

SIR ISRAEL GOLLANCZ MEMORIAL LECTURE

THE COMPILATION OF THE ANGLO-SAXON  
CHRONICLE, 60 BC to AD 890:  
VOCABULARY AS EVIDENCE

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THAT lexical features can be used to determine the date, dialect, and authorship of Old English texts has long been recognized. It is, for instance, nearly ninety years since Thomas Miller first cited a number of features pointing not to a West Saxon (and Alfredian) origin for the Old English Bede but a Mercian one,<sup>1</sup> and appended a list of 'rare words from the version' with 'one or two recognised Anglian words' to 'give further comparisons'.<sup>2</sup> Sixteen years later Richard Jordan published the results of a much wider-ranging investigation of Old English dialect vocabulary, considerably enlarging Miller's list

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In the following notes references to the Chronicle are taken from *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. C. Plummer, Oxford, 1892-9, repr. with two notes by D. Whitelock, 1952, and in particular from Plummer's text of MS A. Readings from A that have been erased or altered by later hands are restored. Short titles of other texts and abbreviations (based on the lists in ASE iv, 1975) are as follows: Old English Bede (Bede), see *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. T. Miller, EETS, os 95, 96, 110, 111, Oxford, 1890-8, repr. 1959, 1963; Alfred's Boethius (Bo), see *King Alfred's OE Version of Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. W. J. Sedgefield, Oxford, 1899; Gregory's Dialogues (GD), see *Bischof Werferths von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, ed. H. Hecht, Leipzig and Hamburg, 1900, 1907, repr. Darmstadt, 1965; Laws (Law), see *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann, Halle, 1903-16, repr. Aalen, 1960; Martyrology (Mart), see *An Old English Martyrology*, ed. G. Herzfeld, EETS 116, 1900, repr. Krause, New York, 1975; Orosius (Or), see *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. Bately, EETS, ss 6, 1979; Pastoral Care (CP), see *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. H. Sweet, EETS 45, 50, 1871-2, repr. 1958; Paris Psalter (PPs), see *Liber Psalmorum: The West-Saxon Psalms*, ed. J. W. Bright and R. L. Ramsay, Boston, 1907; the Soliloquies (Solil), see *King Alfred's Version of St. Augustine's Soliloquies*, ed. T. A. Carnicelli, Cambridge, Mass., 1969.

<sup>1</sup> *Old English Bede*, i, pp. xxvi-lix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. xlix-li.

of words characteristic of texts of Anglian origin.<sup>1</sup> And since 1906 there have been further contributions to the subject,<sup>2</sup> though Jordan's findings have remained substantially unmodified. Less attention has been paid to lexical differences between early and late texts and the establishment of a standard; however, here too a significant contribution has been made in recent years, in particular by Kenneth and Celia Sisam and Helmut Gneuss.<sup>3</sup> As for vocabulary as evidence of authorship, this has increasingly been the subject of scholarly investigation, and it is on this aspect of lexical studies and its possible contribution to an understanding of the manner of compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that I wish to concentrate in this paper.

In theory, a study of the vocabulary of an Old English prose text should provide us with information of at least three different kinds, matters of date and dialect apart. It should enable us 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. In practice, however, things are not so simple. Admittedly, similarities of usage between, for instance, the Institutes of Polity and homilies by Wulfstan enable us to identify the author of the former with the archbishop.<sup>4</sup> A number of other anonymous prose works can be attributed on similar grounds to Ælfric.<sup>5</sup> Differences of usage allow us to

<sup>1</sup> R. Jordan, *Eigentümlichkeiten des englischen Wortschatzes* (Anglistische Forschungen 17), Heidelberg, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., R. J. Menner, 'Anglian and Saxon elements in Wulfstan's vocabulary', *MLN* lxiii (1948), pp. 1-9, and 'The Anglian vocabulary of the Blickling homilies', in *Philologica: The Malone Anniversary Studies*, ed. T. A. Kirby and H. B. Woolf, Baltimore, 1949, pp. 56-64; *The Life of St. Chad*, ed. R. Vleeskruyer, Amsterdam, 1953; also J. J. Campbell, 'The dialect vocabulary of the Old English Bede', *JEGPh* l (1951), pp. 349-72, and O. Funke, 'Altenglische Wortgeographie', *Anglistische Studien, Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Professor Friedrich Wild* (Wiener Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie 66), Vienna, 1958, pp. 39-51.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *The Salisbury Psalter*, ed. C. Sisam and K. Sisam (EETS 242), Oxford, 1959, repr. 1969, and H. Gneuss, 'The origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's school at Winchester', *ASE* i (1972), pp. 63-83.

<sup>4</sup> See *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical'*, ed. K. Jost (Swiss Studies in English 47), Bern, 1959, esp. pp. 16-33.

<sup>5</sup> See *Homilies of Ælfric: a Supplementary Collection*, ed. J. C. Pope (EETS 259-60), Oxford, 1967-8, esp. pp. 94-105.

claim with some confidence that neither the author of the Old English Bede nor that of the Old English Orosius could have been the author of the Boethius, King Alfred,<sup>1</sup> while, as Professor Clemoes has recently shown, the distinctive pattern in which similarities and differences are combined in the Hexameron points to multiple authorship of that work, with part of the translation attributable to Ælfric and part to another author, probably to be identified with Byrhtferth of Ramsay.<sup>2</sup> However, the three kinds of evidence cannot in fact be kept rigidly apart. In the majority of cases the presence of a certain word in a given text is of potential significance only if it can be shown to have been used at the expense of another word, or to be restricted to one of several possible contexts or groups of contexts.<sup>3</sup> So too with preferences, where one word is used much more frequently than another: these are significant only if other texts can be shown to have different preferences and it can be demonstrated that they are indeed the preferences of a single author, and not due to scribal interference or arising from multiple authorship, whether through collaboration, the incorporation of material by other hands, or subsequent re-writing or expansion.<sup>4</sup> And in considering the possibility of

<sup>1</sup> See D. Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', *PBA* xlviii (1962), pp. 57-90; E. M. Liggins, 'The authorship of the Old English Orosius', *Anglia*, lxxxviii (1970), pp. 289-322; and J. M. Batley, 'King Alfred and the Old English translation of Orosius', *idem*, pp. 433-60.

<sup>2</sup> *The Old English Illustrated Hexateuch, British Museum Cotton Claudius, B. iv*, ed. C. R. Dodwell and P. Clemoes (*EEMF* 18), Copenhagen, 1974, esp. pp. 44-6 and 50-2.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Jost identifies as usages typical of Wulfstan *namian* not *hatan*, *genamod* and *genemnod beon* not *gehaten*, *geciged beon*; see K. Jost *Wulfstanstudien*, Bern, 1950, pp. 155 f. That Wulfstan also consistently uses the word *deofol* is in itself not significant—though, of course, his preference for the word on its own, without the demonstrative *se*, is a feature which helps to distinguish his writings from those of Ælfric, who uses both *deofol* and *se deofol* to refer to Satan: see *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. D. Bethurum, Oxford, 1957, p. 47 n. 5.

