pontem arcis Parisiacæ, totamque iuxta Signiam uastant usque ad Mæterne et super uerticem ipsius usque ad **Catsig**, ibique constituunt **ter** hiberneos status.
(*There is a problem at this point in the manuscript of Æthelweard's* Chronicon. *Parts of annals 888 and 889 appear to have been lost*.)	
890	
7 þy ilcan geare for se here of Sigene to Sant Laudan, þæt is betueoh Brettum 7 Francum, 7 Brettas him wiþ gefuhton 7 hæfdon sige 7 hie bedrifon ut on ane ea 7 monige adrencton.	In eodem anno eleuatus est supra memoratus execitus de Signa amne ad locum qui uulgo dicitur Sand Laudan, cuius situs inter Britannos et Francos uidetur. Quorum in occursu Brittanni insistunt armis, obtinentque uictoriæ numen, eosque persecuti sunt in mæandrum cuisdam amnis, ibique non pauci merguntur lymphis.
891	
Her for se here east, 7 Earnulf cyning gefeaht wið ðæm rędhere, ær þa scipu cuomon, mid Eastfrancum 7 Seaxum 7 Bægerum 7 hine gefliemde.	Post etiam spatio unius anni, cateruæ supra dicti exercitus uisitant orientales Francorum partes. Rex Earnulfus obuius quorum equestris tandem inbuit certamen, antequam uenere gurgite classes. Manus Francorum orientalis aderant ibi, Saxones quippe Baiuuerique; auras dant fugæ pagani.

892	
Her on þysum geare for se micla here þe we gefyrn ymbe spræcon eft of þæm eastrice westweard to Bunann 7 þær wurdon gescipode swa þæt hie asettan him on anne siþ ofer mid horsum mid ealle 7 þa comon up on Limene muþan mid .ccl. (hunde) scipa. Se muþa is on easte weardre Cent æt þæs miclam wuda eastende þe we Andred hatað. Se wudu is eastlang 7 westlang hund twelftiges mila lang oþþe lengra 7 þritiges mila brad; seo ea þe we ær ymbe spræcon lið ut of þæm wealda. On þa ea hi tugon up hiora scipu oþ þone weald .iiii. mila fram þæm muþan uteweardum 7 þær abræcon an geweorc inne on þæm fenne; sæton feawa cirlisce men on 7 wæs samworht.	Deinde post annum ex quo bella gessere barbari contra regem Earnulfum, quin Bononiam petunt, ibique construunt classem, primnas dant uentis, uolant rostra ad Anglicas partes in Limneo portu. Constituunt puppes Apoldre loco condicto, orientali Cantiæ partem, destruuntque ibi prisco opere castrum, propter quod rustica manus exigua quippe intrinsecus erat, illicque hiberna castra confirmant.
Þa sona æfter þæm com Hæsten mid .lxxx. scipa up on Temese muðan 7 worhte him geweorc æt Middeltune 7 se oþer here æt Apuldre.	In huius anni scilicet decursu aduehitur classis non minima Hæsten in oras fluuii Temese, arcemque fundant in Cantiæ fines in cognominato Middeltune loco, castra metantur hyeme tota ibi.

'Fulham army' entries: ASC	**'Fulham army' entries: Æthelweard's *Chronicon***
879	
And the same year a band of vikings assembled and encamped at Fulham by the Thames.	
880	
And the same year the army which had encamped at Fulham went overseas into the Frankish empire to Ghent and stayed there for a year.	Then in the same year, after the country in question was subjected to them, the ones who formerly laid out a camp at Fulham sought Gaul by ship, and stationed themselves in the place called Ghent.
881	
In this year the army went further inland into the Frankish empire, and the Franks fought against them; and the Scandinavian army provided itself with horses after that battle.	After one year they sought to go farther, the forces of the Franks sprang in arms against them, **and enjoyed the blessing of victory, putting the barbarian army to flight.**
882	
In this year the army went farther into the Frankish empire along the Meuse, and stayed there a year.	After the passage of one year, the above mentioned army crossed into the upper Meuse territory, **and laid out a camp at Elsloo**.
883	
In this year the army went up the Scheldt to Condé, and stayed there for a year.	When the year was passing away, the above-mentioned army set out up into the districts by the Scheldt to Conde, and took a winter station there.

884	
In this year the army went up the Somme to Amiens, and stayed there a year.	When the course of one year was completed, the hostile pest of the above-mentioned army, of the throng, departed into the upper regions of the Somme to Amiens, and there laid out a camp in the winter season.
885	
In this year the aforesaid army divided into two [one part going east], the other part to Rochester, where they besieged the city and made other fortifications round themselves. And nevertheless the English defended the city until King Alfred came up with his army. Then the enemy went to their ships and abandoned their fortification, and they were deprived of their horses there, and immediately that same summer they went back across the sea.	After a year they divided by lot among themselves the fields of the country itself into two parts, **one adjoining Louvain** and the other Rochester, and they besieged those towns. They also built other small camps for themselves, and already lack [of men] was the lot of the natives, until King Ælfred arrived with a West-Saxon force. At last the foul plague was overcome. They [i.e. the English] sought help, and the king gave his orders to the leader of the men of Sarauara. With many horses they [i.e. the Danes] sought the shore and their proper stations [i.e. their ships.] Some of them sought places beyond the sea.
	In the course of this same year under discussion, those left behind renewed their exchange of hostages with the English, and by deceit had to their account twice in the year raids in the afforested parts of the country where the river Thames touches its southern shores. The foul people who then held East Anglia gave support, and suddenly made an expedition outside their own boundaries to Benfleet. There the allied force was divided by a grim quarrel, some remained, some sought places beyond the sea.
886	
In this year the Scandinavian army which had gone east went west again, and then up the Seine, and made their winter quarters there at the town of Paris.	Then after a year they sought the lower parts of Gaul, and forthwith established themselves by the river Seine before winter time.
887	
In this year the Scandinavian army went up past the bridge at Paris, then up along the Seine to the Marne, and then up the Marne as far as Chézy, and stayed there and in the Yonne area, spending two winters in those two places.	The army which was then ravaging Gaul cut its way through the bridge of the fortress of Paris, and ravaged the whole nearby Seine country as far as the Marne, and beyond the upper part of this as far as **Chezy**, and **there they made three winter camps**.
(*There is a problem at this point in the MS of Æthelweard's* Chronicon. *Parts of annals 888 and 889 appear to have been lost*.)	
890	
And the same year the Scandinavian army went from the Seine to St Lô, which lies between Brittany and France; and the Bretons fought against them and had the victory, and drove them into a river and drowned many of them.	In the same year the above-mentioned army moved from the river Seine to the place called in the vulgar tongue St Lo, of which the position is between the Bretons and Franks. At their meeting with these people, the Bretons gave battle and won the blessing of victory, and they pursued them to the winding course of a certain river, where many were drowned in the waters.

891	
In this year the Scandinavian army went east, and King Arnulf with the East Franks, the Saxons and Bavarians fought against the mounted force before the ships arrived, and put it to flight.	After an interval of one year, the bands of the above-mentioned army entered the eastern empire of the Franks. King Arnulf, meeting them, began a battle of the mounted [arm], before their fleets arrived on the sea. A force of East Franks was there, also Saxons and Bavarians. The pagans took to flight.
892	
In this year the great Scandinavian army, which we have spoken about before, went back from the eastern kingdom westard to Bologne, and they were provided with ships there, so that they crossed in one journey, horses and all, and then came up into the estuary of the Lympne with 200 [and 50] ships. That estuary is in East Kent, at the east end of that great(14) wood which we call Andred. The wood is from east to west 120 miles long, or longer, and 30 miles broad. The river, of which we spoke before, comes out of the Weald. They rowed their ships up the river as far as the Weald, four miles from the mouth of the estuary, and there they stormed a fortress. Inside that fortification there were a few peasants, and it was only half made.	Then after a year from when the barbarians made war against King Arnulf, they went to Boulogne, and there built a fleet, and set their sterns to the wind. The vessels sped to England and into the harbour of the Lympne. The ships were stationed at the place called Appledore in east Kent, and there they destroyed a fort of primitive structure, because there was [only] a small band of rustics in it. They made their winter quarters at that place.
Then immediately afterwards Hæsten came with 80 ships up the Thames estuary and made himself a fortress at Milton, and the other army made one at Appledore.	In the course of this year a fleet and [with it] Haesten arrived by the banks of the river Thames, and they built a fort in the bounds of Kent at the place called Milton and there they laid out a camp for all winter.

1.2 A missing passage in annal 885?

In 1925 Frank Stenton published what Bately would later describe as a 'major new theory'.[168] In his paper he noted that in annal 885 Æthelweard 'inserts a passage which does not correspond to anything in the Chronicle'.[169] The passage in question follows on from a phrase in the *Chronicon*, *[q]uidam eorum ultra petunt marinas partes*, '[s]ome of them sought places beyond the sea', and reads,

> Cursu in eiusdem anni præsentis obsidatum cum renouant Anglis omissi, bisque numerant fraude prædas in anna telluris in condenso adhærenti notheas fluuio partes Tamesi. Petias sub dant plebs immunda quæ tum Orientales continebat Anglos, repente extraneum petunt uestigio cursum ad locum Beam-

168. Bately, *TTR,* p. 27.
169. Stenton, *Preparatory*, p. 112. Whitelock described Æthelweard's version of annal 885 as 'extremely important', in *EHD*, p. 198, n. 1. Keynes and Lapidge also accepted Stenton's conclusions in this regard, in *Asser*, p. 252, n. 125. See also, Bately, *TTR,* p. 27.

> fleote. Ibique lurido motu paritutur socia manus, quidam manent, quidam petunt ultra partes marinas.
>
> In the course of this same year under discussion, those left behind renewed their exchange of hostages with the English, and by deceit had to their account twice in the year raids in the afforested parts of the country where the river Thames touches its southern shores. The foul people who then held East Anglia gave support, and suddenly made an expedition outside their own boundaries to Benfleet. There the allied force was divided by a grim quarrel, some remained, some sought places beyond the sea.[170]

Noting that Æthelweard elsewhere translates the OE phrase *ofer sæ gewiton* with *petunt ultra partes marinas*, Stenton observed that *petunt ultra partes marinas* occurs twice in the *Chronicon*'s version of annal 885, while in ASC 885 *ofer sæ gewiton* appears only once. He wrote,

> It seems evident that the scribe who wrote the text from which all existing versions of the Chronicle descend was misled by the occurrence of the same words at the end of two contiguous or almost contiguous sentences, and omitted all that lay between them. Here, at least, there can be no question that a lost version of the Chronicle is the source of information peculiar to Æthelweard.[171]

Whitelock came to adopt this argument, summarising it as follows in a footnote to annal 885 in her co-edited translation of ASC,

> Æthelweard's account of this year is extremely important... One can see from it that the original Chronicle must have had two consecutive sentences ending 'went across the sea', and all our extant MSS. go back on a text which has accidentally lost the second of them, the scribe having continued after the second, instead of the first occurrence of the words'.[172]

While a majority of scholars also accepted this theory,[173] Bately did not. She wrote, '[e]vidence for loss through homoeoteleuton in annal 885 is not conclusive', for, 'not only does the Chronicle-entry as we have it make perfectly good sense, but

---

170. Campbell, *Æthelweard*, 44.
171. Stenton, *Preparatory*, p. 112.
172. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 198, n. 1. See also Bately, *TTR,* p. 85, n. 213.
173. See Campbell, *Æthelweard*, p. xxviii; Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 252, n. 125.

the clause supposedly left after the hypothetical loss through homoeoteleuton had taken place corresponds to neither of the nearly identical clauses in Æthelweard'.[174] I note, however, that ASC's passages before and after *ofer sæ gewiton* are similar to the passages before and after the *Chronicon*'s two 'beyond the sea' references. The table below compares Æthelweard and ASC in the section leading up to the first 'beyond the sea reference':

Æthelweard 885	**ASC 885**
With many horses they [i.e. the Danes] sought the shore and their proper stations [i.e. their ships.] Some of them sought places beyond the sea.	Then the enemy went to their ships and abandoned their fortification, and they were deprived of their horses there, and immediately that same summer they went back across the sea.

The next table compares ASC's passage following *ofer sæ gewiton* with the passage in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* which follows his second 'beyond the sea' reference:

Æthelweard 885	**ASC 885**
And in the same year the abovementioned King Ælfred sent a fleet to East Anglia, and as soon as they arrived, ships sixteen in number met them at the mouth of the Stour. These were cleared by force of arms and the officers were put to the sword.	That same year King Alfred sent a naval force from Kent into East Anglia. Immediately they came into the mouth of the Stour they encountered 16 ships of vikings and fought against them, and seized all the ships and killed the men.

These passages have much in common. For example, in the second table both versions state that: (1) Alfred sent a fleet to East Anglia; (2) the naval engagement took place immediately upon arrival at the Stour; (3) the viking ships numbered sixteen; and (4) the English defeated the vikings. Bately's objections to Stenton's theory, when seen in the wider context of her 1991 paper, are clearly influenced by her larger conclusion which rejects as uneconomical Plummer's hypothesis of *Æ* as an earlier and more accurate version of *æ*. She agrees, instead, with Dumville that the original Chronicle archetype to the early 890s was Plummer's *æ* as reconstructed from the vernacular versions, with its chronological dislocations, other errors, contemporary spellings, and more. Bately's conclusion that *æ* was the ultimate source of

174. Bately, *TTR*, pp. 42–43.

all ASC-related entries in all versions leaves a textual history for the Chronicle with no room for the eye-slip suggested by Stenton in annal 885 to occur.

1.3 The Fulham army entries: a third Alfredian source?

Given the evidence concerning the Fulham army entries in ASC 879–892 — their unique subject matter, Continental focus, and the fact that Æthelweard's *Chronicon* contains additional material of this type — I suggest the following. First, the Fulham army entries were compiled separately and circulated as an independent text *c*. 892, following the return to England of the Fulham army.[175] I call this source 'R'.[176] Second, the passage apparently missing in ASC 885 was probably lost through scribal error at a stage, as yet undetermined, in the transmission history between R and the Common Stock archetype. Third, Æthelweard's ASC-related source originally (like the vernacular versions) lacked the missing 885 passage. Fourth, either Æthelweard, or another scribe, corrected the 885 loss through homoeoteleuton using R. I also suggest that other interpolations were made in this section of Æthelweard's version of the Common Stock archetype using R.[177] This hypothesis — of the existence of a limited source of annals, 879–892, which antedate the Common Stock archetype — avoids the difficulties associated with Plummer's uneconomical hypothesis of *Æ* as an earlier and more accurate version of a full Chronicle in the form of *æ* (as detailed by Dumville and Bately).

1.4 The building blocks of ASC's early textual history

Up to this point, I have suggested it may be possible to discern within ASC three different set of annals, or independent texts, produced during the reign of Alfred, which

---

175. Given that Asser's *Life* includes Fulham army entries, and Asser was writing his royal biography in 893, they must have been written up in some form before 893.

176. I suggest that the recurring Continental focus makes it unlikely for R's annals to have been added directly to either P or Q before 893. Given R's subject matter, its purpose (as Davis and Meaney noted concerning this material) may well have been military, perhaps intended to alert Alfred's noblemen and allies to the nature of the enemy they were about to engage, or to inform them of tactics which had previously been employed against the vikings.

177. If, as seems likely, P and R were intended for use by Alfred's noblemen, it is not unreasonable to conjecture they could have been available to Æthelweard in the late tenth century in his capacity as ealdorman of the western provinces.

eventually contributed material to the Common Stock archetype. Before considering the possible textual history between the writing of these texts and the compilation of the Common Stock archetype, I will remind us of those three sources.

Source P

ASC's P-type entries are found in annals 789–878. Some evidence related to these entries may suggest they used regnal years rather than A.D. dating.[178] Other defining characteristics of P-type entries include: (1) a continuing focus on Egbert and his dynasty, (2) an emphasis on the south-western West Saxon nobility's long struggle against the vikings and enduring support for Egbert and his descendents, (3) the presence of south-western elements, (4) various distinctive features of style and phraseology (such as *micel wæl geslagen* and *micel wælsliht*), (5) the reporting of information as if from a first-hand account of events, (6) use of the verb *gefaran* for 'die', and, (7) the presentation of Alfred as a capable leader whose rule, even as a child, was recognised by the pope. Given that Alfred was in south-western Wessex in 878, that he then faced the greatest challenge of his reign and sought the support of his south-western West Saxon nobility, I suggest that P was probably written around that time and for a purpose related to the king's situation. Furthermore, I noted that Æthelweard's *Chronicon* contains additional P-type material not found in any other source, which suggests that he, or another scribe before him, had access to a copy of P from which material was interpolated into the ASC-related text used by Æthelweard.

Source Q

If all P-type entries are extracted from ASC, the remaining annals to 878 consist primarily of short, concise statements of fact concerning the history, from a secular

178. For example, the first of ASC's P-type entries describes the first viking raid against English lands, which took place during the reign of Brihtric, as having occurred in 'in his days', see Bately, *TTR,* p. 88, n. 259.

perspective, of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. These annals are very broad in scope, covering events from across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, with a clear emphasis on their conversion to Christianity and establishment of the Christian church in England. I call this source Q. Q-type entries use A.D. dating, and are also distinguished from P-type entries by use of the verb *forðferan*, rather than *gefaran*, for 'die'. Given that *SN*'s first Q-type entry is 455, and that from annal 449 in ASC there is a great increase in the number and frequency of entries it may be that, in its original form, Q opened with the arrival in Britain of Hengist and Horsa in the mid-fifth century. According to this hypothesis, Q was much more limited than ASC, and dealt only with matters of the greatest import — reporting on kings, popes, national conversions, battles, saints and other significant events.

Source R

My third suggested source, R, consists of entries, from 879–892, relating to the 'Fulham army'. R-type entries report this army's activities in England and on the Continent. In 892, the Fulham army returned to England in full force, its leaders intent upon defeating Alfred and capturing his kingdom. The fact that Æthelweard's *Chronicon* includes a number of R-type entries not found in any other ASC-related work may suggest that he (or another scribe) had access to a copy of R. This also suggests that some, but not all, of R's entries were eventually incorporated into the Common Stock archetype.

2. The relationship of Asser's *Life of Alfred* to ASC

If, *c*. 892, P, Q and R existed as three different sources, written at different times, and for different purposes and audiences, then the question remains as to the relationship between the text of Asser's *Life of Alfred*, written *c*. 893, and the Common Stock archetype. Did, as is now widely held, Asser use a full Chronicle in the form of *æ*, or might he, instead, have drawn his ASC-related entries directly from P, Q, and R?

2.1 The authenticity of Asser's *Life of Alfred*

Attempts by V. H. Galbraith in the 1960s and Alfred Smyth in the 1990s to dismiss Asser's *Life of Alfred* as a later forgery were largely unsuccessful.[179] The vast majority of scholars today regard the *Life* as a genuine and, therefore, highly significant biography of an Anglo-Saxon king from the late ninth century.[180] Concerning the hypothesis that Asser used a version of ASC, Bately wrote, 'there has been little controversy — at least since the publication of Stevenson's edition of this work'.[181] Keynes and Lapidge concluded, '[t]he fact that Asser, writing in 893, made use of a copy of the *Chronicle* that extended at least as far as 887 provides us with the essential point of departure: the *Chronicle* must have existed in some form already during Alfred's reign'.[182] The theory of P, Q and R as separate 'pre-Chronicle' texts circulating in late ninth-century Wessex, however, may challenge this assumption.

2.2 The relationship between the *Life* and ASC

As with both Æthelweard's *Chronicon* and *SN*, a comparison of the *Life*'s ASC-related entries with their counterparts in the vernacular versions reveals considerable variation between them. In a paper assessing the literary form of Asser's *Life*, Marie Schütt noted that of Asser's fifty-six ASC-related chapters, 'only fourteen are mere translations, all the others having some addition or expansion'.[183] Stevenson observed that '[t]he version of the Chronicle used by the author did not agree with any MS. of

---

179. See V. H. Galbraith, 'Who Wrote Asser's Life of Alfred?', in *An Introduction to the Study of History* (London: C. A. Watts, 1964); Alfred Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 149–70.

180. James Campbell wrote of the *Life* that 'It is not a fake; and it is very important', in *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2000), p. 129. See also Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, pp. 50–51, and Michael Lapidge, 'Asser's Reading', in *Alfred the Great: Papers From the Eleventh-centenary Conferences*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 27–47, at pp. 44–47.

181. Bately also wrote, 'Asser, according to the consensus, used a version of the Chronicle which reflected both the chronological dislocation and the loss through homoeoteleuton of material in annal 855, but which was independent of the immediate ancestors of any of the surviving Chronicle manuscripts', *TTR*, p. 53.

182. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 277.

183. Marie Schütt, 'The Literary Form of Asser's 'Vita Alfredi'', *EHR* 72 (1957), 217.

that work that has come down to us'.[184] Also, certain features in the *Life*'s ASC-related entries have led scholars to theorise over the possible existence of an earlier and more accurate source for this material than the Common Stock text of the vernacular versions. For example, Asser uses two archaic name forms, *Coenred* and *Sceapieg*, which appear as *Cenred* and *Sceapige*/*Sceapege*/*Scepigge*/*Sceapigge* in the vernacular versions.[185] I also note Thomas Bredehoft's conclusion that the genealogies in Asser and Æthelweard's *Chronicon* appear to belong to a stage in the development of this material which is earlier than the genealogical passages in the Common Stock.[186] Concerning the textual relationship between the vernacular versions and the *Life*, Stevenson concluded,

> It would... seem that none of the four families of MSS. was copied from the lost original that agreed exactly with the copy of the Chronicle used by [Asser], and the genealogy of the MSS. has to be carried beyond the lost original of each of the four groups. The copy used by the author cannot, therefore, have been far removed from the archetype of the Chronicle, for the variations represented in the four groups had clearly not yet arisen. This antiquity and accuracy of the copy of the Chronicle used by him is what one would expect from a writer in whose time the Chronicle was, to all appearances, drawn up.[187]

The considerable variation which exists between Asser's ASC-related annals and their corresponding passages in the vernacular versions raises questions about whether or not Asser's source of this material was indeed a version of the Common Stock archetype in the form of *æ*.