<sup>4</sup> In the Old English Bede, for example, certain exceptional usages are found in a section of the work for which there are two separate versions, in the version which appears to be non-original; others occur in the list of chapter-headings, which may, in part at least, be the work of someone other than the translator of the text. Similarly, in the Old English Orosius, untypical forms which are confined to the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan are probably not the author's own. See D. Whitelock, 'The list of chapter-headings in the Old English Bede', *Old English Studies in Honour of J. C. Pope*, ed. R. B. Burlin and E. B. Irving, Jr., Toronto, 1974, pp. 263-84; Batley, *Anglia*, lxxxviii, p. 439 n. 31; and *The Old English Orosius*, Introduction, section V. 2. iv; and see below, pp. 110 n. 1, 123 n. 4, 126 n. 3.

multiple authorship we must bear in mind the fact that a single author's usage can be subject to considerable variation—as J. C. Pope says of Ælfric, 'he had such a rich vocabulary that each fresh homily is likely to contain something new'—while it is the 'core of familiar words that recur again and again' that is of the greatest significance in terms of authorship.<sup>1</sup> A prerequisite to any consideration of authorship is a corpus of sufficient length to provide such a core, with the desirable bonus of a number of manuscript copies to allow us to attempt to distinguish (as far as it is ever possible to do so) between the author's usage and that of subsequent scribes.

Ælfric provides us with both the sufficiently large corpus and the range of manuscript copies, some very close in date to the composition of their contents, one set with corrections actually in the author's own hand.<sup>2</sup> The earliest version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that has come down to us (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)<sup>3</sup> has also survived in a number of manuscripts, with one—MS A, the Parker MS—containing the whole section 60 BC–AD 891 in a single hand dated late ninth or early tenth century and, it has been suggested, possibly associated with the place of compilation.<sup>4</sup>

However, the seven manuscript copies are not seven independent witnesses to the original text. MS G is apparently a direct copy of MS A; B and C are for long stretches so close to

<sup>1</sup> *Homilies of Ælfric*, i, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ælfric's First Series of Catholic Homilies*, British Museum Royal 7 C. xii, fols. 4–218, ed. N. Eliason and P. Clemoes (EEMF 13), Copenhagen, 1966, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> See *English Historical Documents*, i, ed. D. Whitelock, London, 1955, rev. 1979, pp. 121–2, and, for a chronicle ending at 890, R. H. Hodgkin, 'The beginning of the year in the English chronicle', *EHR* xxxix (1924), pp. 507–8. A number of scholars include the annal for 891 in the 'first' chronicle, while some write of a Chronicle of 892: see, e.g., K. Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies', *PBA* xxxix (1953), p. 332. However, the entry for 891 is absent from MS E (Oxford, Bodley MS Laud Misc. 636) and it is possible that this annal, like the annals from 892 onwards, was added after the 'original' compilation had been completed, its presence in MS D (British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B. iv) being the result of collation. See further below, pp. 100 n. 4, 111 n. 3, 115 n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> See 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* v (1976), pp. 149–71. See further below, p. 124 and n. 5. MS A is Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 173.

one another that Neil Ker has suggested that part of C is a direct copy of B; F is believed to be the work of a scribe who used the archetype of E as his base but also had before him MS A, which he proceeded to collate with his base, deleting entries and parts of entries in order to insert new material, while MSS D and E appear to have had a common archetype for their versions of the 890 Chronicle, a revision commonly known as the 'northern recension'.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the evidence of Latin texts with material derived from the 890 Chronicle is that all the surviving manuscripts of the Old English version shared a common ancestor which was at least one remove from the original compilation.<sup>2</sup> As a result, the most we can hope to achieve by collating the manuscripts is a tentative reconstruction of the archetype and not necessarily the 'original' itself. At the same time, the limited subject-matter of the 890 Chronicle and the sparseness of entries for certain periods mean that the core of familiar words is necessarily a small and selective one. None the less, there is sufficient material for us to reach certain conclusions about both the compilation and the authorship of the 890 Chronicle.

<sup>1</sup> For a valuable survey of the manuscripts and their relationships see Whitelock, *EHD* i, pp. 109-21. For MS G (British Library MS Otho B. xi) see Angelika Lutz, 'Zur Rekonstruktion der Version G der Angelsächsischen Chronik', *Anglia*, xcv (1977), pp. 1-19; for the relationship of MSS B and C (British Library MSS Cotton Tiberius A. vi and B. i) see N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon*, Oxford, 1957, no. 191, 4, and *EHD* i, p. 112. Here Professor Whitelock argues most plausibly that the change in relationship between MSS B and C noted by Ker from annal 653 on must be connected with the dropping of annal numbers at this point by MS B: 'Up to 652 there is no reading which suggests that "C" had access to any other manuscript than "B". But after this date "C" is not solely dependent on "B"; in several places a comparison with other versions shows "C" to have better readings than "B". It can hardly be accidental that this change in the relationship comes at the exact point where "B" stops inserting the annal numbers. If the scribe of "C" were copying "B", he would now have to find some other authority for his dates; and he might then sometimes prefer the readings of this other authority. Nevertheless, he did not discard "B" at this point. "B" and "C" continue to share readings against those of other manuscripts, and, as Ker has noted, the relationship from about 945 to 977, when "B" ends, is again very close.' I would venture to add that on the evidence of the manuscript readings this other authority cannot have been MS A or indeed a manuscript of the 'northern recension'; however, it could have been an ancestor, or be derived from an ancestor, of B which had all the annal numbers and was free from some but not all of B's errors and variants, in which case there is no obligation to suppose that the scribe of C collated MS B and this second manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> See *EHD* i, esp. pp. 117-18.

Earlier scholars had no doubt as to who the person behind the compilation was. Plummer, for instance, writes:

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.<sup>1</sup>

This view of Plummer's, that King Alfred was in some way involved in the compilation of the 890 Chronicle, has persisted until today: R. H. C. Davis, for instance, supports the idea of a national chronicle history composed in the king's court and accepts the suggestion that Alfred may have dictated some of the later annals.<sup>2</sup> However, the belief that the whole of the 890 Chronicle was, as Hodgkin puts it, 'substantially a product of Alfred's reign'<sup>3</sup> has never gained universal acceptance. Indeed, according to one school of thought, the Alfredian Chronicle is an extension of an older compilation, made probably during the reign of Alfred's father, Æthelwulf, and itself a highly composite document,<sup>4</sup> and E. E. Barker has recently put forward the theory that it was this pre-Alfredian version that was the basis of Ealdorman Æthelweard's Latin chronicle in the late tenth century: 'We believe that if his copy were available to us it would prove to be written in one hand down to the annal for 855 and to have subsequent material added at various times in different hands.'<sup>5</sup> Mr Barker also believes that some of the

<sup>1</sup> Plummer, *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, p. civ.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'Alfred the Great: Propaganda and Truth', *History*, lvi (1971), p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, Oxford, 1935, 3rd edn., 1952, ii, p. 624.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., F. Liebermann, review of Plummer, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, civ (1900), pp. 188-99; also A. Brandl, *Geschichte der altenglischen Literatur*, in Paul's *Grundriss*, 2nd edn., Strasbourg, 1909, iii, pp. 1054 ff.; H. M. Chadwick, *The Origin of the English Nation*, Cambridge, 1907, repr. 1924, p. 25; and H. A. Rositzke, *The C-Text of the Old English Chronicle* (*Beiträge zur Englischen Philologie* 34), Bochum-Langendreer, 1940, pp. 7 ff.

<sup>5</sup> E. E. Barker, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle used by Æthelweard', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xl (1967), p. 78. Mr Barker goes on to comment that the presumption that Æthelweard's copy of the Chronicle was a pre-Alfredian one 'may possibly account for certain small

material in the pre-855 section was added after 855 and in this he has the support of other proponents of the theory of a two-stage compilation, though these differ from him in matters of detail. For instance, although Mr Barker sees some of the entries based on Bede Epitome (the chronological summary at the end of Bede's Ecclesiastical History) as included in the Æthelwulf Chronicle and others as being a later addition,<sup>1</sup> Antonia Gransden assigns all the Bede Epitome material to the first compilation;<sup>2</sup> we may compare Plummer's belief that both Bedan and world history annals were inserted 'only . . . in the last stage of the compilation of the Chronicle (up to 892), in order to furnish an introduction to the whole'.<sup>3</sup> Before any attempt is made to discuss the involvement of King Alfred in the compilation of the 890 Chronicle, therefore, it is necessary

variations in the annals shortly after 855'. However, his claim that Æthelweard has nothing to correspond with the last words of annal 855 as recorded in MS A is incorrect, while the fact that Æthelweard also lacks the *7 se Æþelbryht ricsode v gear* of MS A 860 is surely without significance, the five-year reign being implicit in his references to an event which happened four years after Æthelbryht's accession and to the king's death one year after that. As for the mention of King Æthelbryht's burial place s.a. 866 not 860, this, as Mr Barker himself admits, occurs more naturally here and surely could be the result of editing of the Chronicle version by Æthelweard.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 77. Also seen as added later is a series of 'Canterbury annals'. For a refutation of some of Barker's theories see J. Bately, 'Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *Saints, Scholars and Heroes*, ed. M. H. King and W. M. Stevens, 1979. For Bede Epitome see *Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, Oxford, 1896, i, pp. 352-6.

<sup>2</sup> A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 550-c. 1307*, London, 1974, p. 37. Dr Gransden, although maintaining that 'the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was begun in King Alfred's reign' (p. 32), also assigns to the first stage of compilation lists and genealogies of kings, lists of bishops and the like, as well as a series of mid seventh to mid eighth-century West Saxon annals. The annals for the period 495 to the mid seventh century, however, which Barker takes to be part of an Æthelwulf chronicle and which Stenton and Harrison argue are the work of the author of a proto-chronicle composed 'at or shortly after the middle of the seventh century', she sees as a later addition: 'Clearly this section was compiled in Alfred's time, but it probably used oral traditions, partly in the form of epic poems', while the entries about Ceawlin, between 550 and 593, she believes are 'clearly derived from a separate saga about this king'. See further F. M. Stenton, 'The foundations of English history', *TRHS*, 4th ser. ix (1926), p. 166, also K. Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History to A.D. 900*, Cambridge, 1976, pp. 133 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, p. cxiii. Plummer is here following E. Grubitz, *Kritische Untersuchung über die angelsächsischen Annalen bis zum Jahre 893*, Inaugural dissertation, Göttingen, 1868.

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. And it is necessary to consider the possibility of what may be called editorial interference.

What happens when an Anglo-Saxon chronicler extends an existing chronicle, and what happens when he reworks earlier material, can both be demonstrated from surviving Chronicle versions. In MSS D and E, for instance, we have the results of the intervention of the so-called northern recensionist (probably writing in York in the tenth century), who not only inserted a number of pieces of additional material of primarily northern interest into his copy of the 890 Chronicle, but also rewrote and enlarged existing entries which the 890 Chronicle had derived from Bede Epitome.<sup>1</sup> There is sufficient new material for us to obtain a reasonable idea of the recensionist's linguistic habits and to see that he made no real attempt to impose his preferences on the old material.<sup>2</sup> There are admittedly some alterations to the vocabulary in passages not rewritten or containing new material, but these are no different in type nor more numerous than the alterations made deliberately or accidentally by scribes of the Old English Bede or the Martyrology or the Pastoral Care.<sup>3</sup> And collators of manuscripts of the Chronicle can show similar lack of interest in lexical variation, as an examination of MS D reveals.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Plummer, *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, pp. 1-40, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> For the only apparently significant exception (in annal 571) see below, p. 109 n. 2. The normal usage of the author of the 'northern recension' appears to have been *forþferde*, with pp. *forþ(ge)faren* and a single instance of *for to Criste*, 616.

<sup>3</sup> In connection with certain characteristic features in MSS T and U of the *Pastoral Care*, Dorothy Horgan comments that these manuscripts seem to descend from a common archetype, whose scribe 'belonged, it would seem, to a centre . . . where conscientious transcription went side by side with an awareness of the changes which had taken place in syntax and vocabulary'. See D. M. Horgan, 'The relationship between the OE MSS of King Alfred's translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*', *Anglia*, xci (1973), p. 162.

<sup>4</sup> For the suggestion that certain entries in MS D are the result of collation see *EHD* i, pp. 113-14, and *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. D. Whitelock, EEMF 4, Copenhagen, 1954, pp. 28 f. Professor Whitelock suggests that the manuscript used in the collation was of the same type as C. For a different type of revision see GD, where MS H represents the result of a recollection of the original Old English translation with a manuscript of the Latin: see further D. Yerkes, *Studies in the Manuscripts of Gregory's Dialogues*, unpublished dissertation, Oxford, 1976.



At the same time, that chroniclers adding chronologically later material to an existing chronicle did not necessarily trouble, or think it desirable, to undertake a fundamental revision of the vocabulary of that existing chronicle, can readily be demonstrated by a comparison of the manuscripts of the Chronicle, and not just that part of the Chronicle up to 890 but subsequent sections also.<sup>1</sup> It would be unrealistic therefore to expect to be able to differentiate (except in the most exceptional circumstances) between a unitary and a compound 890 Chronicle, that is, between the work of a single compiler or group of compilers drawing on a variety of sources of which some at least were documents in the vernacular, and a multi-stage compilation with, for example, a chronicle compiled in the time of Æthelwulf being brought up to date by a later chronicler or chroniclers writing in or after 890. At 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.

Here the problem arises as to which differences between groups of annals can be considered significant and which cannot. There is undeniably an impressive number of variations of usage within the 890 Chronicle. However, Sir Frank Stenton warns against 'too much regard for minute differences of style and syntax',<sup>2</sup> and this warning cannot lightly be disregarded, especially in view of the very limited occurrence of many of the concepts in the Chronicle. If we take as one of our yardsticks the distribution of similar forms outside the Chronicle, we have indeed either to dismiss a large proportion of these variations

<sup>1</sup> Once again the type of alteration found does not differ in essentials from that normally found in manuscript copies.