2.3 ASC 851, Asser's *Life* and the use of a September Indiction

In considering the possible source of Asser's ASC-related entries, it should be noted that scholars working with the Chronicle have long recognised that a significant

---

184. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. lxxxv.
185. Bately, however, noted that the appearance of these terms in Asser's *Life* does not prove the existence of a source earlier than the Common Stock archetype, in *TTR*, p. 55.
186. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, pp. 23, 33–34.
187. Stevenson, *Asser*, pp. lxxxvii–lxxxviii.

change occurs in ASC at annal 851 (and continues consecutively to annal 890),[188] involving the day on which the new year is reckoned.[189] In a paper published in 1933, Jean Thorogood demonstrated that in those pre-851 annals in ASC in which it is possible to determine the beginning of the new year, it is consistently 25 December.[190] Starting at annal 851, however, the new year is reckoned from the autumn, probably either 1 September, known as the Greek Indiction, or 24 September,[191] known as the Imperial, or Caesarean, Indiction.[192] So, for example, an event occurring in October 853 according to a year ending in December would be given as October 854 by a chronicler employing a September Indiction, for in the latter system the new year would have begun on 1 or 24 September. This discrepancy between systems continues until 25 December, when both fall in with each other again until the next September. For students of the Chronicle the sudden appearance of a September Indiction in the mid-ninth century is both surprising and difficult to explain. Kenneth Harrison wrote that '[n]othing…prepares us for the undeniable fact that during the latter part of the ninth century, from 851 at the latest, the Chronicle's year begins in the autumn'.[193] It is unexpected because 'soon after the eighth century had begun the Indiction ceased to be the prime reckoning for purposes of administration or as a guide to the chronicler and historian'.[194] Why, then, do ASC's annals from 851 to 890 start the year in September? Harrison offered two possible solutions, 'one precise and the other not':

---

188. Hodgkin concluded that annal 890 was the point at which the September Indiction ceased (annal 891 uses *forþferan*) though it does reappear occassionally after 890. See Hodgkin, 'Beginning', pp. 506–7.
189. See Wynn, 'Beginning', pp. 75–76; Kenneth Harrison, 'The Beginning of the Year in England, c. 500-900,' *ASE* 2 (1973), pp. 66–68.
190. Thorogood, 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', pp. 353–63. See also Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 329, n. 9.
191. 24 September is also referred to as the 'Bedan Indiction', see Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 124, and Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 329, n. 9.
192. Thorogood, p. 360.
193. Harrison, 'The Beginning', p. 66.
194. Harrison, *Framework*, p. 117. Harrison concluded (p. 118) that the 'revival of an Indiction as the beginning of the year would appear to be very unlikely in the latter half of the ninth century, to judge from the internal evidence of the Chronicle itself, let alone from the charters'.

> (1) If a precise reckoning from the Greek indiction of 1 September were chosen we should have to postulate an antiquarian revival or a new and powerful influence, perhaps from as far afield as Rome. Alternatively, Bede's preference for 24 September, operating though a copy of *De Temporum Ratione*, may have been the deciding factor...
> (2) A vague concept, such as that of 'the campaigning season'. During the first half of the ninth century it seems to have been only in summer that the Vikings were a menace, and then chiefly near the coast.[195]

I suggest as a third possible option it may have been Asser (or an associate scribe) who imposed a September Indiction on the 851–890 section. This theory, however, requires a reversal in what is currently assumed to be the textual relationship between ASC and Asser's *Life*.

The opening chapters of Asser's *Life* start with Alfred's birth at Wantage in 849, followed by the genealogies of both his parents. The first ASC-related entry, annal 851, comes in chapter 3. Asser then continues to build the narrative structure of the *Life* by weaving ASC-related texts with biographical information gathered from Alfred himself or from members of his court and family, or from things Asser knew from personal experience.[196] The last of Asser's ASC-related entries, annal 887, appears in chapter 86, after which the *Life* continues with more biographical detail to its conclusion in chapter 106. It is noteworthy that the extent of ASC's annals exhibiting a September Indiction (851–890) corresponds closely to the ASC-related entries in the *Life* (851–887). Harrison suggested that the appearance of the Indiction might in this section of ASC represent some form of 'antiquarian revival'. In light of this, I note Keynes and Lapidge's observation that Asser's use of the *Vetus Latina*, or 'Old Latin' translation of the Bible, instead of Jerome's 'Vulgate' version, 'is most likely to derive from his early training at St David's, and that he should still be quoting

---

195. Harrison, 'The Beginning', pp. 66–67. For a discussion of the idea of 'campaigning years' see Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 125.
196. Stevenson, *Asser*, pp. lxxix–lxxx. Stevenson wrote, '[t]his curious mixture of chronicle and biography has exposed the work to much adverse criticism'. For a broad outline of the contents of Asser's *Life*, see Dorothy Whitelock, *The Genuine Asser* (Reading: University of Reading, 1968), 4–5.

from it towards the end of the ninth century suggests that St David's was, in this respect at least, a cultural backwater'.[197] Schütt, considering a variety of evidence, concluded that '[t]hough Asser was two centuries younger than Bede, he seems to stand in older traditions'.[198] It is possible that among such 'older traditions' was also the use of a September Indiction.

2.4 Possible evidence of Welsh influence in this section of ASC

Alex Woolf used evidence of the spellings of names of Celtic origin, for example *Stræcledwalas*[199] and *Lidwiccium*,[200] (both of which first appear in ASC in annal 875), to suggest that the author(s) of such entries might have been,

> working in a house (or houses) which had established connections with south Wales and were in possession, perhaps, of Cambro-Latin books and familiar with Welsh ecclesiastics. Such circumstances may have contributed in part to the Chronicle's perception of the world beyond Wessex. The presence of Asser of Mynyw at Alfred's court indicates that intellectual exchange between south Wales and Wessex could happen in this period.[201]

Such evidence of possible Welsh influence in this section of ASC is in keeping with the theory that Asser may have had a hand in its compilation.

2.5 Introducing hypothetical source 'S'

At this point I posit the following as a working hypothesis. When Asser came to write his *Life of Alfred* in 893, rather than consulting multiple manuscripts as he composed his text, he (or another scribe) produced a separate set of entries drawing (primarily) upon P, Q, and R. I call this source 'S'. If consecutive use of a September

---

197. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 53. They note 'that the state of the author's learning as revealed by the Life is likely to be the product not only of his initial training in Wales but also of his later association with Continental scholars at Alfred's court, making it difficult to decide under which circumstances he acquired knowledge of the various works he certainly used'.
198. Schütt, 'Literary Form', p. 220.
199. Woolf wrote that the form *Stræcledwalas* in ASC 'appears to be Welsh in origin, and it is not the only Welsh form in the Chronicle for the later ninth and tenth centuries', in 'Reporting Scotland in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Brepols, 2010), 235.
200. Woolf wrote, '[t]he term *Lidwicce*, 'Bretons', is a borrowing of Old Welsh *Litewic*', in 'Reporting Scotland', p. 236.
201. Woolf, 'Reporting Scotland', 238.

Indiction in ASC (851–890) is indicative of S,[202] then S appears to have covered most of the years of Alfred's life — Alfred having been born in 849, and annal 851, perhaps, the first entry found in P, Q, or R after that year. Upon its completion, Asser would have selected entries from S to translate[203] and incorporate into his text of the *Life*. At a later stage, S would also have been used by the authors of the Common Stock archetype. The scribal error which caused the loss of the passage in annal 885, missing from Asser's *Life*, A, BCDE and *SN*, would, according to this hypothesis, have first occurred in S. That all of these works share this error is proof of a common textual link between them. If my theory of S is correct, then Asser's influence appears to extend in some degree to the production of the national Chronicle, and he was ultimately responsible for the appearance of the September Indiction in ASC 851–890. Though the last ASC-related entry in the *Life* is annal 887, this does not require S to have concluded at this point, for consecutive use of the September Indiction in ASC continues to 890. Asser may simply not have included all of S in the *Life*.[204] It may be, as some have suggested, that the *Life of Alfred*, in the form that that has come down to us, represents a work in progress instead of a finished text.[205] Keynes and Lapidge wrote,

> What limited circulation the work did enjoy was entirely in England; but even in England it does not seem to have been known to more than a handful of medieval authors. This may be because Asser apparently never completed the work and hence made no arrangements to have it copied and distributed; for it might well be argued that the manuscript transmission derives entirely from Asser's incomplete draft.

---

202. The September Indiction appears to have been imposed on material from whatever sources were used to compile the 851–890 section, including entries of P- and Q-types.

203. Concerning the likelihood that Asser's source of ASC-related entries was in Old English, Stevenson wrote, 'there seems to us no reason for doubting that the author of the Life translated direct from the Chronicle. The evidences of mistranslations of the O.E. of the latter work, and the presence of case-endings that can only be explained as being derived from something written in O.E. (§ 47), and the phrases *loco funeris dominati sunt* and *victoriam accipientes* for 'gaining a victory' are even stronger proofs that an O.E. orignal lies at the back of the Latin annals of the present work. These phrases are too literal translations of O.E. phrases that are commonly used in the Chronicle', in Asser's *Life*, p. lxxxiv.

204. Keynes and Lapidge suggested that Asser may not have used ASC-related entries after annal 887 because the material which followed (to *c*. 891 in their view) was 'anti-climactic', *Asser*, p. 278.

205. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 57.

3. Other evidence for separate authorship of the section starting at 851

Cyril Hart observed that a number of changes occur in the section of annals starting at 851. He wrote that from this point,

> The chronicle becomes preoccupied with the Danish incursions, to the exclusion of almost everything else; consecrations to bishoprics which had characterised the entries for earlier periods (for example, annals 625, 664, 668, 761, 765, 802, 805, 833) are no longer recorded, but as a new feature we find mention of the burial place of the king and other notable persons (for example, annals 855–8, 860, 867, 871, 874, 888). For four whole centuries the great majority of year entries had commenced with the word *Her*, followed by a personal name, then a verb; in the annals of the second half of the ninth century, however, this tradition was largely abandoned, and annals 867 to 887 all commence with *Her for se here*, or some similar variant. The fighting is described in ever greater detail, resulting in longer and longer annals... As we shall see below, the 851 annal marks also the end of the century-long dislocation in the chronology of the A text.[206]

I suggest that the characteristics which Hart describes here add weight to a theory of separate authorship for the section starting at 851 in ASC. It may be that such changes reflect Asser's interests and preoccupations. This evidence fits well with the hypothesis of S as an antecedent text to the Common Stock archetype.

3.1 Annal 851: the end of ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation

Another feature relating to annal 851 in ASC, and which could be of significance for the theory of S as a possible source of ASC-related material, is that at 851 the 756–845 chronological dislocation, affecting all ASC-related texts except *SN,* finally comes to an end. Plummer argued that the cause of such dislocations was 'purely mechanical', and 'due to the scribe passing over now and again (as may easily be done) some blank annal against which nothing is recorded'.[207] He suggested the cor-

---

206. Cyril R. Hart, 'The B Text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *Journal of Medieval History* 8 (1982), 246–47.
207. Earle and Plummer, II, p. ciii.

rection at annal 851 was due 'in part to the occurrence of blank annals in the Chronicle between 845 and 851'.[208] Bately did not agree with Plummer in this instance. She wrote,

> There are certainly a number of places in the surviving Chronicle versions where one or other of the texts falls out of step with the rest in respect of its annal-numbering. However, this state of affairs normally lasts only for a very brief series of annals, and agreement usually returns after the next barren annal-number or sequence of barren annal-numbers.[209]

She cited two other examples — one from MS A 892–920 and the other from MS C 865–914 — observing that '[i]n both these instances the manuscripts with the dislocation have annals dated one or more years in advance of the rest'. In contrast, the 756–845 chronological dislocation was not ahead, but two and, at times, three years behind in its numbering. As to the possible cause of this error and its lack of correction over such a long stretch of annals, Bately wrote, 'there is no simple explanation ready to hand'. She added, '[t]here are a number of places before annal 851 where the author of the error might have been expected automatically to return to the correct numbering but does not, the first of these being at annal 758 (*rectius* 756), others including the turn of a page'.[210]

Bately then proposed, 'very tentatively', the following alternative to Plummer's hypothesis. First, she observed that the text of annal *755 states that Cynewulf reigned for thirty-one years, when the actual framework of the Chronicle allows him just twenty-nine, agreeing with the 29-year reign *SN* gives Cynewulf (with twenty-nine years widely regarded as the correct reading). Next, she noted that the 'original contents of annal 757 (now numbered 755) have been tampered with'.[211] Bately repeated a suggestion she made in an earlier paper that the Common Stock archetype

---

208. Earle and Plummer, II, p. 77.
209. Bately, *TTR,* p. 33.
210. Bately, *TTR,* p. 33.
211. Here Bately agrees with Whitelock that the Cynewulf/Cyneheard account 'has plainly been added to an annal that once existed without it', Whitelock, et. al, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Revised Translation* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. xxii.

may have been produced in sections by a team (or teams) of scribes 'collecting material of a variety of kinds from what appears to have been a wide range of sources'. She wrote,

> When the time came for the various contributions to be meshed together, the compiler(s) quite probably had before them a skeletal regnal framework which they had to reconcile with the 'world history' and Bede Epitome annals, and other assorted materials. In addition to the original annals for *757 and *786 dealing with Cynewulf's accession and subsequent death in battle, there was available to the compiler(s) an extended account of that battle, set in the context of revenge inspired by events in the year of Cynewulf's accession — probably drawing on a prose or verse lay commemorating the occasion. This account... was inserted in annal *757. As a result, the length of Cynewulf's reign is given not once (as the customary regnal length at the end of the annal) but twice.[212]

A scribe reading this material 'would have realised that according to the information provided in the Cynewulf/Cyneheard annal, 755 not 757 ought to have been the date for the accession of Cynewulf, and the date 754 should have been allocated to the one-year reign of King Sigeberht that immediately preceded it'. As a result, the 756–845 chronological dislocation 'would have arisen in the final stages of compilation, perhaps as a direct result of the insertion of the new material relating to the fight between Cynewulf and Cyneheard'. Bately concluded,

> That the dislocation does not continue into the entries for the 850s could be either because the 'corrections' were made before the section in which they occurred was joined up with the final section, or because that final section had what may be called 'secure' dates, familiar to the compilers.[213]

Bately's proposal that the 756–845 chronological dislocation might have been caused by the insertion at annal *755 of new material concerning Cynewulf and Cyneheard is compelling. Also, her suggestion that the correction at 851 may have come about because another set of annals, unaffected by this error, had been 'joined

212. Bately, *TTR*, 34.
213. Bately, *TTR*, 35.

up' with the section ending at 845 dovetails neatly with my theory of S (851–890) as a distinct compilation antedating the Common Stock archetype.

3.2 The divergence between A and B(CDE) at 851

Before concluding this chapter, I consider a final change occurring at annal 851, involving the texts of MSS A, B (and, to varying degrees, C, D, and E), and Asser's *Life of Alfred*. In 1982 Cyril Hart published a paper entitled 'The B text of the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle*' in which he posited what Audrey Meaney described as 'a completely new theory of the dissemination of the *Chronicle*'.[214] Bately called Hart's proposals 'revolutionary'.[215]

Noting that on fol. 4v of MS A, the earliest of the surviving vernacular versions, the scribe switches from a space-saving, vertical, two-column layout to a single-column of text spanning the entire page — a change which coincides with an increase in the frequency and length of annalistic material starting at annal 449 — Hart suggested that the scribe of A had switched layouts mid-page to accommodate the text of a 'radically new source'.[216] He wrote,

> We have seen from the sudden change of format by the scribe of A in the process of working on f.4.v that he was using two (or more) consecutive sources; as a corollary we may assume that he could not have been working from a single exemplar, for at this point he was constructing his exemplar as he went along. If therefore (as I shall hope to show) the B chronicler was dependent on the same materials as A for this period, it follows that either he was using A itself, or else a derivative; he could not have been using a precursor to A.[217]

According to Hart, the entries of this new source 'were both longer in content and closer together in time than their predecessors'.[218] Hart called it the 'A text pre-

---

214. Meaney, 'St. Neots', p. 221.
215. Bately, *TTR*, 3.
216. Hart, 'B Text', 243. See also M.B. Parkes, 'The Palaeography of the Parker Manuscript of the Chronicle, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *ASE* 5 (1976), 154.
217. Hart, 'B Text', p. 244.
218. Hart, 'B Text', p. 244.

cursor' and postulated that it extended from 449 to 914 and 'would have drawn upon a variety of sources'.[219] Comparing the texts of A and B, Hart also noted that,

> Right down to the mid-ninth century the annals in A and B run hand-in-hand. There is nothing in the B text to suggest to me that it was dependent on any other set of annals than that contained in A for this period. In annal 457, B (but not A) identifies Æsc as the son of Hengest, and in annals 635 and 639 the title 'king' is added in the B text to the names Cynegils and Cuthred. The King Beornwulf of annal 825 is identified in B as Mercian. In annal 648 the B text adds the word *hida* to a measurement of land, and in annal 694 *punda* to a measurement of money. The shipmen of annal 789 in the A text are identified in B as *norðmanna*, and the inhabitants of the Kentish marshland appear in annal 798 in B as *merscwara*. The wood of annal 709 is likewise identified in B as *selewuda*. In annal 643 the minster at Winchester appears as the *ealdan* church in B, Newminster having been founded by King Edward the Elder after that portion of the A text had been written. None of these additions implies the use by the B chronicler of a set of annals other than A, for all could have been based, rightly or wrongly, on the conjecture of the chronicler, drawing in most cases on his own general knowledge.[220]

In Hart's view, '[t]he five barren years down to the annal 851 formed a watershed in the content and composition of ASC'. He observed that the text of B (and, largely, CDE),[221] which to 845 follows A so closely as to possibly be a copy of A, at 851 suddenly begins to deviate from A in a number of readings. Most significantly, many of these variant readings bring B(CDE) into agreement with Asser's *Life* against A.[222] Hart wrote,

> It appears to me to be more than a simple coincidence that the B chronicler ceased to use the A text as his sole chronicle source at precisely the same annal, 851, as that used by Asser to commence his account of King Alfred's reign. Asser continued to use annals from the archetype of the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle* down to the year 887… Stevenson concluded that Asser's source was much closer to B than to A. There is a simple hypothetical explanation for

---

219. Hart, 'B Text', p. 280.
220. Hart, 'B Text', p. 244.
221. MSS BCDE appear to descend from a common ancestor. Bately writes of the 'common exemplar of B, C, D and E', and the 'archetype of BCDE, in *TTR*, p. 22.
222. These are listed in Hart, 'B Text', p. 247–48. Meaney summarized Hart's theory in her 1986 paper, 'St. Neots', pp. 222–23. Stevenson also includes a list a variant readings between the different versions, in *Asser*, p. lxxxvi.

this, namely that Asser and the B chronicler had available the same chronicle source for this period.[223]

The following table lists agreements between B and Asser's *Life* against A. Those readings which Stevenson regarded as correct are highlighted in bold text.

Year	MS A	Asser's *Life*	MS B
(530)	feala ('many')	few	fea ('few')
(530)	Wilztgaras-byrig	**Guuihtgara-burlzg**	**Wihtgara-byrig**
851	battle of Sandwich early in the annal	battle of Sandwich at the end of the annal	battle of Sandwich at the end of the annal
853	—	deaths of ealdormen Ealhere and Huda	deaths of ealdormen Ealhere and Huda
(855)	—	Creoda included in genealogy	Creoda included in genealogy
(855)	—	Hathra, Bedwig, and Sceaf	Hathra, Bedwig, and Sceaf
866	'army'	'heathen army'	'heathen army'
868	—	report of a viking siege	report of a viking siege
871	—	death of a viking earl	death of a viking earl
874	—	Ceolwulf named	Ceolwulf named
876	—	hostages taken	hostages taken
886	—	Paris mentioned	Paris mentioned
887	—	the Marne mentioned (x2)	the Marne mentioned (x2)

The table contains only agreements between B and Asser's *Life* against A. It does not account for all of the variation between the different vernacular versions and Asser's *Life*, including disagreements between the *Life* and BCDE, which show that Asser's *Life* was not the BCDE precursor's source.[224] The fact that (1) Asser's ASC-related entries start at annal 851, (2) the divergence between A and B(CDE) begins at

223. Hart, 'B Text', p. 247.
224. Other differences are considered in the next chapter.

851, and (3) many of the variant readings in BCDE agree with Asser against A, as Hart observed, seems too much of a coincidence to be inconsequential. Hart's suggestion of an antecedent text at play here merits consideration. According to his hypothesis, the Common Stock's author(s) and Asser used the same source text (which Hart called the 'A text precursor'), adapting its contents in varying degrees, and apparently introducing a variety of errors. If, as Hart suggests, the scribe of the BCDE percursor had access to that original source, then interpolations made to his copy of Common Stock archetype (either A or a derivative) in instances where the Common Stock's text deviated from the original, would bring the BCDE precursor (and, subsequently, B, C, D and E) into agreement with Asser's *Life* against A. Hart suggested that his 'A text precursor' extended from 455–914. In his view, this text lacked the 756–845 chronological dislocation and was therefore *SN*'s ASC-related source. I note that, according to my working hypothesis, certain features Hart attributed to his A text precursor may, in fact, reflect Q (such as a lack of entries affected by the 756–845 chronological dislocation), while others are indicative of S (such as use of a September Indiction).