<sup>2</sup> F. M. Stenton, 'The south-western element in the Old English Chronicle', *Essays in medieval history presented to T. F. Tout*, ed. A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke, Manchester, 1925, p. 15, repr. in *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England (PASE)*, ed. D. Stenton, Oxford, 1970, p. 106. At the same time it must be remembered that in spite of variations in origin, 'stylistic continuity is (with exceptions such as the entry at 755) well maintained', and as the author of this comment, Cecily Clark, convincingly argues, the restricted vocabulary and phrasing, 'annal after annal using the same semi-formulaic language' must be interpreted in the light of 'the special stylistic principles' observed by the annalist. See C. Clark, 'The narrative mode of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* before the Conquest', in *England before the Conquest*, ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 215-35.

as non-significant because they are elsewhere found together in unitary texts, or to consider them only in a supporting role. For example, although the 890 Chronicle has a variety of expressions for 'become (or be made) bishop or archbishop', 'occupy the see', as AD 35 *gesæt biscepssetl*, 670 *feng to biscepdome*, 745 *onfeng biscepdome*, 741 *wæs to ærcebiscepe gehalgod*, 759 *wæs to ercebiscepe gehadod*, a similar and indeed wider range is found in the Old English Bede.<sup>1</sup> In the Bede, of course, variation in the Old English often reflects variation in the Latin original, and in the Chronicle too the wording of source material may have had an influential part to play. This is demonstrably the case in annals based on Bede Epitome, the *wæron gehadode* of 664 and *wæs gehalgod* of 731 corresponding to *ordinantur* and *consecratus* respectively in Bede.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, a number of variations which mark off one set of annals from another may be no more than the result of historical accident, due either to changing circumstances or to differences of emphasis in the source material. For example, though the annals for 866–76 are characterized by their use of the expression 'took up winter quarters there', *þær wintersetl namon*, the absence of this expression from earlier annals is in no way indicative of different authorship but merely reflects a change in strategy on the part of the Danes.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, comments such as that in 473, that the Britons fled from the English as from fire, *þa Walas flugon þa*

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Bede 54/25–6 *feng to biscopshade*, 90/13 *biscopseðle onfeng*, 116/24 *feng to þam biscopseðle*, 170/7–8 *onfeng biscopscire*, 170/32 *to biscope gehalgode*, 164/15–16 *þa biscopshade onfongen hæfde*, 478/2 *set biscopsetl*. Similarly such variants as the Chronicle's *geflieman* (871) and *aftieman* (836), *ledan* (827) and *geladan* (871), *oferhergian* (796) and *forhergian* (686) are found together in a range of texts including Bede, Or, and the Alfridian canon.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly the choice of the verb *abreca* in annal 409 *Gotan abracon Romeburg* is determined by the use of the corresponding Latin verb *frangere* in Bede Epitome *Roma a Gothis fracta*, while the selection of *gesohte* (annal 46, altered to 47, MS A) for Bede Epitome *adiens* must be seen in the context of the normal rendering of *adire* by *gesecan* in texts such as the Old English Bede and Gregory's Dialogues. For the possibility of certain linguistic practices resulting from educational training see *The Old English Illustrated Hexateuch*, pp. 44–5 and H. Gneuss, *ASE* i, pp. 63–83; see also S. Potter, *On the Relation of the Old English Bede to Wærfeth's Gregory and to Alfred's Translations*, Prague, 1930, pp. 17 ff. It should be noted, however, that in the Chronicle there is no attempt to match the variety of Bede Epitome, with *forþferde* rendering *obiit*, *defunctus est*, *migravit ad Dominum*, and *transiit*.

<sup>3</sup> Non-linguistic factors are also responsible for the limited occurrence of such concepts as 'island', 'booty', 'Britain'. Possibly to be included here are the collocations *faran up on*, *faran up onlong*, concentrated in the section 882–7. See below, p. 110 n. 3.

*Englan swa fyr*,<sup>1</sup> or 584, that Ceawlin took many towns and an enormous amount of booty and 'angry he returned thence to his own folk', *ierre he hwearf þonan to his agnum*, comments which stand out from the rest of the 890 Chronicle with its plain style and generally unemotional language, reflect a difference in subject-matter, the compiler possibly here drawing on an ultimately poetic, oral source.<sup>2</sup>

If we take as the starting-point of our investigation the annals dealing with events up to the death of Æthelwulf, that is, the section that some scholars see as forming a first-stage chronicle, we find 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 or translator. The 'world history' annals, AD 1-110, for instance, are distinguished from all the other annals by their use of *swealt* and *aswalt* 'died' (AD 3 and 45)<sup>3</sup> as well as the 'normal' *forþferde* (AD 63 and 101), and of *gefulluhtud* (AD 30) instead of the usual *gefulwad*, *gefullod*, 'baptized'; however, the verb *sweltan* and its compounds are found alongside *forþferan* in Wærferth's translation of Gregory's Dialogues, while the apparently rare *(ge)fulwihtian*<sup>4</sup> likewise occurs

<sup>1</sup> MS A originally *swa þer* (or *þær*) *fyr*; transcript of MS G *swa þær fyr were*; see CP 90/19 and, for further instances of the construction *swa þer*, the note on CP 90/19 in I. Carlson, *The Pastoral Care edited from British Museum MS. Cotton Otho B. ii*, i, Stockholm Studies in English xxxiv, Stockholm, 1975, p. 150. In view of the reading of MS A here I find Carlson's suggestion of an original reading *swa oper* in CP unconvincing.

<sup>2</sup> See H. Sweet, 'Some of the sources of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *ES* ii (1879), pp. 310-12. Sweet sees 'strikingly poetical diction' in some annals, notably 457 ('with superfluous and probably poetical amplification'), 491 ('with alliteration and poetical diction'), 501 (which 'looks like an attempt to eke out a few poetical epithets into an historical statement'), and Professor Whitelock (private communication) would add the annal 626 where 'the impossible round figures for Penda's age and length of reign are "30" and "50"'. See also Harrison, p. 132 n. 10. The presence of allegedly poetic features in these entries (and I am not altogether convinced by Sweet's claims) does not rule out the possibility of an intermediary Latin version.

<sup>3</sup> In MS A the annal numbers 44, 45, and 46 have been altered to 45, 46, and 47.

<sup>4</sup> Bosworth and Toller, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, cites only this instance and one from a fragment printed by O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, London, 1866, iii, p. 422, 'Of St. Mildrið, Tanet', where it occurs in the same sentence as the verb *gefullian*. However, see also *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, ed. B. Assmann, Kassel, 1889, repr. with supplement by P. Clemoes, Darmstadt, 1964, ii. 21 and xvii. 29. For *fulluhtere* as a variant of *fullere* see GD 13/17 and Mart 102/24, beside 156/11.

alongside the more common *gefullian*. There is nothing in these annals that requires us to suppose that the man who translated the world history material<sup>1</sup> could not also have translated Bede Epitome or provided other pre-855 annals. So too with the section AD 449–584: though this is marked off from the rest of the Chronicle by its regular use of the formula ‘the place called’, as in the annal for 455, *þære stowe þe is gecweden Agæles þrep*, and 477 *þa stowe þe is nemned Cymenes ora*, this distinctive mannerism could already have been present in a Latin or vernacular source used by the compiler,<sup>2</sup> and its absence from surrounding annals does not of itself rule out the possibility of a single act of compilation for the whole section, 60 BC to the end of the seventh century. At the same time a certain unity is given to this section by the selection in its constituent parts of such potentially significant forms as *ealand* not *igland*, ‘island’, *adrifan* not *adræfan*, ‘drive out’, normal *forþferde* for ‘died’, both *onfon rice* and *fon to rice* for ‘succeed to the throne’, *feohtan* and *gefeohtan* for ‘fight’, and *on* and *in* for ‘in’, ‘into’.<sup>3</sup>

These lexical items occur also in the section that follows, in the annals for the eighth and early ninth centuries;<sup>4</sup> indeed, in the majority of entries up to and including the annals for the beginning of Egbert’s reign, that is up to about 830, there is nothing that requires us to suppose a change of compiler, variations being either explicable in terms of differences in the

<sup>1</sup> For the possible Latin sources of the world history material see my forthcoming article, ‘World History in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: its sources and its separateness from the Old English Orosius’, ASE viii.