4. Summary of chapter

I have suggested that when Asser sat down to compile his biography of King Alfred, *c*. 893, he made use of all annalistic materials at his disposal, including P, Q, and R. Perhaps to avoid difficulties associated with consulting multiple manuscripts simultaneously, Asser (or an associate) combined entries from from P, Q, and R into a single text. I call this source S. Annals were then translated and copied from S into the *Life*. According to this hypothesis, S was later used by the authors of the Common Stock archetype, thus serving as the textual link between Asser's *Life* and the vernacular versions. The existence of S would explain the similarities and differences between Asser's *Life* and the Common Stock. A significant feature of S (851–890) is use of a September Indiction. I also suggest that at times Asser amended entries in S,

occasionally intentionally (such as when glossing a word or place name), and at times in error (such as the loss through homoeoteleuton of a passage in annal 885). The authors of the Common Stock archetype likewise appear to have amended and introduced errors into texts from S.

I noted a convergence of features of different kinds occurring at annal 851. At this point:

- ASC's 756–845 chronological dislocation finally comes to an end
- a September Indiction begins to mark the start of a new year
- Hart observed, a number of changes from previous sections begins at 851
- ASC-related entries in Asser's *Life* (851–887) correspond closely to the section of annals in ASC which consecutively exhibit a September Indiction (851–890)
- MSS A and B, the texts of which 'run hand in hand' down to 845, begin to diverge, with several of B's subsequent entries agreeing with Asser's *Life* against A

Based on these observations I suggested that Asser, or an associate scribe, *c*. 893, compiled a set of annals consisting of entries drawn from P, Q and R, extending from 851 to 890. This source, which I call S, was unaffected by the 756–845 chronological dislocation. I also suggested that not only Asser but also the authors of the Common Stock archetype used S.

If Asser, or an associate scribe, drew upon P, Q and R to produce the working copy S (with annals extending from 851–890) *c*. 893, then one of the main tenets of Plummer's hypothesis concerning ASC's early textual history fails. According to Plummer, because the *Life* contains ASC-related material, and Asser is known to have been writing his royal biography in 893, then — assuming Asser's source was a version of the Chronicle — 893 sets the *terminus ante quem* for the Common Stock's compilation. This theory places the origin of the national Chronicle project firmly in the reign of Alfred. If, however: (1) Asser's ASC-related source was not a full

Chronicle, but S, (2) S was drawn from PQR, and (3) the authors of the Common Stock also used S for their 851–890 section, then 893 is, instead, the *terminus post quem* for the Common Stock archetype. This allows a date for the original Chronicle's compilation beyond Alfred's reign, and opens up the possibility for a very different starting point from that established by Plummer.

Hypothetical *æ* served as the cornerstone for Plummer's theories regarding the early textual history of the Chronicle and all ASC-related texts. While the idea of a single archetypal source might appeal to a preference in modern scholarship for Occam's-razor type solutions, it in fact requires the introduction of numerous 'lost' manuscripts to account for all the variations existing between the different versions.[225] Much of the complexity in ASC theory over the past century has arisen from attempts to square the evidence of Asser's *Life*, Æthelweard's *Chronicon* and *SN* with the single archetype hypothesis. As he assessed the ASC-related material in these works, Plummer looked for solutions leading back to the assumed *æ*. So, for example, when *SN* was found to lack the 756–845 chronological dislocation affecting all other texts, Plummer proposed the existence of an earlier and more accurate version of *æ* which was free of this error, and called it *Æ*. Ever since Plummer published his conclusions, the assumption of a single archetypal source for the vernacular versions and other ASC-related works has served as the starting point for scholars studying ASC. When, for example, Dumville and Bately exposed the weaknesses in Plummer's theory of *Æ* as an earlier and more accurate version of *æ*, they nevertheless held to his *æ* hypothesis and concluded that the *SN* compiler had instead corrected and amended a full version of *æ*. I have argued, *pace* Plummer, Dumville and Bately, however, that the source of *SN*'s ASC-related entries to annal 845 was not a version of the Common Stock, but Q — a more restricted compilation which antedated the Common Stock archetype; consisted of short, terse annals (starting, perhaps, at 449);

---

225. Janet Bately, in her 1991 paper, proposed at least seven such 'lost' Chronicle sources.

and gave a broad, sweeping overview of the history of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, using repeating formulaic phrases and the verb *forþferan* for 'die'.

In the remainder of this thesis I consider the evidence for ASC's early textual history based on my theory of PQRS as antecedent texts to the Common Stock archetype. I offer an alternative to Plummer's hypothesis, and suggest that futher research may conclude that the production of a national Chronicle, as it exists in the vernacular versions, originated, not as a Alfredian text, but as a product from the reign of Edward the Elder, Alfred's son and heir to the throne.

5

PQRS and ASC's early textual history

Before considering the possible impact the theory of the existence of PQRS might have on interpreting ASC's early textual history, I now consider evidence which may suggest that yet another set of annals, also antecedent to the Common Stock archetype, was produced during the reign of Alfred and used, together with PQRS, to compile that archetype. The evidence for this additional source relates to a series of *SN*'s annals running from 891–895. By comparing *SN*'s texts with their corresponding passages in Asser's *Life* and ASC it will be shown there is little support for the hypothesis that, in addition to Asser's *Life*, the *SN* compiler also used a version of the Chronicle in the form of the vernacular versions' *æ*.

1. Did the *SN* compiler use Q in his 851–887 annals?

But, first, we return to a discussion regarding source Q, the annals of which, I have suggested, extended from 449–890 and may be distinguished from P-type entries by (1) their use of *forðferan* for 'die' (instead of *gefaran*), (2) certain repeated formulaic phrases, and (3) a subject matter which was concerned almost exclusively with great events involving kings, popes and others also of the highest status. I argue above that from 455–842 *SN* drew its ASC-related material from Q rather than, as is currently assumed, from a full version of the Chronicle in the form of the Common Stock of the vernacular versions. (I also argued that Q was one of the sources used in S, and that S was used both by Asser to write the *Life* in 893, and by authors of the Common Stock as they compiled their original archetype at some point after that date.) Before looking in more detail at the 891–895 section, I will consider whether the tex-

tual evidence of *SN* might be seen to suggest that its compiler on occasion used Q in the section of annals which draws largely upon the *Life* as a source, annals 851–887. Concerning *SN*'s entries from Asser's *Life* Stevenson wrote,

> The compiler makes extensive use of the Life of Alfred, embodying nearly the whole of it. He omits the passages relating to the author, the interpretations of local names, and, like Florence, *anno Dominicae Incarnationis* and the note of Alfred's age under each year. With these exceptions, he fortunately transcribed the Life very accurately... Occasionally he has manifestly superior readings to those of the Cottonian MS of the Life, so that it is probable that he used a better MS.[226]

Although, as noted above, the *SN* compiler's practice of extracting verbatim quotes from his sources caused some early scholars to attribute *SN*'s composition to Asser himself,[227] there are nevertheless a number of instances of variation between *SN* and the surviving copy of the Cotton manuscript of the *Life*. Scholars have long debated the possible cause(s) of that variation — whether it reflects the version of the *Life* used by the compiler,[228] or if he added detail from ASC or some other source, or if he perhaps on occassion invented his own glosses and other phrases. In a paper published by Cyril Hart in 1981, entitled, 'The East Anglian Chronicle' (the name he used for *SN*), Hart listed the following examples of variation which exist between *SN* and the text of the Cotton manuscript of *Life*:

> Asser, who was a Welshman, was inclined to call England indifferently *Britannia* or *Saxonia* its inhabitants *Saxones,* and its language *Saxonice*. Our compiler alters such references consistently. *Saxonice* becomes *Anglice* (44.20; 66.6), *Saxonia* becomes *Anglia* (12.21, 22, 31; 13.29), *Saxones* become *Saxones vel Angles* (15.1; 42.30), or simply *Anglos* (66.17; 106.54), or when appropriate *occidentalium Saxonum* (5.4; 15.1; 18.2; 19.1; 36.2; 43.1; 49.10; 53.2; 71.3; 93.1). The *scola Saxonum* in Rome becomes the *scola Anglorum* (46.10; 71.2). *Britannia* also becomes *Anglia* (21.6; 61.2; 66.5),

---

226. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 104.
227. See Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, pp. xxxix–xl.
228. The MS of the *Life* destroyed in the 1731 fire at Ashburnham dated to *c*. 1000, was carefully copied before it burned. We also have John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*, and the *Historia Regum*, both of which contain material from the *Life* for comparison when attempting to determine possible readings in Asser's original text.

> except when it refers to Wales (14.4). For *Orientalium Saxonum, quod Saxonice East Engle dicitur*, he gives simply *Orientalium Anglorum* (21.6–7). We are able, therefore, to distinguish quite easily in the *East Anglian chronicle* between the continental Saxons and the English, between England and Wales, and between the West Saxons and the East Angles. In one interesting passage, our compiler goes still further, and renders *Angli et Saxones* in his source as *Angli et Merci, Cantuurii, Australes et Occidentales Saxones* (83.6). All these peoples, he says, were brought together for the first time under a single king in the person of Alfred. As a careful and scholarly modification of Asser's text, this tells us something of the ability and interests of our compiler.[229]

As an example of such variation, the table below includes the passage Hart described as 'interesting', Asser's chapter 83, found in *SN* 886. Also included, for comparison, is the relevant entry from ASC,

***SN* 886**	**Asser's *Life* 83**	**MS A 886**
Alfredus, rex Occidentalium Saxonum, post incendia urbium stragesque populorum Lundoniam ciuitatem honorifice restaurauit et habitabilem fecit; quam genero suo Adherędo Merciorum comiti commendauit seruandam. Ad quem regem omnes Angli, Merci, Cantuarii, Australes et Occidentales Saxones — qui prius ubique dispersi fuerant aut cum paganis subs captiuitate erant — uoluntarie reuerterunt et suo dominio se subdiderunt.	Eodem anno Ælfred, Angulsaxonum rex, post incendia urbium stragesque populorum Lundoniam civitatem honorifice restaurauit et habitabilem fecit; quam Ætheredo, Merciorum comiti, commendavit seruandam. Ad quem regem omnes Angli et Saxones, qui prius ubique dispersi fuerant aut cum paganis subs captiuitate erant, voluntarie converterunt et suo dominio se subdiderunt.	Þy ilcan geare gesette Ęlfred cyning Lundenburg, 7 him all Angelcyn to cirde þæt buton deniscra monna hæftniede was; 7 hie þa befæste þa burg Ęþerede aldormen to haldonne.
***SN* 886 (trans.)**	**Asser's *Life* 83.6 (Keynes and Lapidge)**	**MS A 886 (Whitelock)**
Alfred, king of the West Saxons, restored the city of London splendidly — after so many towns had been burned and so many people slaughtered — and made it habitable again; he entrusted it to the care of Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians. All the Angles, Mercians, men of Kent, South and West Saxons — those who had formerly been scattered everywhere and were not in captivity with the Vikings — turned willingly to King Alfred and submitted themselves to his lordship.	In this same year Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, restored the city of London splendidly — after so many towns had been burned and so many people slaughtered — and made it habitable again; he entrusted it to the care of Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians. All the Angles and Saxons — those who had formerly been scattered everywhere and were not in captivity with the Vikings — turned willingly to King Alfred and submitted themselves to his lordship.	That same year King Alfred occupied London; and all the English people that were not under subjection to the Danes submitted to him. And he then entrusted the borough to the control of Ealdorman Ethelred.

229. Hart, 'East Anglian Chronicle', p. 262.

From Asser's phrase *post incendia urbium*, down to the line, *Angli et Saxones*, *SN* is a near verbatim copy of the text of the *Life*. At this point, however, instead of *Angli et Saxones*, *SN* defines more precisely which peoples submitted to Alfred, namely *Angli et Merci, Cantuurii, Australes et Occidentales Saxones*, 'the Angles, Mercians, men of Kent, South and West Saxons'. Given that the vernacular versions agree in reading 'all the English people', ASC was not *SN*'s source of the more detailed phrase. There are, therefore, three options to consider regarding the possible origin of this phrase in *SN*: (1) the *SN* compiler found this reading in his version of the *Life* (though I note that none of the other works drawing upon the *Life* include it), (2) the *SN* compiler invented the phrase himself, or (3) the *SN* compiler had access to another source which was neither the *Life* nor ASC. These three options must be considered for all such variation between *SN* and the texts from Asser's *Life* which have been included in that work. As to *SN*'s annal 886, the concern to specify which peoples submitted to Alfred seems likelier to date to an author writing in or near Alfred's time, than to a scribe in East Anglia more than two centuries later. I suggest, therefore, that *SN*'s phrase, *Angli et Merci, Cantuurii, Australes et Occidentales Saxones*, came from the compiler's copy of Q. If this is correct then it was left out of S and, subsequently, any version whose textual history derives from S, namely Asser's *Life*, Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, and the shared archetype of the vernacular versions.

SN incorporates all or part of seventy-four of the 106 chapters in Asser's *Life*. As Hart noted,

> The compiler omitted to copy from his source accounts of Alfred's genealogy, birth and early life, and his learning and character. He also left out some campaigns and other events in Wales and Francia. All the English events are

> abstracted, with the exception of those for which the compiler has preferred the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle* as his source.[230]

The entries in *SN*'s 851–887 section for which Dumville and Lapidge attribute ASC as the source number only three, these forming parts of annals 877, 878, and 879. In this same section of *SN* they also list seven entries of unknown provenance, in annals 855 (x2), 856, 857, 870, and 878 (x2). I now consider all of these, as well as the three, or possibly four, examples in *SN* which Stevenson suggested offer 'manifestly superior readings' over their counterparts in the Cotton manuscript of Asser's *Life*.

1.1 Stevenson's 'more correct readings' in *SN* over Asser's *Life*

Stevenson, noting that *SN*'s readings from Asser's *Life* 'agreed largely with the Cottonian', suggested that at 49.20 (*SN* 876), 55.4 (*SN* 878), 70.10 (*SN* 885), and 42.26 (*SN* 873), the readings copied from the *Life* into *SN* were 'more correct' than their counterparts in the Cotton manuscript of the *Life*. The first of these examples, from chapter 49 of the *Life* (part of *SN* 876), reads (with the relevant annal included from ASC for comparison) as follows,

***SN* 876**	**Asser's *Life* 49.20**	**MS A 876**
sed more suo solita fallacia utens et obsides et iuramentum atgue fidem promissam non custodiens, nocte quadam fędere dirupto, omnes equites quos habebat occidentem uersus in Domnaniam ad locum qui dicitur anglicę Exanceastra...	Sed, more suo, solita fallacia utens, et obsides et iuramentum atgue fidem promissam non custodiens, nocte quadam, foedere disrupto, omnes equites, quos habebat, occidit, verusque inde alium locum, qui dicitur Saxonice Exanceastre...	7 hie þa under þam hie nihtes bestęlon þære fierde se gehorsoda here into Escanceaster.
***SN* 876 (trans.)**	**Asser's *Life* 49.20**	**MS A 876 (Whitelock)**
But one night, practising their usual treachery, after their own manner, and paying no heed to the hostages, the oath and the promise of faith, they broke the treaty, and turned westward and went to Devon, to the place called Exeter in English...	But one night, practising their usual treachery, after their own manner, and paying no heed to the hostages, the oath and the promise of faith, breaking their treaty, they killed all the horsemen whom they had, [1 word garbled] from there to another place, which is called in Saxon Exeter...	And then under cover of that, they — the mounted army — stole away by night from the English army to Exeter.

230. Hart, 'East Anglian Chronicle', pp. 261–2.

Keynes and Lapidge suggested that '[t]he received text of Asser may be corrupt at this point'.[231] They also noted in this passage that, 'the *Annals of St Neots* read *occidentem* for *occidit*, and although what follows cannot be construed as it stands, the original sense was perhaps that the Viking cavalry then turned westwards (*occidentem versus*) and went to Devon'.[232] Whatever the cause of the variation between *SN* and Asser's *Life* — whether the compiler followed the reading of his version of the *Life* or used another source — the name Devon appears neither in the text of the Cotton manuscript's version of this annal nor in ASC. While the *SN* compiler may have inserted the name Devon from his own knowledge to clarify Exeter's location for his readers, it is also possible that Devon appeared in whichever source he might have been using in addition to the *Life*.

In Stevenson's second example, from chapter 55 of the *Life* (in *SN* 878), the term *page*[233] has been interpolated into Asser's text after *Sumurtunensis*. The relevant passage reads as follows in the three versions,

SN 878	**Asser's *Life* 55.4**	**MS A 878**
Anno eodem post Pascha Alfrędus rex cum paucis fecit arcem in loco qui dicitur Aethelinaeg, et de ipsa arce semper cum nobilibus uasallis Summurtunensis page contra paganos infatigabiliter rebellauit.	Eodem anno post Pascha Ælfred rex cum paucis fecit arcem in loco, qui dicitur Æthelinaeg, et de ipsa arce semper cum fassellis Summurtunensis contra paganos infatigabiliter rebellavit.	7 þæs on Eastron worhte Ęlfred cyning lytle werede geweorc æt Ęþelingaeigge 7 of þam geweorce was winnende wiþ þone here 7 Sumursætna se dęl, se þær niehst wæs.
SN 878 (trans.)	**Asser's *Life* 55.4 (Keynes and Lapidge)**	**ASC 878 (Whitelock)**
In the same year, after Easter, King Alfred with a few men made a fortress at a place called Athelney, and from it with the noble thegns of Somerset [page] he struck out relentlessly and tirelessly against the Vikings.	In the same year, after Easter, King Alfred, with a few men, made a fortress at a place called Athelney, and from it with the thegns of Somerset he struck out relentlessly and tirelessly against the Vikings.	And afterwards at Easter, King Alfred with a small force made a stronghold at Athelney, and he and the section of the people of Somerset which was nearest to it, proceeded to fight from that stronghold against the enemy.

231. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, pp. 245–46, n. 90.
232. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 246, n. 91.
233. Hart wrote, 'Here, the intention is to clarify the location of events', in 'The East Anglian Chronicle', p. 263.

Stevenson's third example of a 'more correct reading' in *SN* is taken from Asser's *Life* 70.10, and found in *SN* 885. It reads,

SN 885	Asser's *Life* 70.10	MS A 885
Qui etiam duo germani fuerunt filii Loduuici: Hloduuicus uero ille filius Karoli MAGNI et antiqui atque sapientissimi qui etiam fuit filius Pipini.	Qui etiam duo germani fuerunt filii Loduuici: Hlothwic vero ille filius Pipini sive Caroli.	7 hie wæron begen Hloþwiges suna, se hæfde eac þæt westrice 7 forþferde þy geare þe sio sunne aþiestrode; se wæs Karles sunu þe Ęþelwulf Westseaxna cyning his dohtor hæfde him to cuene. 7 þy ilcan geare gegadrode micel sciphere on Aldseaxum, 7 þær wearþ micel gefeoht tua on geare, 7 þa Seaxan hæfdun sige, 7 þær wæron Frisan mid.
		Þy ilcan geare feng Carl to þam westrice, 7 to allum þam westrice behienan Wendelsę 7 begeondan þisse sę swa hit his þridda fęder hæfde butan Lidwiccium; se Carl was Hloþwiges sunu; se Hloþwig was Carles broþur, se wæs Iuþyttan fęder þe Ęþelwulf cyning hæfde, 7 hie wæron Hloþwiges suna — se Hloþwig was þæs aldan Carles sunu, se Carl was Pippenes sunu.

SN 885 (trans.)	Asser's *Life* 70.10	MS A 885 (Whitelock)
Who also were two brothers, sons of Louis [the Pious]: but Louis was the son of the old and most wise Charlemagne, who was himself the son of Pippin.	Who also were two brothers, sons of Louis [the Pious]: but Louis was the son of Pippin or Charles.	They were both sons of Louis, who died in the year of the eclipse of the sun. He was the son of that Charles whose daughter Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons had married. That same year a large naval force assembled among the Old Saxons and twice in the year there occurred a great battle, and the Saxons had the victory, and with them were the Frisians.
		That same year Charles succeeded to the western kingdom and to all the kingdom on this side of the Mediterranean and beyond this sea, as his great-grandfather had held it, except for Britanny. This Charles was the son of Louis, the brother of Charles who was the father of Judith whom King Æthelwulf married; and they were sons of Louis. This Louis was the son of the old Charles. This Charles was Pippin's son.

Concerning this entry Keynes and Lapidge wrote,

> According to Wise, the Cotton manuscript at this point read *Hlothwic vero ille filius Pipini sive Caroli*, which makes historical nonsense; the Corpus transcript of the Cotton manuscript reads *Lodovic vero ille filius Pipini*. The *Annals of St Neots*, whose compiler may have had access to a different manuscript of Asser's *Life of King Alfred*... read: *Hlodwicus vero ille filius Karoli magni, et antiqui atque sapientissimi, qui etiam fuit filius Pipini*. This was probably the reading of Asser's original text (See Whitelock, *Genuine Asser*, p. 18 note 2), and accordingly we adopt it in our translation. Hart, on the other hand, believes that the compiler of the *Annals of St Neots* used the Cotton manuscript itself and in this case corrected the text by referring directly to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ('The East Anglian Chronicle', p. 263). The difficulty with this view, however, is that the reading in the *Annals of St Neots* has the support of the *Historia Regum*... this in turn may imply that the compiler of the *Historia Regum* had access to a copy of Asser's *Life*, but further work is needed to verify this point.[234]

It may be, as Keynes and Lapidge suggest, that the *SN* compiler's copy of the *Life* read as it appears in *SN* 885. I would suggest, again, however, the possibility that the compiler could have amended the text of his copy of the *Life* from another source. The text of *SN* 885 will be considered more fully below.

The fourth, and, for Stevenson, least certain example of what might be a better reading in *SN*, from chapter 42 of the *Life*, is included in *SN* 871. The relevant passage reads in the different versions,

***SN* 871**	**Asser's *Life* 42.26**	**MS A 871**
Sed — proh dolor! — paucitatem persequentium despicientes, iterum in pręlium prodeunt et uictoriam capientes loco funeris dominati sunt.[235]	Sed, proh dolor ! peraudacitatem persequentium decipientes, iterum in proelium prodeunt, et victoriam capientes, loco funeris dominati sunt.	7 þæs ymb anne monaþ gefeaht Ęlfred cyning wiþ alne þone here lytle werede æt Wiltune 7 hine longe on dæg gefliemde, 7 þa Deniscan ahton węlstowe gewald.

234. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, pp. 253–54, n. 135.
235. Dumville and Lapidge, *SN*, p. 69.

SN 871 (trans.)	Asser's *Life* 42.26 (Keynes and Lapidge)	MS A 871 (Whitelock)
But, alas, scorning the small number of pursuers, they advanced again into battle, and seizing victory they were masters of the battlefield.	But, alas, outwitting the great daring of the pursuers,[236] they advanced again into battle, and seizing victory they were masters of the battlefield.	And a month later King Alfred fought with a small force against the whole army at Wilton and put it to flight far on into the day; and the Danes had possession of the battle-field.

Dumville and Lapidge wrote of this entry, '[o]nly *decipientes* is reported in the tradition of Asser's text. If our Compiler was responsible for the two alterations in this phrase, he has completely reconstructed the sense of the passage'.[237] Keynes and Lapidge wrote, '[w]e follow Stevenson in preferring the reading of the *Annals of St Neots* (*paucitatem persequentium despicientes*) to the reading of the Cotton manuscript (*peraudacitatem persequentium decipientes*, that is, 'outwitting the great daring of the pursuers').[238] Hart noted that,

> Finally, at 42.26 (where Stevenson was less sure that a 'more correct reading" was preserved) the phrase *per audacitatem* in the sixteenth-century transcript of the Cottonian text is replaced (very reasonably) in [*SN*'s] version by *paucitatem*. Interestingly, the *Worcester chronicle* has *per audacium* here. It seems that the word in the original Cottonian text was not written clearly, or perhaps it incorporated an ambiguous abbreviation.[239]

Given that John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis* also contains a variant reading in this instance, it may be, as Hart suggests, that the original text of Asser's *Life* was not 'written clearly', or perhaps included an abbreviation which was later misread in the transmission history of the text to other sources. I note that the OE text of ASC here includes the phrases *lytle werede* and *ahton węlstowe gewald*, both distinctive features noted by Hodgkin and, according to my theory, both indicators of source P, which, I have also argued, was not a source available to the *SN* compiler.

236. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 243, n. 77.
237. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. 69, n. 54.
238. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 243, n. 77.
239. Hart, 'East Anglian Chronicle', p. 263.

I also note that in the first three of these examples the textual evidence favours a conclusion that the *SN* compiler used a source (or sources) other than ASC or Asser's *Life* to interpolate information of different kinds into the text of Asser's *Life*.

1.2 Three entries in *SN* 851–887 which have been attributed to ASC

In *SN*'s 851–887 section, Dumville and Lapidge list three entries which, in their view, were taken from ASC. These form parts of annals 877, 878 and 879. I now consider each in turn.

Annal 877

The annal dated to 877 in ASC does not appear in the Cottonian version of Asser's *Life*. *SN*, however, does have an entry for 877. Dumville and Lapidge list ASC as the source of *SN* 877, but it is impossible to know if the compiler's version of the *Life* might have included this entry (in which case it was subsequently lost somewhere in the Cottonian version's transmission history), or if the compiler incorporated it from his source of ASC-related material. If the text of annal 877 was originally included in the *Life*, it constituted chapter 51. Stevenson, in fact, chose to include it as chapter 51, but, as Keynes and Lapidge noted,

> There is reason to believe that Stevenson's chapter 51 was not present in the Cotton manuscript of Asser's *Life*, that it may not have formed part of Asser's original text, and indeed that the whole of the annal for 877 was missing in his copy of the *Chronicle*. The Corpus transcript (of the Cotton manuscript of Asser) passes directly from chapter 50 to chapter 52, and the scribe indicates that the annal for 877 is wanting. It seems that the deficiency in the Cotton manuscript was then made good by the insertion of material derived from two diffferent sources: Stevenson's chapters 50b and 50d are from the *Annals of St Neots*, and chapter 50c was inserted into the Corpus transcript on a separate slip...

The suggestion that annal 877 was missing from the original version of the *Life* finds support in the fact that the compiler of the *Chronicon ex chronicis* 'was ob-

lidged to provide his own translation of *ASC* 877'.[240] It is perhaps the likeliest option, therefore, that the *SN* compiler also provided a translation of annal 877 from his source of ASC-related material. *SN* 877 reads,

> item exercitus paganorum Węrham deserens, partim equitando partim nauigando, sed cum peruenerunt ad locum qui dicitur Suanauuic perierunt .cxx. e nauibus. Equestrem uero exercitum rex Alfredus insequens quousque uenit ad Exancęstram, ibi accepit obsides et iuramentum ab eo, ut cito discessurus erat. Ipso anno, mense Augusto, ille exercitus perrexit in Merciam; et illam regionem Merciorum partim dedit Ceoluulfo cuidam insipienti regis ministro, partim inter se diuisit.
>
> Also the pagan army left Wareham, one part on horseback, the other part by boat, but when they came to the place called Swanage, 120 of their ships were lost. But King Alfred followed the mounted army to Exeter. There he received hostages, and an oath from them, as he was about to depart quickly. In the same year, in the month of August, the army went into Mercia, and gave part of it to a certain Ceolwulf, a foolish servant of the king, and part of it shared among themselves.

ASC 877 reads, in MS A,

> Her cuom se here into Escanceastre from Werham, 7 se sciphere sigelede west ymbutan, 7 þa mette hie micel yst on sę, 7 þær forwearþ .cxx. scipa æt Swanawic, 7 se cyning Ęlfred æfter þam gehorsudan here mid fierde rad oþ Exanceaster 7 hie hindan ofridan ne meahte ær hie on þam fæstene wæron, þær him mon to ne meahte, 7 hie him þær foregislas saldon, swa fela swa he habban wolde 7 micle aþas sworon 7 þa godne friþ heoldon; 7 þa on hærfæste gefor se here on Miercna lond 7 hit gedęldon sum 7 sum Ceolwulfe saldon.
>
> In this year the army from Wareham came to Exeter; and the naval force sailed west along the coast and encountered a great storm at sea, and 120 ships were lost at Swanage. And King Alfred rode after the mounted army with the English army as far as Exeter, but could not overtake them [before they were in the fortress where they could not be reached]. And they gave him hostages there, as many as he wished to have, and swore great oaths and then kept a firm peace. Then in the harvest season the army went away into Mercia and shared our some of it, and gave some to Ceolwulf.

---

240. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 247, n. 94.

In the following table the two versions, *SN* and ASC, are presented together, line by line,

***SN* 877**	**MS A 877**
item exercitus paganorum Węrham deserens,	Her cuom se here into Escanceastre from Werham,
partim equitando partim nauigando,	7 se sciphere sigelede west ymbutan,
sed cum peruenerunt ad locum qui dicitur Suanauuic perierunt .cxx. e nauibus.	7 þa mette hie micel yst on sę, 7 þær forwearþ .cxx. scipa æt Swanawic,
Equestrem uero exercitum rex Alfredus insequens quousque uenit ad Exancęstram,	7 se cyning Ęlfred æfter þam gehorsudan here mid fierde rad oþ Exanceaster 7 hie hindan ofridan ne meahte ær hie on þam fæstene wæron, þær him mon to ne meahte,
ibi accepit obsides et iuramentum ab eo, ut cito discessurus erat.	7 hie him þær foregislas saldon, swa fela swa he habban wolde 7 micle aþas sworon 7 þa godne friþ heoldon;
Ipso anno, mense Augusto, ille exercitus perrexit in Merciam; et illam regionem Merciorum partim dedit Ceoluulfo cuidam insipienti regis ministro, partim inter se diuisit.	7 þa on hærfæste gefor se here on Miercna lond 7 hit gedęldon sum 7 sum Ceolwulfe saldon.
***SN* 877 translation**	**MS A 877 Whitelock**
Also the pagan army left Wareham,	In this year the army from Wareham came to Exeter;
part on horseback, part by sea,	and the naval force sailed west along the coast
but when they came to the place called Swanage, 120 of their ships were lost.	and encountered a great storm at sea, and 120 ships were lost at Swanage.
King Alfred followed the mounted army to Exeter.	And King Alfred rode after the mounted army with the English army as far as Exeter, but could not overtake them [before they were in the fortress where they could not be reached].
There he received hostages, and an oath from them, and quickly departed.	And they gave him hostages there, as many as he wished to have, and swore great oaths and then kept a firm peace.
In the same year, in the month of August, the army went into Mercia, and gave part of it to the foolish king Ceolwulf, and part of it shared among themselves.	Then in the harvest season the army went away into Mercia and shared our some of it, and gave some to Ceolwulf.

If, as Dumville and Lapidge suggest, *SN* 877 translated ASC 877, then *SN*'s compiler has adapted his text in numerous ways. For example, ASC 877 begins, *[h]er cuom se here into Escanceastre from Werham, 7 se sciphere sigelede west ymbutan, 7 þa mette hie micel yst on sę, 7 þær forwearþ .cxx. scipa æt Swanawic*, which in *SN* reads, *item exercitus paganorum Węrham deserens, partim equitando partim*

nauigando, sed cum peruenerunt ad locum qui dicitur Suanauuic perierunt .cxx. e nauibus. In fact, no line in *SN* 877 may be regarded as a close translation of its ASC counterpart. Either the *SN* compiler revised his Old English text while translating it into Latin, or he used an ASC-related source which was not ASC.

Annal 878

The next of *SN*'s entries which Dumville and Lapidge attibute to ASC is a short sentence included in annal 878. It reads:

> In quo etiam acceperunt illud uexillum quod Reafan nominant.
>
> And there was captured the banner which they call 'Raven'.

A closely corresponding phrase appears in MSS BCDE, but not in A. The relevant line in 878 (MS B) reads:

> 7 þær wæs se guþfana genumen ðe hie Hręfn heton.
>
> And there was captured the banner which they call 'Raven'.[241]

Asser does not record the capture of the raven banner, and it is not found in A or Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. Though *SN*'s version is very similar to the corresponding entry in BCDE, I note that the passage which follows in *SN* is one for which '[n]o known source has been identified'.[242] It also appears to employ a style which differs considerably from *SN*'s other ASC related entries. It reads,

> Dicunt enim quod tres sorores Hynguari et Hubbe, filię uidelicet Lodebrochi, illud uexillum texuerunt et totum parauerunt illud uno meridiano tempore. Dicunt etiam quod, in omni bello ubi praecederet idem signum, si uictoriam adepturi essent, appareret in media signi quasi coruus uiuus uolitans; si uero uincendi in futuro fuissent, penderet directe nichil mouens — et hoc sepe probatum est.

241. Whitelock, *EHD*, p. 195, n. 19.
242. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. 78, n. 26.

> For it is said that the three sisters of Ivar and Ubbe, that is, the daughters of Lothbrok, wove and completed that flag all [in one afternoon]. It is also said that in whatever battle the banner went forth, if they were about to be victorious, there would appear as it were a raven, alive and flying in the middle of the banner; if however they were about to be defeated, it would droop right down, not moving at all — and this has often been proved.

The appearance of this unique passage in *SN* 878 is clear evidence that the *SN* compiler had access to a source of information which was neither ASC nor Asser's *Life*. The style and vocabulary of this passage, however, is unlike other Q-type entries. Perhaps the *SN* compiler had access to a source of information concerning St Edmund which has since been lost.[243] Given that Ivar and Ubbe have, in other sources, been associated with the death of the king, it is possible such a source could have included other information relating to these brothers and their later activities in England.

Annal 879

The third passage in *SN*'s 851–887 section which Dumville and Lapidge attribute to ASC is in annal 879, an entry which fits well with the theory of Q as a source used in *SN*. The relevant line is in *SN* 879 and reads,

> Ipsoque anno obiit Hlodouicus rex Occidentalium Francorum, frater Iudittę reginę Adhelwlfi regis Anglorum.
>
> In this same year Louis, king of the Western Franks, the brother of Judith, queen of Æthelwulf, king of the English, died.

I note ASC's annal 879 has no corresponding entry for this passage. According to Dumville and Lapidge, '[t]he information in this account of the death of Louis the Stammerer was drawn from the annal for 885 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* where a cross-reference is provided to this year'.[244] A comparison of *SN* 879 and ASC 885,

---

243. Hart, 'East Anglian chronicle', p. 267.
244. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. 81, n. 6.

however, reveals considerable variation. ASC's corresponding 885 entry is contained in a report concerning the deaths of Louis' two sons, Charles (d. 885) and Louis III (d. 884). It reads in MS A:

> Þy ilcan geare... forþferde Carl Francna cyning... 7 ane geare ær his broður forþferde, se hæfde eac þæt westrice, 7 hie wæron begen Hloþwiges suna. Se hæfde eac þæt westrice, 7 forþferde þy geare þe sio sunne aþiestrode. Se wæs Karles sunu þe Ęþelwulf Westseaxna cyning his dohtor hæfde him to cuene.
>
> That same year... Charles, king of the Franks died... and a year previously his brother, who had also held the western kingdom, had died. They were both sons of Louis, who also had held the western kingdom, who died in the year of the eclipse of the sun. He was the son of that Charles whose daughter Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons, took as his queen.

The following table compares the relevant passages, line by line:

SN **879**	**MS A 885**
	7 hie wæron begen Hloþwiges suna,
Ipsoque anno obiit Hlodouicus rex Occidentalium Francorum,	se hæfde eac þæt westrice 7 forþferde
	þy geare þe sio sunne aþiestrode;
frater Iudittę	se wæs Karles sunu þe
reginę Adhelwlfi regis Anglorum.	Ęþelwulf Westseaxna cyning his dohtor hæfde him to cuene.

SN **879 (translation)**	**MS A 885 (Whitelock)**
	They were both sons of Louis,
In this same year Louis died, king of the Western Franks,	who also had held the western kingdom, and who died
	in the year of the eclipse.
the brother of Judith,	He was the son of that Charles
queen of Æthelwulf, king of the English.	whose daughter Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons, took as his queen.

As this table reveals, *SN* 879 is not a close translation of ASC. For example, the Chronicle describes Louis as 'the son of' Charles — no similar reference is made in *SN*. ASC refers to, but does not name, Judith (though she is named later in ASC 885, described as the daughter of Charles 'whom King Æthelwulf married'). *SN* names Judith but notes her relationship to her brother Louis rather than to her father, Charles. Also, Judith is described in *SN* as *reginę Adhelwlfi*, 'Æthelwulf's queen',

while in ASC she is Charles' daughter whom Æthelwulf *hæfde him to cuene*, 'took as his queen'. Finally, Æthelwulf is described in *SN* as *regis Anglorum*, 'king of the English', whereas in ASC he is *Westseaxna cyning*, 'king of the West Saxons'. In the hands of another medieval compiler, innovation of this kind might well have been normal practice. Given the recurring examples (otherwise consistent throughout *SN*) of the compiler's 'extreme fidelity to the wording of his sources', it could be argued (as I have done elsewhere) that here, too, the *SN* compiler had access to a source of Anglo-Saxon information related to the Chronicle but which was not ASC. I also note that Dumville and Lapidge's suggestion, that the *SN* compiler drew his annal 879 from ASC 885, is further weakened by the fact that, just a few annals later, *SN* includes an entry for 885, incoporating Asser's chapter 68, the text of which is very similar to ASC 885. If, as Dumville suggests, the *SN* compiler concocted his version of annal 879 from ASC 885, he then also wittingly presented the same information again in the space of a few annals. Chapter 68 of the *Life* reads:

> ...ipsi etenim ambo filii Hlothuuici regis Francorum erant. Qui etiam Hlothuuicus supra memorato anno, quo eclypsis solis facta est, defunctus est; ipse quoque Hlothuuicus filius Karoli Francorum regis erat, cuius filiam Iuthittam Æthelwulfus, Occidentalium Saxonum rex, ad reginam sibi paterna voluntate suscepit.
>
> ...for both brothers were sons of Louis [the Stammerer], king of the Franks. This Louis had died in the year of the solar eclipse, which was mentioned above; moreover, he was the son of Charles [the Bald], king of the Franks, whose daughter Judith was given as queen — by paternal consent — to Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons.[245]

In the following table, chapter 68 of the *Life* (of which *SN* 885 is a near verbatim quote) is given together with the text of ASC 885:

Asser chapter 68	MS A 885
...ipsi etenim ambo filii Hlothuuici	7 hie wæron begen Hloþwiges suna,

245. Keynes and Lapidge, *Asser*, p. 87.

regis Francorum erant. Qui etiam Hlothuuicus supra memorato anno, quo eclypsis solis facta est, defunctus est;	se hæfde eac þæt westrice 7 forþferde þy geare þe sio sunne aþiestrode;
ipse quoque Hlothuuicus filius Karoli Francorum regis erat,	se wæs Karles sunu þe
cuius filiam Iuthittam	
Æthelwulfus, Occidentalium Saxonum rex, ad reginam sibi paterna voluntate suscepit.	Ęþelwulf Westseaxna cyning his dohtor hæfde him to cuene.

Asser chapter 68 (trans.)	**MS A 885 (trans.)**
...for both the brothers were sons of Louis,	They were both sons of Louis,
king of the Franks. This Louis had died in the year of the solar eclipse, which was mentioned above;	who also had held the western kingdom, and who died in the year of the eclipse.
moreover, he was the son of Charles, king of the Franks,	He was the son of that Charles
whose daughter Judith	whose daughter
was given as queen — by paternal consent — to Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons.	Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons, took as his queen.

The main points of variation between Asser and ASC here are: (1) where the *Life* reads 'both the brothers were sons of Louis', the word 'brothers' is not included in ASC, (2) Asser describes Louis the Stammerer as 'king of the Franks', while ASC specifies that he 'held the Western kingdom', (3) Asser adds 'as mentioned above' in reference to the solar eclipse, (4) Charles (the Bald) is referred to as 'king of the Franks' in the *Life*, this phrase missing from ASC, (5) Asser specifically names Judith here, ASC does not, (6) according to the *Life* Judith is 'given as queen' to Æthelwulf 'by parental consent', in ASC there is no reference to 'parental consent', the text noting instead that it is Æthelwulf who 'takes her as his queen'. Such variation between Asser and ASC is, however, normal when compared with the rest of their shared material. Rather than assuming that the *SN* compiler has rewritten the text of ASC 885 to create a new annal 879, I suggest that *SN* 879 was also drawn from his ASC-related source, Q, and that he later included chapter 68 of the *Life* for his annal 885, thus repeating some of the information in Q 879, but thereby maintaining his normal practice of carefully copying his sources.

1.3 Entries of unknown provenance in *SN* 851–887

As noted above, Dumville and Lapidge list seven entries of unknown provenance in *SN*'s 851–887. These are found in annals 855 (x2), 856, 857, 870, and 878 (x2). The two entries from annal 878 dealing with the capture of the Raven banner were discussed above. Of the remaining passages, three include entries relating to King Edmund of East Anglia, at 855, 856, and 870. *SN* 885 reads,

> rex EADMVNDVS Orientalium Anglorum gloriosissimus cepit regnare .viii. kal. Ianuarii, id est die natalis Domini, anno etatis sue .xiiii.. Hoc etiam anno Lotharius imperator Romanorum obiit, filius Hloduuici augusti piissimi;[246] anno eodem initium regni Karoli tercii imperatoris, filii Loduuici secundi.
>
> Edmund, most glorious king of the East Angles, began to reign on the eighth day from the Kalends of January, that is on Christmas Day, in the fourteenth year of his life. In the same year died Lothar, Roman Emperor, the son of the august, most pious Louis. In the same year the Emperor Charles III, son of Louis II, began his reign.