<sup>2</sup> In the Old English Bede, for instance, constructions of this type are normally (though not exclusively) used to render similar expressions in the Latin: see, e.g., 92/18 *on þære mæran stowe þe cweden is Degsastan*, Bede, HE i. xxxiv *in loco celeberrimo, qui dicitur Degsastan*; 140/16 *in þære stowe þe Mælmæn hatte*, HE ii. xiv *in loco qui vocatur Maelmin*. Instances in vernacular charters are paralleled in Latin ones. In the Old English Orosius, on the other hand, the ‘is’ or ‘was called’ formula is used freely without equivalent in the Latin source, apparently as a stylistic mannerism of the translator’s. It is significant that in both the Bede and the Orosius as in other texts of the period the formula is found throughout the work, not concentrated in one small area as here in the Chronicle. The formula returns to the Chronicle in the ‘continuation’ 891–7; it is also a feature of the style of the northern recensionist. See further below, pp. 106 f., 111 n. 3, 114 n. 2, 123. Does the use of *Wiht ealand* (annals 530 and 534) beside the *Wiht* of 661 and 686 reflect a similarly worded Latin or vernacular source? See, e.g., Be, where *Wiht* (*þæt*) *ealand* regularly translates Latin *Uecta insula*?

<sup>3</sup> See further below, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> For the verb *adræfan* (755) beside *adrifan* (823) see below, pp. 106 f.; *ealand* is confined to the BEp material in the annal for 716.

source material or paralleled in unitary texts. However, a handful of annals stand out from the rest. These are a group of early eighth-century annals and the entry for 755. The early eighth-century annals (stretching from at least 716 to 741)<sup>1</sup> are distinguished by their use of the collocation *lic restep* (716, 738) not *lic lip* in referring to a man's burial place, *ferde* (721, 728, 737) in preference to *for* (confined here to an annal based on Bede Epitome), and *gewon* (741) beside the usual *feahht*, *gefeahht* (722, 725, 728, 743). Taken individually none of these items is of itself significantly distinctive; however, in combination<sup>2</sup> they must lead us to treat with caution the theory that the annals for the early eighth century, like those for preceding centuries, were originally composed in Latin,<sup>3</sup> and were subsequently translated by the compiler of this part of the Chronicle.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Annals 716 and 741 are merely the identifiable limits of this group, which could well extend beyond these annals in both directions. For the suggestion that the compiler may have had access to a series of annals for the end of the seventh and the first part of the eighth century see, e.g., F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford, 1943, 3rd edn., 1971, p. 692.

<sup>2</sup> See also below, p. 111 n. 4. *Feran* is found also in certain ninth-century annals, but in a quite different combination. *Restep* could reflect the Latin verb *requiescere*; the normal *lic lip* is found ten times elsewhere in the 890 Chronicle. For *gewon* see below, p. 122 n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Items translated from Bede Epitome of course excepted. There is no evidence that the Bede Epitome entries, which stretch from 60 BC to AD 731, were not all translated by the same person, nor is there anything conclusive in the order of Bede Epitome and other material in individual annals to show the stage in the compilation at which they were added or to support Sisam's claim (*PBA* xxxix, p. 334, agreeing with Earle and Plummer) that the incorporation of the Bede Epitome material was late. Quite often BEp material opens an annal (as, e.g., 710 and 725); where it does not, it is usually the nature of the material that determines the order of items (as, e.g., 675, where there are chronological considerations, or 685, where West Saxon material takes first place), though sometimes it may well have been the amount of space available to the compiler and its physical location that has done so. Moreover, in none of the four places 'where something follows a pedigree' (cited by Sisam as consistent with the theory of late incorporation) is the order of items arbitrary. Thus, in the annal for 676 we have the order West Saxon material + relevant pedigree + BEp material; in 685 we have West Saxon material incorporating the relevant pedigree + BEp material + relevant pedigree + further BEp material; in 716 the annal begins and ends with BEp material, the pedigrees being inserted at appropriate points in the course of the entry; in 731 we have Northumbrian material + relevant pedigree + BEp material, with the Northumbrian material possibly derived from or replacing an entry in Bede Epitome dated 729.

<sup>4</sup> An alternative possibility is that the compiler was here drawing on a vernacular source and that his linguistic usage at this point was influenced

Of the exceptional nature of the annal for 755, on the other hand, there can be no doubt. This is the annal incorporating the story of the heroic confrontation between the followers of Cynewulf and Cyneheard, an account (possibly from a saga or lay)<sup>1</sup> which, like a number of other items in the Chronicle, contains features that demonstrate clearly that it was added as an afterthought or additional comment to an existing entry, and so need not be the work of the author of that entry.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore not surprising that a study of vocabulary should reveal a number of differences of usage between this account and other

by the language of that source (see Plummer, ii, p. cxi, with arguments with which I disagree). However, if so, it does not necessarily follow that that text was composed in the eighth century: a translation of an original Latin document or documents could have been provided for him. For the suggestion that most if not all of the early material was originally composed in Latin see, e.g., Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 15. 'The foundation of the work was a set of West Saxon annals, possibly written in Latin, which came down to the middle of the eighth century', and *ibid.*, p. 692; also Chadwick, p. 26. Chadwick follows W. H. Stevenson, 'The beginnings of Wessex', *EHR* xiv (1899), pp. 32-46, in drawing attention to certain apparent archaisms involving proper names, 'which make it probable that the annals were written in Latin'. However, modern scholarship would not agree with all Stevenson's interpretations of forms. It would be tempting to see the use of *rex* and *dux* in annals 792, 837, and 851 as an indication of Latin sources for these annals also were there not other possible explanations for this, as, for instance, the adoption by the compiler or scribe of Latin titles. See *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*, rev. D. Whitelock, Oxford, 1967, xxxiv, ll. 1 and 2.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., C. L. Wrenn, 'A saga of the Anglo-Saxons', *History*, xxv (1941), pp. 208-15.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed after the account of the feud the entry resumes as though the digression had never been made, 'in this same year . . .'. See further Wrenn, p. 213. Other annals with material of this type include the entries for 658 and 709; see also annals 787, 827, and 836. Of annal 827 Professor Whitelock observes (private communication quoting from her forthcoming book), 'One cannot help wondering why the chronicler has made so much of Egbert's conquest of Mercia when it was of such short duration. It may be that he saw a parallel between Egbert's position in 829 and that achieved by Alfred a few years before he was writing, when he was ruling the Mercians as overlord of Ealdorman Æthelred . . . The chronicler may have wished to stress that there was precedent for the rule of a West Saxon king over the Mercians.' And Professor Whitelock goes on to suggest that if this is indeed so, 'it would mean that the source the Chronicle is using for Egbert's reign might have quite a simple annal at 827 (for 829), stopping perhaps at *Miercna rice* (or at *besuþan Humbre was*) and not continuing until the last sentence about the submission of the Northumbrians'. Annal 827, it should be noted, contains one of the two instances of *geþwærnesse*, taken by Hodgkin to give unity to the section 823-78; the other occurs s.a. 860.

pre-855 annals, as, for instance, *adrafan* not *adrifan*, *haten* not *genemned*, *gecueden*, etc., while an important syntactical difference is the use no fewer than three times in the Cynewulf and Cyneheard material of the expanded form *wæron feohtende*, where other annals have only the simple form. For comparable features we have to look to the annals not of the eighth century or before, but of the ninth century, and more specifically to those annals that relate to the close of the reign of Egbert and to the times of Æthelwulf and his sons, 835 Chronicle dating onward.