Following on from this entry, the text of *SN* 855 continues with chapters 10–16 of Asser's *Life*. Then follows a comparatively short annal, for 856, which reads as follows,

> hoc est anno secundo KAROLI imperatoris tercii, anno uero regni Adheluulfi Occidentalium Saxonum regis .xviii., Hunberchtus Orientalium Anglorum antistes unxit oleo consecrauitque in regem EADMVNDVM gloriosissimum cum gaudio magno et honore maximo in uilla regia quę dicitur BVRNA, quia tunc temporis regalis sedes erat, anno ętatis suę .xv., sexta feria, luna .xxiiii., die natalis Domini.
>
> That is, in the second year of Emperor Charles III, but [i.e.] in the eighteenth year of the reign of Ethelwulf, king of the West Saxons, Hunbercht, bishop of the East Angles, anointed with oil and consecrated as king the most glorious Edmund, with great joy and the greatest honour, in the royal town, which is called Burna, because at that time it was a royal residence, in the fifteenth year

246. Dumville and Lapidge note that 'the first half of this sentence has an equivalent (albeit differently worded) in the Norman Annals', Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. 45, s.a. [855], n. 2.

> of his life, on the sixth day of the week, the twenty-fourth of the moon's age, being Christmas Day.

SN 870, also of unknown provenance, includes a third reference to St Edmund. It reads,

> Passus est autem sanctus EADMVNDVS, Orientalium Anglorum rex glorioosissimus, .xii. kal. Decembris anno Christi incarnationis .dccclxx., indictione .iii[a]., secunda feria, luna .xxii., anno ętatis suę .xxix., anno uero regni sui .xvi., et anno etiam .xv. immperii Karoli tercii autusti filii Lodoiuci secundi 'augusti'. Hoc est autem anno .v[to]. Aderędi regis Occidentalium Saxonum.
>
> St. Edmund, the most glorious king of the East Angles, suffered martyrdom on the twelfth day from the Kalends of December, in the 870th year from the incarnation of Christ, at the third indiction, on the second day of the week, on the twenty-second of the moon's age, in the twenty-ninth year of his life, and the sixteenth year of his reign, and in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Charles III, son to Louis II, 'the August'. This was in the fifth year of Ethelred, King of the West Saxons.

Hart noted a similarity in this annal's elaborate dating formula with that found in the *Passio S. Æthelberhti*, concerning King Æthelberht's martyrdom. It reads,

> Passus est autem beatus ÆDELBERHTUS anno aetatis suae XIIII, die dominica XIII Kl. Junii, Idictione. 1., anno ab incarnatio domini DCCXCIII, a passione vero DCCLXI, ab adventu anglorum in brytanniam CCCXLII.[247]

SN 870 is, in its entirety, a very long annal, beginning with a passage from Abbo's *Passio S. Eadmundi* (§§3–12), followed by the above entry of unknown provenance, which serves as a bridge into another long passage incorporating chapters 32–34 of Asser's *Life*. Perhaps the *SN* compiler, working in East Anglia, had access to an uknown source of information concerning the life of St Edmund.

SN 857 and the unique reference to Steyning

The last entry of unknown provenance in *SN*'s 851–887 section is found in annal 857. Stevenson wrote concerning it that, '[t]he most remarkable reading in the An-

247. Hart, 'East Anglian Chronicle', p. 265.

nals [of *St Neots*], one that is peculiar to them, is that of Steyning instead of Winchester' for the burial place of King Æthelwulf.[248] He continued,

> As the Annals of St Neots elsewhere transcribes the Life so carefully, it is probable that this reading is derived from the MS. of that work used by the compiler of the Annals. In that case we should have to conclude that the Cottonian MS. was not the one from which the compiler derived his extracts from the Life.[249]

Scholars have debated the possible source of the place name Steyning in *SN*'s annal 857 — whether it was included (as Stevenson suggested) in the copy of Asser's *Life* used by the compiler, or if it was in the compiler's version of ASC, or if it came from some other source. I note that a comparison of the three versions shows that *SN* 857 differs considerably from the corresponding entries in both Asser's *Life* and ASC. The relevant passages read as follows in the three versions:

SN 857	**Asser's *Life* 16 and 17**	**MS A 855**
Adheluulfus sepe memoratus rex Occidentalium Saxonum uiam uniuersitatis adiit; quieuit in pace sepultusque est apud Steningam. Regnauit Adhelbaldus Filius eius post illum duos annos et dimidium; qui et ipse antea cum patre regnauit annis duobus et dimidio.	16: Vixit ergo Æthelwulfus rex duobus annis post quam a Roma pervenit... 17: Defuncto autem Æthelwulfo rege... effrenisque duobus et dimidio annis Occidentalium Saxonum post patrem regni gubernacula rexit.	7 ymb .ii. gear þæs ðe he on Francum com he gefor, 7 his lic liþ æt Wintanceastre, 7 he ricsode nigonteoþe healf gear... On þa fengon Ęþelwulfes suna twegen to rice, Ęþelbald to Wesseaxna rice 7 Ęþelbryht to Cantwara rice 7 to Eastseaxna rice 7 to Suþrigea 7 to Suþseaxna rice, 7 þa ricsode Ęþelbald .v. gear.
SN 857 (trans.)	**Asser's *Life* 16 and 17 (Keynes and Lapidge)**	**MS A 855 (Whitelock)**
Æthelwulf, the oft-celebrated king of the West Saxons, went the way of the universe, rested in peace and was buried at Steyning. After him, Æthelbald his son reigned two and a half years; he had previously reigned two and a half years with his father.	16: King Æthelwulf lived two years after he returned from Rome... 17: Once King Æthelwulf was dead, Æthelbald his son... controlled the government of the kingdom of the West Saxons for two and a half lawless years after his father.	And two years after he had come from France, he died, and his body is buried in Winchester, and he had reigned 18 years and a half. And Æthelwulf was the son of Egbert, the son of Ealhmund...
		And then Æthelwulf's two sons succeeded to the kingdom, Æthelbald to the kingdom of the West Saxons and Ethelbert to the kingdom of the people of Surrey, and to the kingdom of the South Saxons, and then Æthelbald reigned five years.

248. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. lviii.
249. Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 213.

As this comparison reveals, *SN* 857 is equivalent to neither Asser's *Life* nor ASC. According to traditional Chronicle theory (which holds Plummer's *æ* as the original source of all ASC-related material in all works), the original version of this annal reads it stands in ASC. If this is correct, then Asser divided ASC's text between his chapters 16 and 17,[250] and *SN*'s compiler largely rewrote ASC 857, and added the name Steyning from some other source. In keeping with my working hypothesis, I would suggest, instead, that the source of this annal in *SN* was Q.

1.4 Section summary

A comparison of *SN*'s texts with their corresponding passages in Asser's *Life* and ASC offers little support for the conclusion that, in addition to Asser's *Life*, the *SN* compiler was also in possession of a Chronicle in the form of *æ*. Where texts may be compared, the variation between *SN* and ASC is consistent and at times substantial. Though there is more work to be done in comparing *SN* with ASC, Asser's *Life*, and other related works such as John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*, *Historia Regum*, and other texts, given my working hypothesis that the *SN* compiler used Q up to 842, I would suggest that the evidence of *SN*'s 851–887 section in no way precludes, and may even be seen to support, the possibility that he continued to use Q alongside his copy of Asser's *Life*. The question I will now consider is, what happens in the section of annals which follow on from 887 in *SN* and ASC?

2. Alfred's last wars: 891–895

If Q was one of the sources Asser had available to him in 893, it follows that his version of Q was compiled before that date. This raises the question of the extent of Q in its original form. Which annal concluded Asser's Q text? Was it 887, the last of his ASC-related entries? Or did his version of Q continue to 893, the year he worked on the *Life*? Or might it have concluded at another annal between 887 and 893? In at-

250. Asser does not name King Æthelwulf's burial place.

tempting to answer this question, I now look to *SN*, and the section of annals following on from 887.

The ASC-related entries in Asser's *Life* conclude with chapter 85, the text of which is very similar in structure and content to ASC 887. Following from annal 887, ASC has entries for 888, 889 and 890. *SN*'s first annal after 887 is an entry dated to 890 reporting the death and burial of the converted viking king, Guthrum, Alfred's godson, ruler of East Anglia. *SN* 891–895 offers, when compared to the corresponding section in ASC, a much more concise and well-structured account of Alfred's last wars, starting with the appearance of comets in 891, followed by the arrival in England of vikings from the Continent in 892, and then, from 892–895, reports concerning Alfred's dealings with the viking invaders, his eventual victory over them, and, finally, their return to the Continent in 895. The corresponding section in ASC is much longer and far more complex. A comparison of these two sections, *SN* 891–895 and ASC 891–896, I will suggest, may be seen to indicate that *SN*'s version represents an earlier stage in the history of this material, with ASC offering a later, and much revised, version of the text.

2.1 *SN* 890, the end of the original Q?

As noted above, the first annal in *SN* after Asser's ASC-related entries end at 887, is 890. ASC has entries for 888, 889 and 890. This section reads as follows in the two versions:

SN	MS A
888	
	Her lędde Beocca aldormon Wesseaxna ęlmessan 7 Ęlfredes cyninges to Rome. 7 Ęþelswiþ cuen, sio wæs Ęlfredes sweostor cyninges, forþferde, 7 hire lic liþ æt Pafian. 7 þy ilcan geare Ęþelred ercebiscep 7 Ęþelwold aldormon forþferdon on anum monþe.
889	
	On þissum geare næs nan fęreld to Rome, buton tuegen hleaperas Ęlfred cyning sende mid gewritum.

890	
obiit Gvthram, rex paganorum, qui et Athelstanus nomen in baptismo suscepit. Qui primus apud Orientales Anglos regnauit post passionem sancti regis EADMVNDI; ipsamque regionem diuisit coluit atque primus inhabitauit. Mortuus est itaque anno .xiiii. postquam baptismum suscepit mausoleatusque in uilla regia que uocatur Headleaga apud Orientales Anglos.	Her lędde Beornhelm abbud Westseaxna ęlmessan to Rome 7 Ęlfredes cyninges; 7 Godrum se norþerna cyning forþferde, þæs fulluhtnama wæs Ęþelstan, se wæs Ęlfredes cyninges godsunu, 7 he bude on Eastenglum 7 þæt lond ærest gesæt. 7 þy ilcan geare for se here of Sigene to Sant Laudan, þæt is betueoh Brettum 7 Francum, 7 Brettas him wiþ gefuhton 7 hæfdon sige 7 hie bedrifon ut on ane ea 7 monige adrencton.

SN	**MS A**
888	
	In this year Ealdorman Beocca took to Rome the alms of the West Saxons and of King Alfred. And Queen Æthelswith, who was King Alfred's sister, died, and her body is buried in Pavia. And the same year Archbishop Ethelred and Ealdorman Æthelwold died in the same month.
889	
	There was no expedition to Rome in this year, but King Alfred sent two couriers with letters.
890	
Guthrum, king of the pagans, died, he who received the name Athelstan in baptism. He was the first to rule East Anglia after the martyrdom of Saint Edmund the king. This same region he also divided up and he was the first to occupy it. He died fourteen years after receiving baptism and he was entombed at the royal residence called Hadleigh in East Anglia.	In this year Abbot Beornhelm took to Rome the alms of the West Saxons and of King Alfred. And the northern king, Guthrum, whose baptismal name was Athelstan, died. He was King Alfred's godson, and he lived in East Anglia and he was the first to settle that land. And the same year the Danish army went from the Seine to St Lô, which lies between Brittany and France; and the Bretons fought against them and had the victory, and drove them into a river and drowned many of them.

The fact that *SN*'s only entry in the 888–890 section concerns Guthrum's death in 890 may suggest that the compiler chose to omit annals 888 and 889 (if they were in his source), as he appears to have done with Asser's chapter 86, concerning ealdorman Æthelhelm's trip to Rome in 887. It is also possible, however, that *SN*'s source of Anglo-Saxon material had nothing for 888 or 889, for, if that source was Q, it may be that ASC's 888 and 889 were not included there, as they report on lesser nobles rather than kings, popes or events of great signficance.[251] *SN* 890's report of the death and burial of Alfred's godson, the converted viking king, Guthrum, is a

251. Susan Irvine discusses this section of ASC in her paper, 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Idea of Rome in Alfredian Literature', in *Alfred the Great: Papers From the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 63–77.

subject, however, that could easily have suited Q. That ASC is unlikely to have been *SN*'s source of annal 890 is suggested by a comparison of two versions. They read:

***SN* 890**	**MS A 890**
... obiit Gvthram, rex paganorum, qui et Athelstanus nomen in baptismo suscepit.	7 Godrum se norþerna cyning forþferde, þæs fulluhtnama wæs Ęþelstan,
	se wæs Ęlfredes cyninges godsunu,
Qui primus apud Orientales Anglos regnauit post passionem sancti regis EADMVNDI;	7 he bude on Eastenglum,
ipsamque regionem diuisit coluit atque primus inhabitauit.	7 þæt lond ærest gesæt.
Mortuus est itaque anno .xiiii. postquam baptismum suscepit mausoleatusque in uilla regia que uocatur Headleaga apud Orientales Anglos.	

***SN* 890 (translation)**	**MS A 890 (Whitelock)**
Guthrum, king of the pagans, died, he who received the name Athelstan in baptism.	And the northern king, Guthrum, whose baptismal name was Athelstan, died.
	He was King Alfred's godson,
He was the first to rule East Anglia after the martyrdom of Saint Edmund the king.	and he lived in East Anglia
This same region he also divided up and he was the first to occupy it.	and was the first to settle that land.
He died fourteen years after receiving baptism and he was entombed at the royal residence called Hadleigh in East Anglia.	

Once again there is considerable variation between the passages in ASC and *SN*. *SN* describes Guthrum as *rex paganorum,* 'king of the pagans', ASC calls him, *norþerna cyning*, the 'king of the northerners'. ASC's statement that Guthrum was Alfred's godson is missing from *SN*. ASC's *he bude on Eastenglum* 'he lived in East Anglia', is reported in *SN* as *[q]ui primus apud Orientales Anglos regnauit post passionem sancti regis EADMVNDI*, 'he was the first to rule East Anglia after the martyrdom of Saint Edmund the king'. ASC's phrase, *7 þæt lond ærest gesæt,* 'and he was the first to settle that land', in *SN* reads*, ipsamque regionem diuisit coluit atque primus inhabitauit,* 'this same region he also divided up and was the first to occupy it'. And, finally, *SN*'s concluding statement that Guthrum died fourteen years after his baptism and was buried in Hadleigh is not found in ASC or any other text. If the Common Stock of the vernacular versions was *SN*'s source for annal 890, then the *SN* compiler has largely rewritten this annal, adding the place name Hadleigh, which

is found in no other source, and thus abandoned his normal practice of rendering the content of his source texts with care.

Both ASC and *SN* follow up their versions of annal 890 with entries dated to 891. In ASC, however, annal 891 introduces one of the most complex sections in all of the Chronicle.

3. *SN* 891–895: possible evidence for a source in addition to Q?

The many examples of variation between *SN*, ASC and Asser's *Life* in the 851–887 section pose significant problems for Plummer's theory of a single archetype for all ASC-related works. In addition to the pre-Common Stock existence of the hypothetical sources PQRS, I will now suggest that another source of texts antedating the compilation of the Common Stock archetype was used by authors of that work. The evidence for this additional source (in relation to PQRS) is found in *SN* 891–895.

I begin with the ASC-related entries in this section of *SN*, which read:

***SN* 891 (Latin)**	**MS A 891 (OE)**
	Her for se here east, 7 Earnulf cyning gefeaht wiþ ðæm rędhere, ær þa scipu cuomon, mid Eastfrancum 7 Seaxum 7 Bægerum 7 hine gefliemde. 7 þrie Scottas comon to Ęlfrede cyninge on anum bate butan ęlcum gereþrum of Hibernia, þonon hi hi bestęlon, forþon þe hi woldon for Godes lufan on elþiodignesse beon, hi ne rohton hwær. Se bat wæs geworht of þriddan healfre hyde þe hi on foron, 7 hi namon mid him þæt hi hæfdun to seofon nihtum mete, 7 þa comon hie ymb .vii. niht to londe on Cornwalum 7 foron þa sona to Ęlfrede cyninge. Þus hie wæron genemnde, Dubslane 7 Maccbethu 7 Maelinmun 7 Swifneh, se betsta lareow þe on Scottum wæs gefor.
comete apparuerunt post pascha circa rogationes.	[*the following sentence is dated 892 in MS A but is, in fact, a continuation of 891*] 7 þy ilcan geare ofer Eastron, ymbe gang dagas oþþe ær, æteowde se steorra þe mon on boclæden hæt cometa: sume men cweþaþ on Englisc þæt hit sie feaxede steorra, forþæm þær stent lang leoma of, hwilum on ane healfe, hwilum on ælce healfe.

SN **892 (Latin)**	**MS A 892 (OE)**
magnus paganorum exercitus uenit de orientali regno Francorum usque ad Bononniam, indeque cum .cccl. nauibus in ostium Limene fluminis; et ibi non longe a flumine, in loco qui dicitur Apuldran, fecerunt castellum firmissimum. Quod Limene flumen cunit de silua magna quę uocata est Andreadesuueald; quę silua habet spatium in longitudine ab oriente in occidente<m> miliaria .cxx. et eo amplius et in latitudine .xxx..	Her on þysum geare for se micla here þe we gefyrn ymbe spræcon eft of þæm eastrice westweard to Bunann 7 þær wurdon gescipode swa þæt hie asettan him on anne siþ ofer mid horsum mid ealle 7 þa comon up on Limene muþan mid .ccl. (hunde) scipa. Se muþa is on easte weardre Cent æt þæs miclam wuda eastende þe we Andred hatað. Se wudu is eastlang 7 westlang hund twelftiges mila lang oþþe lengra 7 þritiges mila brad; seo ea þe we ær ymbe spræcon lið ut of þæm wealda.
	On þa ea hi tugon up hiora scipu oþ þone weald .iiii. mila fram þæm muþan uteweardum 7 þær abræcon an geweorc inne on þæm fenne; sæton feawa cirlisce men on 7 wæs samworht.
Eodem anno Hastengus uenit cum .lxxx. nauibus in ostium Tamensis fluminis fecitque sibi firmissimum oppidum apud Middeltunam in australi ripa Tamensis; non multo post fecit alium in aquilonali parte Tamensis in loco qui dicitur Beamfleot.	Þa sona æfter þæm com Hæsten mid .lxxx. scipa up on Temese muðan 7 worhte him geweorc æt Middeltune 7 se oþer here æt Apuldre.
SN **893 (Latin)**	**MS A 893 (OE)**
[*SN 893 begins with an entry from the Norman annals*] Hoc etiam anno Alfredus, rex Occidentalium Saxonum, pugnauit contra Nordmannos in loco qui dicitur Fearnhamme: qui eos occidit, et regem eorum sauciauit atque fugauit, necnon et spolia multa eis diripuit. Transieruntque Tamens flumen — coacti ad Eastseaxam profecti sunt — sedtamen multi in Tamense perierunt. Rex uero Alfredus, ut audiuit quod magna pars paganorum exercitus quę inde fugata est, perrexit per mare nauigans usque ad Exanceastram; qui statim equestrem atque pedestrem secum illo adducens exercitum, contra eos atrociter pugnans illosque ibidem deuicit strauit atque fugauit.	On þys geare, þæt wæs ymb twelf monað þæs þe hie on þæm eastrice geweorc geworht hæfdon, Norþhymbre 7 Eastengle hæfdon Ælf(f)rede cyninge aþas geseald 7 Eastengle foregisla .vi. 7 þeh, ofer þa treowa, swa oft swa þa oþre hergas mid ealle herige ut foron, þonne foron hie, oþþe mid oþþe on heora healfe an. Þa gegaderade Ælfred cyning his fierd 7 for þæt he gewicode betwuh þæm twam hergum þær þær he niehst rymet hæfde for wudufæstenne ond for wæterfæstenne, swa þæt he mehte ægþerne geræcan gif [hie ænigne feld secan wolden. Þa foron hie siþþan æfter] þæm wealda hloþum 7 flocradum bi swa hwaþerre efes swa hit þonne fierdleas wæs.
Interea, ex precepto regis Alfredi, Adhered comes Merciorum — una cum ciuibus Lundonię et aliis innumeris bellatoribus prudentissimis — uenit usque Beamfleotam munitionemque paganorum obsedit fregit atque innumera spolia ibidem accepit in auro et argento equis et uestibus. In quibus etiam et uxor Hastengi, cum duobus filiis, ad Lundoniam est adducta et ante regem Alfredum presentata. Quos rex statim iussit reddi, eo quia fili<orum> su<orum> unus erat filiolus regis Alfrędi, alter Adheredi comitis.	7 hi(m) mon eac mid oþrum floccum sohte mæstra daga ælce, oþþe on niht, ge of þære fierde ge eac of þæm burgum; hæfde se cyning his fierd on tu tonumen, swa þæt hie wæron simle healfe æt ham, healfe ute, butan þæm monnum þe þa burga healdan scolden. Ne com se here oftor eall ute of þæm setum þonne tuwwa, oþre siþe þa hie ærest to londe comon, ær sio fierd gesamnod wære, oþre siþe þa hie of þæm setum faran woldon. Þa hie gefengon micle herehyð 7 þa woldon ferian norþweardes ofer Temese in on Eastseaxe ongean þa scipu,