As we have seen, supporters of the theory of a two-stage compilation take as the end of the first stage the annal for 855, and some go so far as to suggest that the material for the last twenty-five years or so of this section was quite probably provided by the compiler himself. In this view they are joined by J. B. Wynn, who comments that 'Down to about 830 the man responsible for the first recension, whether it ended at 855 or 891, was dependent for most of his information upon a number of older sources, especially Bede's *Historia*, and a series of seventh, eighth, and early ninth-century annals. After 830, or thereabouts, his work was more in the nature of an independent account, based on a first-hand knowledge of events'.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars, however, detect the hand of an Alfredian chronicler or chroniclers well before this date. Sir Frank Stenton, for example, contrasts annals 800-39 Chronicle dating, which deal with the reign of Egbert and the early part of Æthelwulf and which he takes to be all contemporary, with the subsequent entries from 840 to 865, which he points out are inconsecutive. Some of these annals, he says, must have been written down appreciably later than the events which they relate and are probably 'the work of the man who wrote the subsequent "Alfredian" section from 865 to 891'.<sup>2</sup> Hodgkin, on the other

<sup>1</sup> See J. B. Wynn, 'The beginning of the year in Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *MÆ* xxv (1956), p. 77. For the generally accepted view that for the second half of the eighth century and the first thirty years of the ninth century the compiler had virtually no West Saxon material at his disposal see, e.g., Chadwick, p. 26, also Stenton's comment, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 692, that it is doubtful whether, for the period 750-800, any written material lay before the compiler. As Professor Whitelock kindly informs me, it seems likely that the few records available to him were supplemented from Mercian sources.

<sup>2</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 642. See also A. J. Thorogood, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in the reign of Ecgbert', *EHR* xlviii (1933), pp. 353-63, and Chadwick, p. 25 n. 3, 'the paucity of entries between 840

hand, while agreeing with the theory of the involvement of an Alfredian chronicler in the Æthelwulfian annals, firmly rejects the theory that the earlier annals were contemporary, administering a stern rebuke to those not holding this view: 'If [they] had paid attention to the contrast in style and phraseology of the Chronicle before and after 823 [they] could scarcely have maintained that the annals for the reign of Egbert are a distinct entity and contemporary.' For Hodgkin the change comes *c.* 823, and he claims that the entries 823–71 are all of a piece and must have been composed in Alfred's reign.<sup>1</sup>

In support of his claim, Hodgkin lists five distinctive features of 'style and phraseology' occurring between 823 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* (823 etc., to 871), *micel wælsliht* (839 and 871), *gefægene wærun* (855 and 878), *geþwærnesse* (827 and 860), and *micle* (or *lytle*) *werede* (823, 871, 878). However, the unity that they give is, as he himself emphasizes, not necessarily the result of common authorship—most of the items being found in a range of texts by different authors—nor does their presence here of itself require us to suppose that all the entries were composed in Alfred's reign.<sup>2</sup> What is more, since the evidence that we have shows the Chronicle to follow the wording of its source material faithfully,<sup>3</sup> and there is no evidence of imaginative rewriting of the type found in the Orosius,<sup>4</sup> absence of Hodgkin's distinctive features from earlier annals does not necessarily imply a change of compiler. The majority of annals before 823 simply do not offer opportunities for the use of these or alternative forms and

and 865 is worth noticing'. Annals 822 (for 824) and 823 (for 825) still begin the year at Christmas, the first clear indication of the commencement of the year in the autumn (apparently the normal usage from that point to 890) comes in the entry for 851. See Professor Whitelock's note in Plummer, *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, pp. cxl–cxli, and *EHD* i, p. 125. For 'appreciably later' entries see below, p. 112 n. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, ii, p. 627. See also pp. 745–6.

<sup>2</sup> For the occurrence of *micel wæl geslæan* in later parts of the Chronicle see, e.g., 905D and 982C. Like the expressions *miclum* or *micle werede* it appears also in both the Old English Bede and Or; *gefægen beon* is found in the Alfredian canon, and *geþwærnes* in Be, Or, and CP.

<sup>3</sup> Additions and omissions apart, there are very few changes in translating material from Bede Epitome, the most important involving the substitution of active for passive constructions.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Old English Orosius*, Introduction, Section VIII and commentary, *passim*.



constructions.<sup>1</sup> So, for instance, in the annal for 800 the Chronicle reports a great battle in which two ealdormen were slain and the people of Wiltshire had the victory: that the author of the annal does not use the words and phrases cited by Hodgkin and add that one side or the other came with a large force (or only a small one), or that there was much slaughter, or that the victors rejoiced, or that there was subsequently concord between the antagonists, need mean no more than that he had no access to information about such matters.

However, 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 consistently rendered by *gefaran*; in the annals of the 880s it is rendered no less consistently by *forþferan*.<sup>2</sup> The potential significance of this difference is demonstrated by the distribution of these two euphemistic expressions in other Old English texts of the ninth century. In these *forþferan* and *gefaran*, though common, normally never occur side by side in the same text, exceptions apparently being the result of the

<sup>1</sup> Indeed the only entry, between 60 BC and AD 823 to refer to 'much slaughter of human beings' is 592, *Her micel wælfill wæs æt Woddesbeorge*, which we may compare with 839 *Her wæs micel wælsliht on Lundenne* and 871 *þær wearþ micel wælsliht on gehwæþere hond* (the apparent rarity of *wælsliht* and *wælfill* outside the Chronicle making it not possible to determine their potential value as indicators of authorship), 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.