Cum autem Hastengus iterum uenit Beanfleatam, reparauit ibidem castellum quod fractum fuerat. Deinde perrexit ad Sceobyrig et ibi construxit munitionem ualidissimam; adiunctusque est ei exercitusille qui apud Apuldran sedit necnon et ab Orientalibus Anglis et a Nordanhymbris non minima sed maxima mulTitudo. Qui, simul properantes, sursum trans Tamensem fluuium, depredantes, quousque peruenerunt ad ripam Sabrine fluminis et ibi apud Buttingatunam munitissimum oppidum fecerunt.	þa forrad sio fierd hie foran 7 him wið gefeaht æt Fearnhamme 7 þone here gefliemde 7 þa herehyþa ahreddon, 7 hie flugon ofer Temese buton ælcum forda, þa up be Colne on anne iggað. Þa besæt sio fierd hie þær utan þa hwile þe hie þær lengest mete hæfdon. Ac hie hæfdon þa heora stemn gesetenne 7 hiora mete genotudne, 7 wæs se cyng þa þiderweardes on fære mid þære scire þe mid him fierdedon. Þa he þa wæs þiderweardes, 7 sio oþeru fierd wæs hamweardes, 7 ða Deniscan sæton þær behindan, forþæm hiora cyning wæs gewundod on þæm gefeohte þæt hi hine ne mehton ferian, þa gegaderedon þa þe in Norþhymbrum bugeað 7 on Eastenglum sum hund scipa 7 foron suð ymbutan, 7 sum feowertig scipa norþ ymbutan 7 ymbsæton an geweorc on Defnascire be þære norþsæ, 7 þa þe suð ymbutan foron. ymbsæton Exancester.
Sed mox Adheredus comes Mertiorum, cum comitibus Eathelmo et Eathel(m)-notho necnon et cum aliis fidelibus regis, obsedit oppidum ex omni parte quousque paganis defecit omnis uictus sic ut carnes equorum suorum comeder`e´nt; ac demum fame coacti procedunt ad bellum contra eos qui ex orientali parte obsidionis erant. Ceciderunt ibidem multi ex utraque parte; tamen, Deo auxiliante, christiani uictoria sunt potiti; Dani uero in fugam sunt uersi. Item ad Eastseaxam redierunt unde uenerunt.	Þa se cyng þæt hierde, þa wende he hine west wið Exanceastres mid ealre þære fierde, buton swiþe gewaldenum dæle easteweardes þæs folces. Þa foron forð oþþe hie comon to Lundenbyrg 7 þa mid þæm burgwarum 7 þæm fultume þe him westan com, foron east to Beamfleote; wæs Hæsten þa þær cumen mid his herge þe ær æt Middeltune sæt, 7 eac se micla here wæs þa þærto cumen þe ær on Limene muþan sæt æt Apuldre; hæfde Hæsten ær geworht þæt geweorc æt Beamfleote 7 wæs þa ut afaren on hergaþ, 7 wæs se micla here æt ham. Þa foron hie to 7 gefliemdon þone here 7 þæt geweorc abræcon 7 genamon eal þæt þær binnan wæs, ge on feo, ge on wifum, ge eac on bearnum, 7 brohton eall into Lundenbyrig, 7 þa scipu eall oðþe tobræcon oþþe forbærndon oþþe to Lundenbyrig brohton oþþe to Hrofesceastre;
	7 Hæstenes wif 7 his suna twegen mon brohte to þæm cyninge, 7 he hi him eft ageaf, forþæm þe hiora wæs oþer his godsunu, oþer Æðeredes ealdormonnes; hæfdon hi hiora onfangen ær Hæsten to Beamfleote come, 7 he him hæfde geseald gislas 7 aðas, 7 se cyng him eac wel feoh sealde 7 eac swa þa he þone cniht agef 7 þæt wif. Ac sona swa hie to B(l)eamfleote comon, 7 þæt geweorc (ge)gewor<h>t wæs, swa hergode he on his rice, þone ilcan ende þe Æþered his cumpæder healdan sceolde, 7 eft oþre siþe he wæs on hergað gelend on þæt ilce rice, þa þa mon his geweorc abræc.

	Þa se cyning hine þa west wende mid þære fierde wið Exancestres, swa ic ær sæde, 7 se here þa burg beseten hæfde, þa he þærto gefaren wæs, þa eodon hie to hiora scipum. Þa he þa wið þone here þær wæst abisgod wæs, 7 þa hergas wæron þa gegaderode begen to Sceobyrig on Eastseaxum 7 þær geweorc worhtun, foron begen ætgædere up be Temese, 7 him com micel eaca to, ægþer ge of Eastenglum, ge of Norþhymbrum. Foron þa up be Temese oþþæt hie gedydon æt Sæferne, þa up be Sæferne. Þa gegaderode Æþered ealdormon 7 Æþelm ealdorman 7 Æþelnoþ ealdorman 7 þa cinges þegnas þe þa æt ham æt þæm geweorcum wæron, of ælcre byrig be eastan Pedredan, ge be westan Sealwuda ge be eastan, ge eac be norþan Temese 7 be westan Sæfern, ge eac sum dæl þæs Norðwealcynnes.
	Þa hie þa ealle gegaderode wæron, þa offoron hie þone here hindan æt Buttingtune on Sæferne staþe 7 hine þær utan besæton on ælce healfe on anum fæstenne. Þa hie ða fela wucena sæton on twa healfe þær e, 7 se cyng wæs west on Defnum wiþ þone sciphere, þa wæron hie mid metelieste gewægde 7 hæfdon miclne dæl þara horsa freten, 7 þa oþre wæron hungre acwolen. Þa eodon hie ut to ðæm monnum þe on easthealfe þære e wicodon 7 him wiþ gefuhton, 7 þa cristnan hæfdon sige; 7 þær wearð Ordheh cyninges þegn ofslægen 7 eac monige oþre cyninges þegnas ofslægen, 7 se dæl þe þær aweg com wurdon on fleame generede.
	Þa hie on Eastseaxe comon to hiora geweorce 7 to hiora scipum, þa gegaderade sio laf eft of Eastenglum 7 of Norðhymbrum micelne here onforan winter 7 befæston hira wif 7 hira scipu 7 hira feoh on Eastenglum 7 foron anstreces dæges 7 nihtes þæt hie gedydon on anre westre ceastre on Wirhealum seo is Legaceaster gehaten. Þa ne mehte seo fird hie na hindan offaran, ær hie wæron inne on þæm geweorce; besæton þeah þæt geweorc utan sume twegen dagas 7 genamon ceapes eall þæt þær buton wæs 7 þa men ofslogon þe hie foran forridan mehton butan geweorce 7 þæt corn eall forbærndon 7 mid hira horsum fretton on ælcre efenehðe. 7 þæt wæs ymb twelf monað þæs þe hie ær hider ofer sæ comon.

SN **894 (Latin)**	**MS A 894 (OE)**
prefatus exercitus paganorum hiemauit in insula quę uocata est Mereseige.	ONd þa sona æfter þæm on ðys gere for se here of Wirheale in on Norðwealas, forþæm hie ðær sittan ne mehton, þæt wæs forðy þe hie wæron benumene ægðer ge þæs ceapes ge þæs cornes ðe hie gehergod hæfdon. Þa hie ða eft ut of Norðwealum wendon mid þære herehyðe þe hie ðær genumen hæfdon, þa foron hie ofer Norðhymbra lond 7 Eastengla, swa swa seo fird hie geræcan ne mehte, oþþæt hie comon on Eastseaxna lond easteweard on an igland þæt is ute on þære sæ, þæt is Meresig haten. 7 þa se here eft hamweard wende þe Exanceaster beseten hæfde, þa hergodon hie up on Suðseaxum neah Cisseceastre, 7 þa burgware hie gefliemdon 7 hira monig hund ofslogon 7 hira scipu sumu genamon. Ða þy ilcan gere onforan winter þa Deniscan þe on Meresige sæton tugon hira scipu up on Temese 7 þa up on Lygan. Þæt wæs ymb twa ger þæs þe hie hider ofer sæ comon.
SN **895 (Latin)**	**MS A 895 (OE)**
	On þy ilcan gere worhte se foresprecena here geweorc be Lygan .xx. mila bufan Lundenbyrig. Þa þæs on sumera foron micel dæl þara burgwara 7 eac swa oþres folces þæt hie gedydon æt þara Deniscana geweorce 7 þær wurdon gefliemde, 7 sume feower cyninges þegnas ofslægene. Þa þæs on hærfeste þa wicode se cyng on neaweste þære byrig, þa hwile þe hie hira corn gerypon, þæt þa Deniscan him ne mehton þæs ripes forwiernan. Þa sume dæge rad se cyng up bi þære eæ 7 gehawade hwær mon mehte þa ea forwyrcan, þæt hie ne mehton þa scipu ut brengan; 7 hie ða swa dydon, worhton ða tu geweorc on twa healfe þære eas. Þa hie ða þæt geweorc furþum ongunnen hæfdon 7 þærto gewicod hæfdon, þa onget se here þæt hie ne mehton þa scipu ut brengan. Þa forleton hie hie 7 eodon ofer land þæt hie gedydon æt Cwatbrycge be Sæfern 7 þær gewerc worhton. Þa rad seo fird west æfter þæm herige, 7 þa men of Lundenbyrig gefetedon þa scipu 7 þa ealle þe hie alædan ne mehton tobræcon, 7 þa þe þær stælwyrðe wæron binnan Lundenbyrig gebrohton; 7 þa Deniscan hæfdon hira wif befæst innan Eastengle, ær hie ut of þæm geweorce foron. Þa sæton hie þone winter æt Cwatbrycge. Þæt wæs ymb þreo ger þæs þe hie on Limene muðan comon hider ofer sæ.
Hastengus cum exercitibus sibi adherentibus, tercio anno postquam uenerunt in ostium Tamensis et in ostium Limene fluminis, mare transiuit sine lucro et sine honore sed multis perditis ex sociis suis: applicuit in ostium Sequanę fluminis.	

SN **896 (Latin)**	**MS A 896 (OE)**
	Ða þæs on sumera on ðysum gere tofor se here, sum on Eastengle, sum on Norðhymbre, 7 þa þe feohlease wæron him þær scipu begeton 7 suð ofer sæ foron to Sigene. Næfde se here, Godes þonces, Angelcyn ealles forswiðe gebrocod, ac hie wæron micle swiþor gebrocede on þæm þrim gearum mid ceapes cwilde 7 monna, ealles swiþost mid þæm þæt manige þara selestena cynges þena þe þær on londe wæron forðferdon on þæm þrim gearum. Þara wæs sum Swiðulf biscop on Hrofesceastre 7 Ceolmund ealdormon on Cent 7 Beorhtulf ealdormon on Eastseaxum 7 Wulfred ealdormon on Hamtunscire 7 Ealhheard biscop æt Dorceceastre 7 Eadulf cynges þegn on Suðseaxum 7 Beornulf wicgefera on Winteceastre 7 Ecgulf cynges horsþegn 7 manige eac him þeh, ic ða geðungnestan nemde.
	Þy ilcan geare drehton þa hergas on Eastenglum 7 on Norðhymbrum Westseaxna lond swiðe be þæm suðstæðe mid stælhergum, ealra swiþust mid ðæm æscum þe hie fela geara ær timbredon. Þa het Ælfred cyng timbran langscipu ongen ða æscas. Þa wæron fulneah tu swa lange swa þa oðru. Sume hæfdon .lx. ara, sume ma.
	Þa wæron ægðer ge swiftran ge unwealtran, ge eac hieran þonne þa oðru; næron nawðer ne on fresisc gescæpene ne on denisc, bute swa him selfum ðuhte þæt hie nytwyrðoste beon meahten. Þa æt sumum cirre þæs ilcan geares comon þær sex scipu to Wiht 7 þær micel yfel gedydon, ægðer ge on Defenum ge welhwær be ðæm særiman. Þa het se cyng faran mid nigonum to þara niwena scipa, 7 forforon him þone muðan foran on utermere. Þa foron hie mid þrim scipum ut ongen hie, 7 þreo stodon æt ufeweardum þæm muðan on drygum; wæron þa men uppe on londe of agane. Þa gefengon hie þara þreora scipa tu æt ðæm muðan uteweardum, 7 þa men ofslogon, 7 þæt an oðwand; on þæm wæron eac þa men ofslægene buton fifum. Þa comon forðy onweg ðe ðara oþerra scipu asæton.
	Þa wurdon eac swiðe uneðelice aseten: þreo asæton on ða healfe þæs deopes ðe ða deniscan scipu aseten wæron, 7 þa oðru eall on oþre healfe, þæt hira ne mehte nan to oðrum. Ac ða þæt wæter wæs ahebbad fela furlanga from þæm scipum, þa eodan ða Deniscan from þæm þrim scipum to þæm oðrum þrim þe on hira healfe beebbade wæron 7 hie þa þær gefuhton. Þær wearð ofslægen Lucumon cynges gerefa 7 Wulfheard Friesa 7 Æbbe Friesa 7 Æðelhere Friesa 7 Æðelferð cynges geneat, 7 ealra monna fresiscra 7 engliscra .lxii. 7 þara deniscena .cxx..

	Þa com þæm deniscum scipum þeh ær flod to, ær þa cristnan mehten hira ut ascufan, 7 hie forðy ut oðreowon. Þa wæron hie to þæm gesargode þæt hie ne mehton Suðseaxna lond utan berowan, ac hira þær tu sæ on lond wearp, 7 þa men mon lædde to Winteceastre to þæm cynge; 7 he hie ðær ahon het, 7 þa men comon on Eastengle þe on þæm anum scipe wæron swiðe forwundode. Þy ilcan sumera forwearð nolæs þonne .xx. scipa mid monnum mid ealle be þæm suðriman. Þy ilcan gere forðferde Wulfric cynges horsðegn, se wæs eac wealhgefera.

And in translation:

SN **891 (translation)**	**MS A 891 (Whitelock)**
	In this year the Danish army went east, and King Arnulf with the East Franks, the Saxons and Bavarians fought against the mounted force before the ships arrived, and put it to flight.
	And three Scots came to King Alfred in a boat without any oars from Ireland, which they had left secretly, because they wished for the love of God to be in foreign lands, they cared not where. The boat in which they travelled was made of two and a half hides, and they took with them enough food for seven days. And after seven days they came to land in Cornwall, and went immediately to King Alfred. Their names were as follows: Dubslane, Machbethu and Maelinmum. And Swifneh, the best scholar among the Scots, died.
Comets appeared after Easter near Rogation days.	[*the following lines, though dated 892 in MS A, are, in fact, a continuation of 891*] And the same year after Easter, at the Rogation days or before, there appeared the star which is called in Latin *cometa*. Some men say that it is in English the long-haired star, for there shines a long ray from it, sometimes on one side, sometimes on every side.
SN **892 (translation)**	**MS A 892 (Whitelock)**
A great army of pagans came from the eastern kingdom of the Franks as far as Bologne, and from there with 350 ships into the mouth of the river Lympne; and there, not far from the river, in a place which is called Appledore, they made a very strong fortress. This river Lympne flows from a large wood which is called Andred; this wood has an area in length from east to west of 120 miles and more, and 30 miles in breadth. In the same year Hæsten came with 80 ships into the mouth of the river Thames and made for himself a very strong fortress at Milton on the southern bank of the Thames; not much after he made another fortification on the northern part of the Thames in a place which is called Benfleet.	In this year the great Danish army, which we have spoken about before, went back from the eastern kingdom westward to Bologne, and they were provided with ships there, so that they crossed in one journey, horses and all, and then came up into the estuary of the Lympne with 200 [and 50] ships. That estuary is in East Kent, at the east end of that great wood which we call *Andred*. The wood is from east to west 120 miles long, or longer, and 30 miles broad. The river, of which we spoke before, comes out of the Weald. They rowed their ships up the river as far as the Weald, four miles from the mouth of the estuary, and there they stormed a fortress. Inside that fortification there were a few peasants, and it was only half made. Then immediately afterwards Hæsten came with 80 ships up the Thames estuary and made himself a fortress at Milton, and the other army made one at Appledore.

SN **893 (translation)**	**MS A 893 (OE)**
[*Annal 893 in SN begins with an entry from the Norman annals*] Also in this year, Alfred, king of the West Saxons, fought against the Northmen in a place which is called Farnham: he killed them, wounded their king, and seized many spoils from them. They crossed the river Thames — they were forced to set out for Essex — however, many perished in the Thames. In fact, when king Alfred heard that a large part of the pagan enemy which had been routed from there, sailed across the sea and continued as far as Exeter, immediately bringing an army of cavalry and infantry there with him, he fought savagely against them and in the same place he completely defeated them, overthrew them and routed them.	In this year, that was twelve months after the Danes had built the fortress in the eastern kingdom, the Northumbrians and East Angles had given King Alfred oaths, and the East Angles had given six preliminary hostages; and yet, contrary to those pledges, as often as the other Danish armies went out in full force, they went either with them or on their behalf. And then King Alfred collected his army, and advanced to take up a position between the two enemy forces, where he had the nearest convenient site with regard both to the fort in the wood and the fort by the water, so that he could reach either army, if they chose to come into the open country. Then they went afterwards along the Weald in small bands and mounted companies, by whatever side it was then undefended by the English army.
Meanwhile, on the order of King Alfred, Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians — together with the citizens of London and countless other very skilled warriors — came as far as Benfleet and besieged the pagan fortification. He broke it down and in the same place received countless spoils of gold, silver, horses and clothes. Also among them were Hæsten's wife and two sons, who were taken to London and presented before King Alfred. The king immediately ordered them to be returned, because one was King Alfred's godson, and the other Ealdorman Æthered's.	And also they were sought by other bands, almost every day, either by day or by night, both from the English army and from the boroughs. The king had divided his army into two, so that always half its men were at home, half on service, apart from the men who guarded the boroughs. The enemy did not all come out of those encampments more than twice: once when they first landed, before the English were assembled, and once when they wished to leave those encampments. Then they captured much booty, and whiched to carry it north across the Thames into Essex, to meet the ships.
But when Hæsten came again to Benfleet he repaired there the fortress, which had been destroyed. Then he continued on to Shoebury and there he built a very strong fortification; and there the army which was encamped at Appledore joined to him and also [those] from East Anglia and Northumbria — not a very small, but a very large multitude. These came quickly together across the river Thames, until they had come to the river Severn and in that same place at Buttington they built a very strong fortification.	Then the English army intercepted them and fought against them at Farnham, and put the enemy to flight and recovered the booty. And the Danes fled across the Thames where there was no ford, and up along the Colne on to an islet. Then the English forces besieged them there for as long as their provisions lasted; but they had completed their term of service and used up their provisions, and the king was then on the way there with the division which was serving with him. When he was on his way there and the other English army was on its way home, and the Danes were remaining behind there because their king had been wounded in the battle, so that they could not move him, those Danes who live in Northumbria and East Anglia collected some hundred ships, and went south round the coast [and some 40 ships went north around the coast] and besieged a fortress on the north coast of Devon, and those who had gone south besieged Exeter.

But subsequently Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians, together with the ealdormen Æthelhelm and Æthelnoth and with some other faithful companions [thegns], of the king, besieged the town on every side, until the pagans ran out of all provisions, and were reduced to eating the flesh of their own horses. Finally they [the pagans] were compelled by hunger to come out and fight those who were opposing them, on the eastern side of the blockade. Many men from both sides were killed there, but with God's help the Christians were victorious. The Danes however were routed. They returned to Essex, whence they had come.	When the king heard that, he turned west towards Exeter with the whole army, except for a very inconsiderable portion of the people (who continued) eastwards. They went on until they came to London, and then with the citizens and with the reinforcements which came to them from the west, they went east to Benfleet. Hæsten had then come there with his army which had been at Milton, and the large army which had been at Appledore on the estuary of the Lympne had then also come there. Hæsten had previously built that fortress at Benfleet; and he was then out on a raid, and the large army was at home. Then the English went there and put the enemy to flight, and stormed the fortress and captured all that was within, both goods, and women and also children, and brought all to London; and they either broke up or burnt all the ships, or brought them to London or to Rochester.
	And Hæsten's wife and two sons were brought to the king; and he gave them back to him, because one of them was his godson, and the other the godson of Ealdorman Ethelred. They had stood sponsor to them before Hæsten came to Benfleet, and he had given the king oaths and hostages, and so he did also when he gave back the boy and the woman. But immediately they came to Benfleet and had made that fortress, Hæsten ravaged his kingdom, that very province which Ethelred, his son's godfather, was in charge of; and again, a second time, he had gone on a raid in that same kingdom when his fortress was stormed.
	When the king had turned west with the army towards Exeter, as I have said before, and the Danish army had laid siege to the borough, they went to their ships when he arrived there. When he was occupied against the army there in the west, and the (other) two Danish armies were assembled at Shoebury in Essex, and had made a fortress there, they went both together up along the Thames, and a great reinforcement came to them both from the East Angles and the Northumbrians. [They then went up along the Thames until they reached the Severn, then up along the Severn.] Then Ealdorman Æthelhelm and Ealdorman Æthelnoth and the king's thegns who then were at home at the fortresses assembled from every borough east of the Parret, and both west and east of Selwood, and also north of the Thames and west of the Severn, and also some portion of the Welsh people.

	When they were all assembled, they overtook the Danish army at Buttington on the bank of the Severn, and besieged it on every side in a fortress. Then when they had encamped for many weeks on the two sides of the river, and the kind was occupied in the west in Devon against the naval force, the besieged were oppressed by famine, and had eaten the greater part of their horses and the rest had died of starvation. They then came out against the men who were encamped on the east side of the river, and fought against them, and the Christians had the victory. And the king's thegn Ordheah and also many other king's thegns were killed, and a very great [slaughter] of the Danes was made, and the part that escaped were saved by flight.
	When they came to Essex to their fortress and their ships, the surviviors collected again before winter a large army from the East Angles and Northumbrians, placed their women and ships and property in safety in East Anglia, and went continuously by day and night till they reached a deserted city in Wirral, which is called Chester. Then the English army could not overtake them before they were inside that fortress. However, they besieged the fortress for some to days, and seized all the cattle that was outside, and killed the men whom they could cut off outside the fortress, and burnt all the corn, or consumed it by means of their horses, in all the surrounding districts. And that was twelve months after they had come hither across the sea.
***SN* 894 (translation)**	**MS A 894 (OE)**
As predicted the pagan army spent the winter on an island called Mersea.	And then in this year, immediately after that, the Danish army went into Wales from Wirral, because they could not stay there. That was because they were deprived both of the cattle and the corn which had been ravaged. When they turned back from Wales with the booty they had captured there, they went, so that the English army could not reach them, across Northumbria and into East Anglia, until they came into east Essex on to an island called Mersea, which is out in the sea.
	And when the Danish army which had besieged Exeter turned homewards, they ravaged up in Sussex near Chichester, and the citizens put thejm to flight and killed many humdreds of them, and captured some of their ships. Then the same year in early winter the Danes who were encamped on Mersea rowed their ships up the Thames and up the Lea. That was two years after they came hither across the sea.
***SN* 895 (translation)**	**MS A 895 (OE)**
	And in the same year the aforesaid army made a fortress by the Lea, 20 miles above London, Then afterwards in the summer a great part of the citizens and also of other people marched till they arrived at the fortress of the Danes, and there they were put to flight and four king's thegns were slain.

	Then later, in the autumn, the king encamped in the vicinity of the borough while they were reaping their corn, so that the Danes could not deny them that harvest. Then one day the king rode up along the river, and examined where the river could be obstructed, so that they could not bring the ships out. And this was carried out: two fortresses were made on the two sides of the river. When they had just begun that work [and had encamped for that purpose], the enemy perceived that they could not bring the ships out. Then they abandoned the ships and went overland till they reached Bridgnorth on the Severn and built that fortress. Then the English army rode after the enemy, and the men from London fetched the ships, and broke up all which they could not bring away, and brought to London those which were serviceable. And the Danes had placed their women in safety in East Anglia before they left that fortress. Then they stayed the winter at Bridgnorth. That was three years after they had come hither across the sea into the estuary of the Lympne.
Hæsten together with his troops keeping close to him, in the third year after they came to the mouth of the Thames and to the mouth of the river Lympne, he crossed the sea without gain and without honour but with many of his allies destroyed: he approached the mouth of the river Seine.	
***SN* 896**	**MS A 896 (OE)**
	And afterwards in the summer of this year the Danish army divided, one force going into East Anglia and one into Northumbria; and those that were moneyless got themselves ships and went south across the sea to the Seine. By the grace of God, the army had not on the whole afflicted the English people very greatly; but they were much more seriously afflicted in those three years by the mortality of cattle and men, and most of all in that many of the king's best thegns who were in the land died in those three years. Of those, one was Swithwulf, bishop of Rochester, and Ceolmund, ealdorman of Kent, and Brihtwulf, ealdorman of Essex [and Wulfred, ealdorman of Hampshire], and Ealhheard, bishop of Dorchester, and Eadwulf, a king's thegn in Sussex, and Beornwulf, the town-reeve of Winchester, and Ecgulf, the king's marshal, and many besides them, though I have named the most distinguished.
	In the same year the armies in East Anglia and Northumbria greatly harassed Wessex along the south coast with marauding bands, most of all with the warships which they had built many years before. Then King Alfred had 'long ships" built to oppose the Danish warships. They were almost twice as long as the others. Some had 60 oars, some more.

	They were both swifter and steadier and also higher than the others. They were built neither on the Frisian nor the Danish pattern, but as it seemed to him himself that they could be most useful. Then on a certain occasion of the same year, six ships came to the Isle of Wight and did great harm there, both in Devon and everywhere along the coast. Then the king ordered (a force) to go thither with nine of the new ships, and they blocked the estuary from the seaward end. Then the Danes went out against them with three ships, and three were on dry land farther up the estuary; the men from them had gone up on land. Then the English captured two of those three ships at the entrance to the estuary, and killed the men, and the one ship escaped. On it also the men were killed except five. These got away because the ships of their opponents ran aground.
	Moreover, they had run aground very awkwardly: three were aground on that side of the channel on which the Danish ships were aground, and all [the others] on the other side, so that none of them could get to the others. But when the water had ebbed many furlongs from the ships, the Danes from the remaining three ships went to the other three which were stranded on their side, and they then fought there. And there were killed the king's reeve Lucuman, Wulfheard the Frisian, Æbba the Frisian, Æthelhere the Frisian, Æthelfrith the king's geneat, and in all 62 Frisians and English and 120 of the Danes. Then, however, the tide reached the Danish ships before the Christians could launch theirs, and therefore they rowed away out. They were then so wounded that they could not row past Sussex, but the sea cast two of them on to the land, and the men were brought to Winchester to the king, and he ordered them to be hanged. And the men who were on the one ship reached East Anglia greatly wounded. That same summer no fewer then 20 ships, men and all, perished along the south coast. That same year died Wulfric, the king's marshal, who was [also] the Welsh-reeve.

This comparison reveals considerable variation between *SN* and ASC. For example, *SN* reports the appearance of comets in 891. Dumville and Lapidge noted '[n]one of the extant vernacular texts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* has this correct date'.[252] Also noteworthy is the fact that *SN* refers to *comete*, 'comets', in the plural, while all other sources refer to a single comet. Bately suggested this may indicate that the *SN* compiler had access to a source outside ASC, though she did not speculate as to the possible nature of that source.[253]

252. Dumville and Lapidge, *St Neots*, p. 95 (for 891), n. 1.
253. Bately, *TTR,* p. 90, n. 276.

In contrast to ASC, *SN* 891–895 gives a concise account of Alfred's last wars, with a clear beginning, middle and end. *SN* 891 reports comets appearing: a possible portent of bad tidings, followed with news in annal 892 of the arrival in England of two viking armies from Boulogne, on the Seine. One force, in 350 ships and led by an unnamed king, sailed into the mouth of the Lympne before continuing to Appledore, where it built a fortification. Later that year another force, in 80 ships and under the command of Hæsten, sailed into the Thames, building fortifications at Milton and Benfleet, north and south of the river. *SN* 893 reports on various conflicts between the vikings and Alfred's armies, including the capture of Hæsten's wife and two sons and their subsequent return to the pagan king — an honourable gesture on the part of Alfred, repaid by Hæsten with continued aggression. Later that year, however, the vikings suffered a humiliating defeat, despite the arrival of large numbers of reinforcements from Northumbria and East Anglia. Annal 894 finds the pagans on the island of Mersea, off the Essex coast. Then, in 895, Hæsten departed from England 'without gain and without honour', having lost many companions, sailing back to the Seine from where he began his campaign several years earlier.

SN 891–895 presents a well-ordered structure, as follows:

- 891: comets appear in the sky
- 892: vikings sail from Bologne to attack England
- 893: Alfred engages the viking armies
- 893: Alfred acts honourably
- 893: Hæsten acts dishonourably
- 893: the vikings are defeated
- 894: the vikings retreat to the island of Mersea
- 895: Hæsten returns to the Seine without wealth or honour

4. Evidence for multiple stages in the development of ASC's 891–896 section

In assessing the textual relationship between *SN* 891–895 and ASC 891–896, I now consider three studies dealing with various aspect of ASC 891–896, by Cecily Clark, Janet Bately and Thomas Shippey. In 1971 Clark published a most influential paper in which she noted a change in style in ASC's annals, beginning at 892, coinciding with a change of hand in the A manuscript in the middle of annal 891, occuring at the top of folio 16v. Compared to previous sections of the Chronicle, Clark writes of ASC's 892–896 annals, '[n]ot only are they longer and fuller of detail, but their syntax, in contrast with the scarcely varied co-ordination of the preceding entries, shows free use of subordination'. Clark also found evidence of rhetorical patterning and 'historical interpretation' in these annals, and suggested that 'what has changed here is not simply syntax, or taste for word patterns, but the view of chronicling: objectivity is partly discarded'.[254] I note, however, that with but one possible exception, all of the examples of stylistic and syntactical change which Clark lists occur in those texts in ASC which have no corresponding entry in *SN*.[255] In contrast, the examples she gives which 'still show many passages of purely co-ordinate structure', and so exhibit continuity with earlier sections of ASC, are among those passages which are also found in *SN*.[256] So, for example, one of the entries with purely co-ordinate structure (and thus indicative of earlier sections of ASC), from ASC 893, reads, *[þ]a forrad sio fierd hie foran, 7 him wið gefeaht æt Fearnhamme, 7 þone here gefliemde, 7 þa herehyþa ahreddon*, '[t]hen the army intercepted them and fought against them at

254. Clark, 'Narrative Mode', p. 222.
255. The exception regards one OE phrase using rhetorical patterning, *ægþer ge of East Englum, ge of Norþhymbrum*, here in ASC 893, which coincides with a line in *SN* 893, *et ab Orientalibus Anglis et a Nordanhymbris*. This single exception among all those noted by Clark, however, does not undermine the argument that these features of more complex syntax occur in texts which have no corresponding entry in the *SN* version.
256. Clark, 'Narrative Mode', p. 222.

Farnham, and put the enemy to flight and recovered the booty', and has a corresponding entry in *SN* 893, which reads, *Alfredus, rex Occidentalium Saxonum, pugnauit contra Nordmannos in loco qui dicitur Fearnhamme: qui eos occidit, et regem eorum sauciauit atque fugauit, necnon et spolia multa eis diripuit*, 'Alfred, king of the West Saxons, fought against the Northmen in a place which is called Farnham: he killed them, wounded their king, and seized many spoils from them'. This may be interpreted in one of two ways. Either the *SN* compiler, using, a full chronicle in the form of *æ*, successfully selected only entries which lacked the unique features noted by Clark, or, the *SN* compiler's source of ASC-related entries for 891–895 was already free of such material. If the latter suggestion is correct, then this version was likely later expanded to create ASC 891–896, with the new material introducing the unique features noted by Clark. This idea of multiple authorship in ASC's 891–896 annals may find some support in a paper by Janet Bately, published in 1985, in which she reviewed the lexical evidence of ASC 892–896. Like Clark, Bately observed several unique features in this section, which she described as 'special linguistic characteristics'.[257] Among these are included, for example, the 'use of the construction verb of motion + *oþþæt* or *þæt*', and the 'use of correlative *þa*..., *þa*, and their handling of *þa*, conjunction and adverb in general'. The occurrence of such features, she wrote, 'is in marked contrast with both earlier and later sections of the work. Correlation with conjunction *þa* is never found in the annals up to and including 879, and it occurs only 1x in the section 880 to 891... In this section adverb *þa* occurs 64x in all'.[258] All of the examples Bately listed containing 'special linguistic characteristics' appear in texts for which there is no corresponding passage in *SN*, or in passages in which

257. Bately, 'Compilation, Once More', p. 12.
258. Bately, 'Compilation, Once More', p. 13.

there is considerable variation between *SN* and ASC. This adds considerable weight to the suggestion that such material was written separately from the source of the 891–895 section in *SN* and added at a later stage in its textual history. A third study, by Tom Shippey, noted that the author of ASC's 893–896 section exhibits 'peculiar oscillations between control and (apparent) forgetfulness'.[259] Shippey observed that the author of annal 893, for example, 'repeated the words or phrases *west*, *begen*, *foron up be Temese*, *gegaderode*, (*be*)*sæton on ælce* / *twa healfe*. He tended to say: 'When A happened, then B happened. When B happened, then C happened." The result is highly redundant, and even then not immediately clear'.[260] Shippey suggested that the author of this section had 'particular difficulty with temporal relations', struggled to 'work to any elaborate plan', and had a tendency to fall into 'semantically pointless repetition'.[261] Is is most significant that, as with the examples given by Bately and Clark, such entries as Shippey noted occur only in texts for which there is no corresponding entry in *SN*. Either the *SN* compiler carefully extracted only those sections of ASC 891–896 which did not contain any of the unique features which Clark, Bately and Shippey describe, and then reworked the material to suit his own tastes, or such features were missing from *SN*'s source of this material in the first place. The latter, I suggest, is by far the more economical solution. Furthermore, if it is held that the *SN* compiler did, indeed, draw upon a full chronicle in the form of *æ*, then he largely rewrote ASC 893–896, omitting the treachery of the East Anglians and Northumbrians, and condensing a confused and complex narrative into a simple, straightforward report which also changed the year of Hæsten's final departure from

259. Shippey, 'Missing Army', p. 328.
260. Shippey, 'Missing Army', p. 336.
261. Shippey, 'Missing Army', pp. 334–35.

England from 896 to 895.[262] Given the overwhelming evidence for the *SN* compiler's otherwise highly conservative methods in relation to his sources, this seems rather unlikely.

According to my larger working hypothesis, Asser's annalistic source in 893 was not a full chronicle in the form of *æ*, but, rather, a working copy of texts, S, which, in turn, had been compiled from P, Q and R. If this is correct, then Q, in its original form to 890,[263] may well have continued in use as a distinct and independent text after 893, its annals not yet amalgamated into *æ*. Given this possibility I suggest that following the defeat of Hæsten and his departure for the Continent in 895, an account of Alfred's victory over the vikings was compiled in honour of Alfred's successes. This text either circulated independently, or it formed a continuation added to the 890 Q. I call this hypothetical source 'T'. It was T which the *SN* compiler used for his 891–895 annals and it may have come to him together with the copy of Q which supplied him with the archaic name forms, various West Saxon kings' regnal lengths and other features unique to *SN*'s ASC-related entries. It was also Q which kept his work free of the chronological dislocations present in the vernacular versions and Æthelweard's *Chronicon*.[264]

A more detailed comparison of annal 892 in the two versions is given in the following table:

SN **892 (translation)**	**MS A 892 (Whitelock)**
A great army of pagans	In this year the great Danish army [*se micla here*], which we have spoken about before,

262. Might a September Indiction have been used for the opening entry in ASC 896? If Hæstein's forces left England between 25 September and 25 December 895, then according to A.D. reckoning his departure would have fallen in 895 (as in *SN*), whereas someone using a September Indiction would have dated it to 896 (as in ASC). Might this suggest that Asser (who may himself have imposed a September Indiction on the annals in S) was involved in the production of *æ*, whereas another scholar was responsible for Q? If Asser did indeed work on *æ*, is would not be surprising should he have chosen to incorporate the text of S.

263. My arguments for 890 as the last annal in Q were presented above.

264. For example, this statement by Keynes and Lapidge, 'The fact that Asser, writing in 893, made use of a copy of the Chronicle that extended at least as far as 887 provides us with the essential point of departure: the Chronicle must have existed in some form already during Alfred's reign', in *Asser*, p. 277. See also Whitelock, *EHD*, pp. 117–18.

came from the eastern kingdom of the Franks as far as Bologne,	went back from the eastern kingdom westward to Bologne,
and from there with 350 ships into the mouth of the river Lympne; and there, not far from the river,	and they were provided with ships there, so that they crossed in one journey, horses and all, and then came up into the estuary of the Lympne with 200 [and 50] ships.
in a place which is called Appledore, they made a very strong fortress.	
	That estuary is in East Kent, at the east end of
This river Lympne flows from a large wood which is called Andred; this wood has an area in length from east to west of 120 miles and more, and 30 miles in breadth.	that great wood which we call Andred. The wood is from east to west 120 miles long, or longer, and 30 miles broad.
	The river, of which we spoke before, comes out of the Weald. They rowed their ships up the river as far as the Weald, four miles from the mouth of the estuary,
	and there they stormed a fortress. Inside that fortification there were a few peasants, and it was only half made.
In the same year Hæsten came with 80 ships into the mouth of the river Thames and made for himself a very strong fortress at Milton on the southern bank of the Thames;	Then immediately afterwards Hæsten came with 80 ships up the Thames estuary and made himself a fortress at Milton,
not much after he made another fortification on the northern part of the Thames in a place which is called Benfleet.	
	and the other army made one at Appledore.

Though the versions are similar, I note that no single entry in *SN* 892 is the exact equivalent of its counterpart in ASC. Most of the variation is minor, and at first glance insignificant — such as ASC's line that Hæsten, *worhte him geweorc æt Middeltune*, 'made himself a fortress at Milton', which in *SN* reads, *fecitque sibi firmissimum oppidum apud Middeltunam in australi ripa Tamensis*, 'made for himself a very strong fortress at Milton on the southern bank of the Thames'. Occasionally the order in which details are given is different, such as the statement at the beginning of *SN* 892 telling that the viking army built a fortress at Appledore, a place name which appears, awkwardly, at the end of ASC 892. Variations of this nature, though minor, are also unnecessary, and, if (as Plummer and many others have argued) the *SN* compiler derived this material from ASC, run contrary to what is otherwise known of his cautious use of the sources.

I suggest that the report in *SN* 891, concerning the appearance of comets, belonged to a set of annals written up after 895 and Hæsten's return, in defeat, with his forces to the Continent. If this is correct, then Asser's version of Q is unlikely to have continued to 893 (or if it did its annals 891–893 were either subsumed or lost in subsequent texts). It may be that Asser's Q extended only to the death of Guthrum in 890. In this hypothesis, *SN* 891–895 was drawn from a set of annals dealing with Alfred's last battles, but written far more concisely and with better structure than the version of these events as it appears in ASC 891–896. Furthermore, I suggest that the source of *SN* 891–895 was either compiled as a continuation of Q, or it originated as a separate text but came into the *SN* compilers' possesion via their copy of Q. I therefore refer to the source of *SN*'s 891–895 section as a separate text, which I designate 'T'. Source T opened with a report of a comet, and continued with annals for 892, 893, 894 and 895. According to this hypothesis, *SN* 891–895 follows the original structure and text of T very closely.

4.1 Evidence of T in John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*?

I noted above[265] that a number of readings shared by *SN* and John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis* suggest the possibility that Q was a source of ASC-related material in both Latin works. In the same paper Cyril Hart made another interesting, and possibly significant comparison of the text of annal 892 in *SN*, the *Chronicon ex chronicis*, and ASC. It reads as follows in the three versions,

ASC	*SN*	*Chonicon ex chronicis*
Her on þysum geare for se micla here … eft of þæm eastrice westweard to Bunann 7 þær wurdon gescipode,	magnus **paganorum exercitus** uenit de **orientali** regno **Franc**orum usque ad **Bononniam,**	Classicus et equestris **paganorum exercitus**, **orientalem Franci**am deserens, **Bononiam** adiit**,**

265. See pp. 88–89.

swa þæt hie asettan him on anne siþ ofer mid horsum mid ealle, 7 þa comon up on Limene muþan mid .ccl. (hunde) scipa. Se muþa is on easte weardre Cent æt þæs miclam wuda eastende þe we Andred hatað.	**indeque** cum CCCL **nauibus in ostium** Limene fluminis, et ibi non longe a flumine, in loco qui dicitur Apuldran, fecerunt castellum firmissimum. Quod Limene flumen **cunit de silua magna** que uocata est Andreadesuueald.	**indeque** simul cum suis equis CCL **navibus** Cantian transvectus, **in ostio** amnis Limenae, qui **de silva magna** Andred nominata **decurrit**…

Hart highlighted the words marked out in bold in *SN* and the *Chronicon ex chronicis* as having been 'used by the two chroniclers in common in their translations of the Anglo-Saxon chronicle'. He continued, '[i]t must be more than coincidental that both give *paganorum exercitus* for OE *here*, both introduce the word *Franc(orum)*, both give *Bonon(n)iam* for OE *Bunnan*, both omit to translate OE *west weard*'. Hart proposed *SN* may have been available to John of Worcester, but I suggest is also possible that both Latin texts are here translating a shared OE text which was not ASC. This theory dovetails neatly with the theory of T. Also, the appearance of T-type texts in both *SN* and the *Chronicon ex chronicis*, would support the hypothesis that T either accompanied, or was added as a continuation to, Q. Once again, I suggest that further analysis of the text of the *Chronicon ex chronicis* might help to determine the nature of John of Worcester's ASC-related sources.

6

Conclusion

Ever since the publication in 1899 of Charles Plummer's comprehensive analysis of ASC, students of the Chronicle have assumed that the common core of annals shared by the vernacular versions (to some point in the 890s) was also the ultimate source of all ASC-related entries in all works, both Old English and Latin. My thesis reconsiders the evidence behind this hypothesis and challenges a number of related assumptions. I propose, instead, that behind the Common Stock archetype are several texts from the reign of Alfred which were all used to produce the text Plummer called *æ*.

1. Summary of hypotheses

Chapter 1 began with a review of the foundations of Chronicle theory. Plummer started his investigations into the Chronicle's origins by comparing the texts of the vernacular versions — ABCDEF — against each other. This led him to conclude (now proved beyond doubt) that the vernacular versions share a common core of entries starting at 60 B.C., and continuing to some point in the 890s. This archetypal text Plummer named *æ*, or the 'common stock' — also describing it as the 'first Alfredian compilation'. He further suggested that the entire project was of Alfred's making, the king possibly even having written some annals himself. Assuming that a Chronicle in the form of *æ* was the source of all ASC-related entries in Asser's *Life*, Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, and *SN*, Plummer compared their texts with the Common Stock of the vernacular versions. On this assumption, the fact Asser wrote his *Life of Alfred* in 893 is proof the Common Stock archetype existed before then. Thus, for more than a

century, 893 has stood as the *teminus ante quem* for *æ*'s compilation. Plummer also noted certain features in *SN*'s ASC-related entries (including use of archaic spellings and a complete lack of the major 756–845 chronological dislocation) which appear to suggest an 'earlier' and 'more accurate' source than that behind the vernacular versions' Common Stock entries. This led him to conclude that *SN* used an earlier and more accurate version of *æ*, which he named *Æ*. He suggested *æ* picked up numerous errors and emendations in the transcription process from *Æ*.