<sup>2</sup> Outside the section beginning with the annal for 867 the form *gefor* is found only in the entries for 571, 731, and 855. The instance s.a. 571 (found in MSS A, B, and C but altered to *geforþferde* in A) corresponds to MS E *forþfor* (itself exceptional here, though Menner, *MLN* lxiii, p. 6 describes the verb *forþferan* as 'a WS word that is both early and late') and it is possible that both of these forms are the result of scribal substitution. MS D has a lacuna. The version of annal 731 found in MSS A, B, and C contains features which suggest rewriting and so possibly does annal 855 (see below, p. 112); the corresponding entries in the 'northern recension', which are both rewritten, use the verb *forþferan*. It should be noted that the 'genealogical preface' with which MS A opens and which is now generally believed to be an older document, not necessarily part of the 890 Chronicle, has three instances of *gefaran*.

insertion of new material or scribal alteration.<sup>1</sup> And scribal alteration normally involves an original Anglian *leoran*, *geleoran*, 'pass away'.<sup>2</sup> Of 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. However, there are 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)<sup>3</sup> is characterized by its use of a variety of words for 'fight' where the second group has only one,<sup>4</sup> its use of *innan* and *into* (each 3×) as well as *on*, *to*, its choice of the collocation *sige niman* (3×), where the second group has *sige habban* (2×), and its fondness for expanded con-

<sup>1</sup> In the Bede I have noted only three instances of *gefaran*, one in MSS O and Ca, ii, 223/42, in the section where someone other than the original translator has filled part of a lacuna by a new translation (see Potter, *Relation*, pp. 30–3, J. J. Campbell, 'The OE Bede: Book III, Chapters 16–20', *MLN* lxxvii (1952), pp. 381–6, and D. Whitelock, 'Chapter headings', *Old English Studies*, pp. 263–84). On the two other occasions where this form occurs it is MS C which reads *gefor* for the *geleorde* and *ferde* respectively of the other manuscripts (see Bede 362/3 and 378/1), and it is best explained as a scribal replacement for an original *geleorde*. A similar explanation may be put forward for the solitary instance of *gefor* in MS B of the Martyrology, 188/3, C *gewat*. An instance of *forþferde* beside normal *gefor* in three manuscripts of the West Saxon Genealogy (MSS Cambridge University Library Kk 3, 18, ff. 3<sup>v</sup>–4<sup>r</sup>, Cotton Tiberius A iii, f. 178, and Corpus Christi College Cambridge 383, f. 108<sup>v</sup>) is probably a later addition, BL Additional MS 34652 having *gefor* in a corrupt passage and Chronicle MS A omitting the entry altogether. See *The Genealogical Preface to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. B. Dickins, Cambridge, 1952, also K. Sisam, *PBA* xxxix, pp. 295 f., and esp. pp. 332–4, and R. I. Page, *Trans. Camb. Bibl. Soc.* vi (1973), pp. 75–9. GD 135/25 *geforon of þysum leohte*, MSS C and H *foron*, is of course not a strictly comparable usage.

After the ninth century the chief user of *gefaran* is the Chronicle. Indeed the only other instances of the verb that I have found in Old English prose are single examples in the Blickling Homilies and *Læceboc*.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Mart 102/17, where MS B *leoran* and *geleorde* appear as *gewitan* and *gewat* respectively in MS C.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted, however, that the annals 882, 883, and 884 resemble the annals that follow in their use of *up on(long)*. For the suggestion of a new hand at 885 see G. C. Donald, *Zur Entwicklung des Prosastils in der Sachsen-Chronik*, Marburg, 1914, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., annal 867 *winnende wærun*, 868 *gefuhton*, 870 *feahrt*, 871 *onfeoh-tende wæron*.

structions 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,<sup>1</sup> its use of *wip þa* as well as *him wip gefuhton*, and its freedom from formulae such as *þær wæs micel wæl geslægen* and *ahton wælstowe gewald*.<sup>2</sup> Because of the limited number of forms involved it is not possible to claim that all these choices and preferences are equally significant; however, cumulatively they appear to confirm the difference of authorship suggested by the distribution of *gefaran* and *forþferan* and seem to rule out the possibility of a single author responsible for all the post-Æthelwulfian entries and writing from first-hand knowledge, not taking his information from existing documents.<sup>3</sup>

The question that then arises is whether features, or more particularly combinations of features, typical of either of these two sets of annals<sup>4</sup> are to be found in earlier parts of the Chronicle. As we have seen, the Cynewulf and Cyneheard material in the entry for 755 is distinguished from that of surrounding annals by such features as the use of *adræfan*, *hatan*, and expanded verb forms, a list to which we may add the collocation of *ymb* with *þæs þe*.<sup>5</sup> All these features are found also in the annals

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., annal 885 *com*, *eode*, *gewiton*, *wendon*, 886 *for*. *Ferde*, however, is not found in these annals, being confined to a group of early eighth-century annals and to the annals 835, 855, and 868, for which see below, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Opportunities for these formulae do, however, occur: see, e.g., the annal for 885.

<sup>3</sup> The annal for 891 reverts to *gefor*, thus possibly lending support to the view that this annal was not part of the compilation circulated in the early 890s. See above, p. 96 n. 3 and below, p. 115 n. 1, and, for the use of *genemnde* in this same annal see below, pp. 123 and 114 n. 2. Separate authorship for the annals 892–7 is indicated by a large number of features.

<sup>4</sup> Single points of agreement are not necessarily significant. Sometimes the forms in question may be due to scribal alteration or partial rewriting (see above, p. 109 n. 2): sometimes they are found in different combinations, suggesting different authors at work (see, e.g., *ferde* in the early eighth-century annals and the discussion above, p. 105).

<sup>5</sup> See above, pp. 106 f. *Ymb þæs þe* and adverbial *þæs ymb* are found nine times between 871 and 878, otherwise appearing only here and in the annals for 606 and 855. The annal for 606 contains a reference to the death of Gregory taken from Bede Epitome 605 (*recte* 604) and the addition *ymb x gear þæs þe he us fulwiht sende* (MSS A, B, and C only) must have been made after the error of date crept in, possibly by someone other than the author of the surrounding annals. We may compare AD 33 and 688 *ymb* and 745 *þa wæs xliii winter agan sibban*, a single instance of *ymb* occurring alongside

centred on the 870s but are absent from those of the 880s.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the presence of the expanded forms in the Cynewulf and Cyneheard material links this account with two other entries of the pre-855 section, both of which in their turn have further points of similarity with the annals of the 870s. Thus, in addition to its use of the expanded form, the annal for 835 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. 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.<sup>2</sup> However, the fallaciousness of such arguments has been convincingly demonstrated by Kenneth Sisam in an earlier British Academy lecture<sup>3</sup> and, what is more, Professor Whitelock has shown that there are certain inaccuracies in the information given in the annal which appear to imply that it cannot have been recorded (at least in its present form) in any sense of the word contemporaneously.<sup>4</sup> So neither

*þæs ymb* in annal 878. The annal for 755 also agrees with the annals of the 870s in its use of *swa hwelc swa* and *lytle werode*, the main point of disagreement lying in its use of *nænig*, where the annals centred on the 870s have *nan* (see 868 and 876); however, scribal interference and the influence of the wording of source material cannot be ruled out. In this context note the change from indirect to direct speech in the course of the entry.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. annal 887 *dræfde*.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Wynn, *MÆ* xxv, p. 77. Having commented (n. 28) that 'the last few lines of annal 855 are probably a later continuation', Wynn adds 'In fact with the exception of this one annal there is no evidence of a change of authorship at any point before 891.'

<sup>3</sup> See Sisam, *PBA* xxxix, p. 332. The pedigree, comments Sisam, reads 'more like additional material, artlessly tacked on, than the studied close of a work ending at 855'.