Plummer's influence over Chronicle studies proved wide-reaching, with most scholars adopting, and some soon expanding upon his conclusions. Before long, however, several contemporaries proposed that the Common Stock archetype had incorporated an earlier chronicle produced during Æthelwulf's reign, with annals ending at 855. They argued that this 'Æthelwulfian chronicle' was taken up and extended after Alfred's accession, continuing into the 890s when copies were made and distributed to centres around the country. I note that both theories assert a single archetype, in the form of the Common Stock, ultimately served as the source of all ASC-related material in all surviving works.

In 1978 Janet Bately published a groundbreaking lexical analysis of ASC's texts to annal 890. Two questions she sought to answer were, first, whether Alfred was one of ASC's authors, and, second, whether the lexical evidence supported an 855 Æthelwulfian chronicle hypothesis. Her study answered both questions in the negative, but led to the unexpected discovery of an apparent break in ASC's texts at annal 878. Picking up on this observation, I noted the historical significance of 878 for Alfred and the Anglo-Saxons, with the king in south-western Wessex facing the greatest challenge of his reign. I then referred to a significant paper by F. M. Stenton, published in 1925, in which he noted that, starting in the early ninth century, a number of ASC's entries contain what he termed 'south-western elements'. From his interpretation of the Chronicle's origins, Stenton established 750–891 as the dating range for such features, when, in fact, they appear in ASC from 789–878, concluding

in the same year as Bately's analysis suggested a possible break in the text. Another study, by J. B. Wynn, also noted a possible 'change' in ASC's early ninth century annals, suggesting they appear as if written from a 'first-hand account of events'.

Chapter 2 continued to assess the apparent change (compared to earlier annals) in certain entries starting in the early ninth century. In a book published in 1939, R. H. Hodgkin noted 'five distinctive features of style and phraseology', such as *micel wæl geslagen* and *gefægne wærun*, which suddenly appear in ASC's ninth century texts. Hodgkin suggested that such entries were 'all of a piece'. I noted that his 'five distinctive features' also conclude at annal 878, and appear in ASC together with Stenton's south-western elements, often in the same sentence. Entries with such features are generally longer and more detailed than annals of previous centuries, and, when taken together as a whole, share a common subject matter, concerning: (1) Egbert and his dynasty (unflaggingly supported by the south-western West Saxon nobility), (2) news of viking raids, and, later (3) an emphasis on Alfred's unique and divinely-ordained ability to lead his people. Bately observed that in Old English texts outside ASC the euphemistic terms for 'die', *forðferan* and *gefaran*, never appear together. It is significant, therefore, that entries with Stenton's 'south-western elements' and Hodgkin's 'five distinctive features' use *gefaran* but never *forðferan*. Chapter 2 concludes with the suggestion that ASC's entries of this *gefaran* type, from 789–878, containing south-western elements and various other distinctive features, originated in a text written *c*. 878 for some purpose related to the king's situation in south-western Wessex at that time. I called this hypothetical source 'P', and suggested it was the 'first Alfredian compilation' — a source of ASC-related entries which was not the Chronicle.

Chapter three considered the question, 'If there was a source P, then what is the relationship between P and those non-P entries in ASC which precede, overlap, and follow from P?' Also, did P, as an independent source, influence any other ASC-related works? To these ends I began by extracting all P-type material from ASC.

With the exception of the World History annals (to the second century), the remaining texts fall into two main groups continuing into the 890s: (1) those short and concise entries reporting matters of the greatest significance to the Anglo-Saxon peoples, and (2) a set of entries starting at 879 which closely monitor a viking force which would attack England from the Continent in 892 and engage Alfred for several years in his final battles. Entries of the first type use the term *forðferan* and repeat a number of formulaic phrases across the centuries. Though secular in nature, these texts also recount the conversion histories of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the establishment of England's ecclesiastical institutions. Scholars have long recognised that *SN*'s ASC-related material may derive from a source both earlier and more accurate than the vernacular versions' Common Stock archetype. An analysis of *SN*'s 789–842 section (after which *SN* picks up with Asser's *Life*) revealed only annals of the *forðferan* type, with no south-western elements among them. There is also significant variation between *SN*'s ASC-related entries from 455–842 and the Common Stock texts of the vernacular versions. Based on *SN*'s evidence, I suggested that ASC's non-P, *forðferan*-type entries probably originated in a text once independent of P, which was compiled after P, but before Asser wrote the *Life* in 893. This source I called 'Q'. I suggested that *SN*'s compilers used Q rather than a version of ASC from annal 455. According to this hypothesis, the similarities and differences between *SN* and ASC resulted from both works sharing Q as a common source.

Chapter four looked at Asser's *Life of Alfred* and the possible source(s) of Asser's ASC-related entries. I began, however, with section 879–892 in ASC, considering if the evidence might suggest the existence of yet another set of annals, independent of P and Q, written and circulated *c*. 892 and, so, also available to Asser. ASC 879–892 follows the activities of an army introduced in 879, then encamped for the winter at Fulham. Most unusually ASC continues to report on this army's movements even after its departure for the Continent within the year. Peter Sawyer observed that news of such a viking force, one of many then active in and around Bri-

tain, would have only been of interest to an Anglo-Saxon audience *after* the 892 invasion. In R. H. C. Davis' view these entries read like military 'Intelligence Reports'. Dorothy Whitelock noted that additional material of this type appears in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. I suggested that these Fulham army entries probably originated in an independent source *c*. 892, produced to serve Alfred's political needs at the time. I called this source 'R'. The appearance in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* of additional R-type detail — including a passage missing in ASC 885 apparently lost through homoeoteleuton — offers considerable support for the hypothesis that R once circulated as an independent text, and was either available to Æthelweard or used by an earlier scribe to make such interpolations in his version of the Chronicle text.

Returning to the question of Asser's *Life*, I suggested that when Asser came to write his royal biography, he had at his disposal at least three different sources — P, Q, and R — from which to choose annalistic material for his work. In the *Life*, Asser combines biographical detail about Alfred with ASC-related entries from 851–887. Certain features in Asser's annalistic texts, however (including archaic spellings and use of genealogical texts which appear earlier than those in ASC), have caused some to suggest that Asser's ASC-related source belonged to an earlier stage than the Common Stock ancestor of the vernacular versions.

I then noted that from 851 ASC's annals suddenly begin to reckon the start of the new year from a date in September rather than 25 December/1 January. This change in ASC has long bemused scholars, for by the mid ninth century use of a September Indiction had long disappeared from Anglo-Saxon sources. Kenneth Harrison suggested this might represent some form of 'antiquarian revival'. I noted that the first ASC-related entry in Asser's *Life* is annal 851. I also noted evidence suggesting that Asser held to 'older traditions'. It is possible, then, that Asser, or perhaps an associate, imposed the September Indiction on the annals starting at 851. This theory, however, requires a radical shift in the perceived relationship between Asser and

ASC. If, in 893, Asser needed to consult multiple sources (PQR) to compile his *Life*, then, perhaps, to aid him in this work, a set of annals was drawn up combining relevant entries from PQR into a single text. If this is correct, then the September indiction could have been imposed on these annals at this stage, regardless of the dates assigned them in their original sources. This hypothetical compilation I called 'S'. I suggested S was probably an Old English text, used first by Asser and, later, by the authors of the Common Stock as the basis of their 851–890 annals. In support of this theory, I noted that at annal 851 ASC's major 756–845 chronological dislocation finally comes to an end. Bately observed there is no obvious reason for the correction to occur here, unless, perhaps, a set of annals, unaffected by the dislocation, was joined to the preceding section which ended at annal 845. I then noted that MSS BCDE, from 851–887, agree in several instances with Asser's *Life* against A (and also Æthelweard's *Chronicon*). Given that A is the earliest of the vernacular versions (dating to the late ninth or early tenth century), it is possible A reflects an earlier version of the Common Stock archetype than BCDE, and which included several variant readings from S. If this is correct, then a later scribe in the shared textual history of BCDE could have 'corrected' A's version using a copy of S, thus bringing a BCDE prototype into greater agreement with Asser's *Life* than A (and Æthelweard's *Chronicon*).

Chapter five considered whether another set of annals, also antecedent to the Common Stock archetype, might have been compiled *c*. 895. I began, however, with the suggestion that the *SN* compiler continued to use Q in his 851–887 section, alongside Asser's *Life*. There are several instances in these annals in *SN* where the compiler either has access to a source (or sources) of unknown provenance, or he has amended the *Life*'s texts in ways not reflected elsewhere. Examples include the place names Steyning, in annal 857, and Hadeigh, in annal 890, both unique to *SN*. I noted that Q was a possible source of the variation in many instances, apart from three entries in annals 877 and 878 which may have come from a text concerning the life

of St Edmund. A comparison of *SN* with ASC offers little support for the suggestion that ASC was *SN*'s source of its 851–887 section.

I then compared *SN* 891–895 with ASC 891–896, noting that *SN*'s account of the last wars of Alfred is much shorter, more concise, and far better structured than that found in the Chronicle. With reference to three papers concerning a number of unique and unusual features in ASC's 892–896 account, I noted that such features do not occur in *SN* 892–895. Given this evidence, I suggested *SN* may offer an earlier (perhaps based on the original) version of this material, with ASC representing a later stage in its textual history. I called the hypothetical source behind *SN*'s 891–895 section 'T', and suggested T was either added as a continuation to Q, or was included together with the *SN* compiler's Q text.

2. Avenues for future research

The central hypothesis of this thesis — that the Common Stock archetype incorporated texts from several independent sources dating to the reign of Alfred — opens the way for new approaches to the evidence concerning ASC's origins. For example, if Asser's ASC-related entries 851–887 came to the *Life* from PQR via S, then the *terminus post quem* for the Common Stock's compilation is 893, the year Asser wrote his *Life*. Similarly, if *SN* 891–895 reflects the original account of Alfred's last wars, then this account was embellished in the Common Stock archetype, thus pushing a possible date for *æ*'s compilation to 895/6 at the earliest.

Such a conclusion has immediate consequences for Chronicle scholarship. The theory that the Common Stock was compiled before 893 has hitherto confined all discussion concerning purpose to a historical context within an early 890s framework. In recent years, however, scholars have begun to recognise an intent on the part of the Common Stock's authors, by use of genealogical material and other means, to bestow legitimacy on the house of Wessex and, in particular, Edward the Elder's rule. For example, Thomas Bredehoft, wrote that,

> The extensive collection of genealogies and the Cynewulf and Cyneheard material worked together to define for the Chronicle an abiding concern with West Saxon political legitimacy and the West Saxon succession. The degree to which these concerns pervade the Chronicle might well be read as deriving from an anxiety about the West Saxon succession during Alfred's time.[266]

Bredehoft's concluding sentence here reflects the assumption that the Common Stock archetype was produced during Alfred's reign. For this reason he attributes to the Common Stock an 'abiding concern with West Saxon political legitimacy and West Saxon success' at the end of Alfred's reign. If, however, the Common Stock is a post-895/6 compilation, then might it instead reflect Edward's concerns, perhaps when his succession was under threat, and while Asser still lived?[267] Bredehoft wrote,

> The extensive record of Alfredian events from the 860s to the end of the Common Stock appears to confirm that narrating the history of Alfred's reign was a central motive for the Common Stock's composition.[268]

This raises the question, who stood to gain the most from this motive? Alfred in waning years of his life, or his son, Edward, whose rule was challenged from the very beginning? It was with the latter conviction that I started this thesis.

---

266. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, p. 61.
267. According to ASC, Asser died in 909.
268. Bredehoft, *Textual Histories*, p. 147.

Bibliography

ABELS, Richard P., *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*. *Medieval World* (London: Longman, 1998).

ARNOLD, Thomas (ed.) *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*. 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1882.)

BAKER, P. S., (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 8: MS F* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000).

BARKER, Eric E., 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Used By Æthelweard', *Bulletin of Historical Research* 40 (1967): 74–91.

BATELY, Janet, (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 3: MS A* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1986).

——— , *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and Textual Relationships*. Reading Medieval Studies Monograph 3 (Reading: Reading Medieval Studies, 1991).

——— , 'Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in Margot H. King and Wesley M. Stevens (eds.), *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Saint John's Abbey and University, 1979), pp. 233–54.

——— , 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 60 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as Evidence', *PBA* 64 (1978): 93–129.

——— , 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Once More', *LSE* 16 (1985): 7–26.

——— , 'Manuscript Layout and the Anglo-saxon Chronicle,' in D. G. Scragg (ed.) *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-saxon England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 1–22.

——— , 'World History in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: Its Sources and Its Separateness From the Old English Orosius', *Anglo-Saxon England* 8 (1979): 177–94.

BOSWORTH, J. and T. N. TOLLER, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: University Press, 1898) with *Supplement* by T.N. Toller (1921) and *Revised and Enlarged Addenda* by A. Campbell (1972).

BRANDL, A., 'Geschichte der altenglishen Literatur', in Hermann Paul (ed.), *Grundriss Der Germanischen Philologie* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1909), pp. 1053–55.

BREDEHOFT, Thomas. *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

BROOKS, Nicholas P. (ed.), *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain* (Leicester: University Press, 1982).

——, 'Why is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle About Kings?' *ASE* 39 (2010): 43–70.

CAMPBELL, Alistair, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1959).

—— (ed. and trans.) *The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London: Nelson, 1962).

CAMPBELL, James, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2000).

CHADWICK, H. Munro, *The Origin of the English Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924).

CHIBNALL, M. 'History of the Priory of St Neots', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society* 59 (1966): 67–74.

CLARK, Cecily, 'The Narrative Mode of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Before the Conquest', in Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (eds.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 215–237.

CLEMOES, Peter and K. HUGHES (eds.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

COLGRAVE, Bertram and R. A. B. MYNORS (eds.), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969; repr. 1998).

CUBBIN, G. (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 6: MS E* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996).

DARLINGTON, Reginald R. and P. McGURK, 'The "Chronicon ex chronicis" of "Florence" of Worcester and its use of sources for English History before 1066', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5 (1982): 185-96.

DARLINGTON, Reginald R. and P. McGURK, (eds.), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, Volume II: The Annals from 450 to 1066*, (trans.) Jenny Bray and P. McGurk, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1995).

DAVIS, R. H. C., 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth', *History* 56 (1971): 169–82, repr. in his *From Alfred the Great to Stephen* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 1991), pp. 33–46.

——— , *The Normans and Their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.)

——— , 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *EHR* 97 (1982): 803–10.

DAVIS, R.H.C. and J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

DUMVILLE, David N., 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *ASE* 5 (1976): 23–50.

——— , 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 4 (1985): 21–66.

——— , 'Vikings in Insular Chronicling', in Stefan Brink and Neil S. Price (eds.), *The Viking World* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 350-67.

——— , *Wessex and England From Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural, and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992).

DUMVILLE, D. and M. LAPIDGE (eds.), *ASCCE Volume 17: 'The Annals of St Neots' with 'Vita Prima Sancti Neoti'* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985).

FLOWER, R. and H. SMITH (facs. edd.), *The Parker Chronicle and Laws (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 173). A Facsimile* (London: Oxford University Press, 1941).

GALBRAITH, V. H., 'Who Wrote Asser's Life of Alfred?' in V.H. Galbraith (ed.), *An Introduction to the Study of History* (London: C.A. Watts, 1964), 88–128.

GRANSDEN, Antonia, *Historical Writing in England* c. *550 to* c. *1307* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974).

HARRISON, Kenneth, 'The Beginning of the Year in England, *c*. 500–900' *ASE* 2 (1973): 51–70.

——, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History to A.D. 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

HART, Cyril R., 'The B Text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *JMH* 8 (1982): 241–99.

——, 'The Early Section of the *Worcester Chronicle*', *JMH* 7 (1981): 249–82.

——, 'The East Anglian Chronicle', *JMH* 7 (1981): 249–82.

HODGKIN, Robert H. 'The Beginning of the Year in the English Chronicle', *EHR* 39 (1924): 497–510.

——, *A History of the Anglo-Saxons* vol. II, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1939).

HUNTER BLAIR, P., 'Some Observations on the "Historia Regum" attributed to Symeon of Durham', in N. K. Chadwick (ed.), *Celt and Saxon. Studies in the Early British Border* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 63-118.

IRVINE, Susan (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 7: MS E* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2004).

——, 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Idea of Rome in Alfredian Literature', in Timothy Reuter (ed.), *Alfred the Great: Papers From the Eleventh-centenary Conferences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003): pp. 63–77.

JORGENSEN, Alice. 'Introduction', in Alice Jorgensen (ed.), *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 1–28.

—— (ed.) *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

KER, N. R., *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957).

—— , *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books* 2nd edn. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964).

—— , *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

KEYNES, S. and M. LAPIDGE (eds. and transl.) *Alfred the Great: Asser's* 'Life of King Alfred' *and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1983).

LAPIDGE, Michael and H. GNEUSS (eds.), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England. Studies presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985).

LAPIDGE, Michael, 'The Hermenueutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE* 4 (1975): 67–111.

—— , 'Asser's Reading', in Timothy Reuter (ed.) *Alfred the Great: Papers From the Eleventh-centenary Conferences* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 27–47.

LATHAM, R. E., *et al.* (eds.) *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London: British Academy, 1975–[in progress])

LIEBERMANN, F., 'Review of Plummer', *Archiv für das Studium der neuren Sprachen* 104 (1900): 188–99.

LUTZ, Angelika (ed.), 'Das Studium der Angelsächsischen Chronik im 16. Jahrhundert: Nowell and Joscelyn', *Anglia* 100 (1982): 301–56.

MARTIN, Brett, 'John of Worcester and His Contemporaries', in R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.) *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 101-96.

MEANEY, Audrey, 'St. Neots, Æthelweard and the Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Survey', in Paul E. Szarmach (ed.), *Studies in Earlier Old English*

Prose: Sixteen Original Contributions (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp. 193–243.

O'BRIEN O'KEEFFE, K. (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 5: MS C* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001).

PARKES, M.B. 'The Palaeography of the Parker Manuscript of the Chronicle, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *ASE* 5 (1976): 149–71.

PAGE, R. I., 'Anglo-Saxon Episcopal Lists', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 9 (1965) 71–95 and 10 (1966): 2–24.

PLUMMER, C. (ed.), *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts From the Others: A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition By John Earle*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892–99).

REUTER, Timothy (ed.), *The Annals of Fulda*, Ninth-Century Histories 2 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).

ROLLASON, D.W., *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 1998).

SAWYER, Peter H., *The Age of the Vikings*. 2nd edn. (London: Edward Arnold, 1971).

SCHÜTT, Marie, 'The Literary Form of Asser's "Vita Alfredi"', *EHR* 72 (1957): 209–20.

SHIPPEY, Thomas A., 'A Missing Army: Some Doubts About the Alfredian Chronicle', *Anglo-Saxon* 1 (2007): 319–38.

SISAM, Kenneth. 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *PBA* 39 (1953): 287–346.

SMITH, A. H. (ed.) *The Parker Chronicle 832–900*, 3rd edn. (London: Methuen, 1951), see also 4th edn., by M. J. Swanton, Exeter, 1980.

SMYTH, Alfred, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

STENTON, F. M., *Anglo-Saxon England*. 3rd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

—— , *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

—— , 'The South-Western Element in the Old English Chronicle', in A.G. Little and F. M. Powicke (eds.), *Essays in Medieval History presented to Thomas Frederick Tout* (Manchester: [n. pib., printed for the subscribers], 1925), pp. 15–24.

STEVENSON, William Henry (ed.), *Asser's Life of King Alfred Together With the Annals of Saint Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904; rev. imp., by D. Whitelock, 1959).

STODNICK, Jacqueline, 'Sentence to Story: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as Formulary', in Alice Jorgensen (ed.) *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 91–111.

SWANTON, Michael J. (ed. and trans.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London: Phoenix, 2000).

TAYLOR, Simon (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition. Volume 4: MS B* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983).

THOROGOOD, A. J., 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the Reign of Ecgberht', *EHR* 48 (1933): 353–63.

THORPE, Benjamin (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, according to the several orginal authorities*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1848/9).

WALLACE-HADRILL, J. M., 'The Franks and the English in the Ninth Century: Some Common Historical Interests', *EMH*, 201–16. 1975.

WHITBREAD, L., 'Æthelweard and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *EHR* 74 (1959), 577–589.

WHITELOCK, Dorothy, *The Genuine Asser* (Reading: University of Reading, 1968).

—— , *The Importance of the Battle of Edington A.D. 878: a Lecture at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Edington Priory Church, August 27th, 1977*. London: Friends of Edington Priory Church, 1977.

—— (trans.) *English Historical Documents 1* c. *500–1042*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 1979).

WHITELOCK, Dorothy, DOUGLAS, D. C., and TUCKER, S.I., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961).

WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, completed by R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1998).

WINTERBOTTOM, Michael, 'The Style of Æthelweard', *MÆ* 36 (1967): 109–118.

WOOLF, Alex, 'Reporting Scotland in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in Alice Jorgensen (ed.), *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 221–39.

WORMALD, Patrick, 'The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and Its Neighbours', *TRHS* 27 (1977): 95–114.

WYNN, J. B., 'The Beginning of the Year in Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *MÆ* 25 (1956): 71–78.