<sup>4</sup> See *EHD* i, pp. 189 n. 12 and 122 f. As Professor Whitelock points out (private communication) 'If annal 855 is the end of a chronicle written soon after Æthelwulf's death, its author should have known that he did not live two years after his return from the continent: he was still in the Frankish kingdom 1 October 856.' Also apparently written some considerable time, not just a handful of years, after the event is the comment, s.a. 851, that the

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.<sup>1</sup>

It seems reasonable to conjecture, therefore, that the hand of what may for convenience be called the first Alfredian annalist (though the possibility of collaboration cannot be ruled out) may be seen in the final form taken by at least two annals relating to Æthelwulf's reign, possibly more,<sup>2</sup> and in view of the politically sensitive content of one of those annals as well as the reversion to *forþferde* in annal 860, possibly though not necessarily as the result of the rewriting of earlier material.<sup>3</sup> It may well also be seen in the additional material in the annal for 755. However, all the evidence points away from the author being responsible for the translation of Bede Epitome or other Latin material in the early part of the Chronicle, or for general revision of the early Chronicle.<sup>4</sup> The role of the hypothetical author or authors of the second set of Alfredian annals, on the other hand, is less easily determined. Certainly these annals

slaughter inflicted in a battle in that year was the greatest 'that we ever heard of until this present day', while the reference to what the Chronicle describes as the consecration as king of the boy Alfred in 853 (see *EHD* i, p. 123), however we interpret it, has more the ring of a remark made by a chronicler writing in Alfred's reign than that of someone writing under Æthelwulf or indeed under Alfred's rebellious eldest brother Æthelbald.

<sup>1</sup> The affiliations of the two annals (dated 865 and 866) that follow are impossible to determine. However, in view of the use in them of the collocation *friþ (ge)niman wiþ* + dative, where subsequent annals have *friþ niman wiþ* + accusative, it is possible that they may not be the work of the author of the first set of Alfredian annals. See further below, p. 118 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., annal 853 with *gehwæpere hond* as in annal 871.

<sup>3</sup> Where Asser tells (probably mainly from hearsay) of rebellion by Æthelwulf's eldest son Æthelbald during the king's absence abroad, the 890 Chronicle (MSS A, B, and C) simply reports that Æthelwulf's people rejoiced at his return. Even as diplomatic a comment as this might have been dangerous if made in the period up to Æthelbald's death in 860. Alternative explanations for 860 *forþferde* include a separate source for this annal and a temporary change of authorship. Certainly the vague 'in his day' suggests writing some time after the event.

<sup>4</sup> Apart from the normal use in the earlier part of the Chronicle of *forþferde* not *gefor* and the absence of expanded forms except in the special circumstances already discussed, we may note the use in the first set of Alfredian annals of *adrafan* (874 and 878) and possibly also a syntactical feature, the use of *sio sunne* (879), where the earlier annals normally use *adrafan* and *sunne*.

agree with the early chronicle against the first set of Alfredian annals in their use of *forþferan* not *gefaran*, and of simple not expanded forms. And in other respects, too, the basic vocabulary of the two sections is similar, both showing a preference for *faran*, both employing *todælan*, *bedrifan*, and so on. However, there are a number of differences which, taken together, require us at least to leave open the possibility of more than one author at work. The Bede Epitome entries, for instance, differ from the annals of the 880s in using *swaþeah* not *þeah*, *eac swelce* not *eac*, *adrifan* not *dræfan*, *huerf* not *wende*, *feohtan* not *gefeohtan*, *onfon rice* beside *fon to rice*, and *in* beside *on*.<sup>1</sup> Similar lists of differences can be drawn up for the annals for the 880s and other sections of the early Chronicle, though here, of course, there is a possibility of influence on choice by the usage of vernacular sources.<sup>2</sup>

The distribution of lexical items in the 890 Chronicle, then, appears to rule out the theory of a single compiler writing in or after 890 and drawing on existing oral and written sources (whether Latin or vernacular) for the history of his country up to the death of Æthelwulf, but then himself providing all the information about subsequent events. It does not rule out the possibility of there having been a single compiler for the bulk of the section 60 BC to the early ninth century—working, it

<sup>1</sup> See also the syntactical feature *sunne* not *seo sunne*. None of these is of itself necessarily distinctive; though study of other texts shows that they can be significant in terms of authorship, it can also reveal the dangers of jumping to conclusions. Thus, with the concentration of *in* in the earlier parts of the 890 Chronicle we may compare Or, where the form is similarly confined to the first part of the work only, its last occurrence in MS L being in 85/10, the beginning of Book IV, though in the list of chapter-headings *on* is several times found for the *in* of the text. In contrast to the distribution patterns in Or and the Chronicle, on the other hand, the seven instances of *in* recorded in Sweet's edition of CP occur mostly towards the end of the work, with five between 284/15 and 385/22. Scribal removal of *in* can be clearly seen from a comparison of the manuscripts of Mart (see also D. Yerkes's study of the usage in GD, *Manuscripta*, xxi (1977), pp. 38–41) while for the converse see Pope, *Ælfric Homilies*, ii. xxx, 114 n. However, the very predilection for lack of variation normally shown in the 890 Chronicle makes these differences notable.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., 890 *þæs fulluhtnama wæs*, beside 794 *þam wæs ofer noma nemned* and 465 and 508 *þam wæs noma* (also below, p. 123 and n. 2), 885 *hamweard wendon* beside 584 and 813 *hwearf to his agnum*; 885 *herehyþ*, 473 and 584 *herereaf*, 418 *nænig*, 887 *nan*, possibly also 887 *forþam*, earlier annals *forþon* (658, 661, also, based on BEp., 680), *forþon þe* (694), *þy* (787, 823, 836): see Liggins, *Anglia*, lxxxviii, p. 302. However, for MS A *forþam* B, C, D, and E read *forþon*.

should be emphasized, at any time between the date of the last annal for which he is responsible up to 890<sup>1</sup>—though if we wish to see his contribution as extending up to 855 or 860 we must, I think, assume the rewriting or expansion of a number of annals between 755 and 855, apparently by the first Alfredian annalist.<sup>2</sup> That the compiler of this early material was not also the author of the annals that conclude the 890 Chronicle may be suspected but not proven. Finally, 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

<sup>1</sup> If he was working around 890, then we would have to assume a team of collaborators. When the annalist responsible for the entries centred on the 870s was working is also an open question: although his use of *gefor* links him with the annal for 891, it should be noted that he never employs the construction *wip* + dative following the verb *gefehtan* whereas the latter does. This construction is indeed very rare in the 890 Chronicle, being confined to annals 495, 710, 722, and 853, though *him wip* with *wip* preceding the verb occurs four times between 845 and 890. As regards the information provided by this annalist, at least two pieces may indicate writing down some time after the event: thus s.a. 871 only six of nine pitched battles are named, while s.a. 867 Bishop Ealhstan is wrongly given an episcopate of fifty years (see Plummer, *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, p. 71). I am indebted to Professor Whitelock for drawing my attention to these details.

<sup>2</sup> Parkes, *ASE* v, p. 154, has drawn attention to the interesting fact that fol. 14 of MS A is a singleton and probably a cancel; noting that the material on the verso has been spread out, while on the recto it is compressed, he suggests that 'either new material has been added on this page or existing material has been rearranged here'. Taken in conjunction with Mr Parkes's earlier comment, p. 153, that the first scribe's booklet was 'probably contemporary with the revision itself', and the fact that the vocabulary of fol. 14 is by and large of a piece with the vocabulary of surrounding leaves but different in a number of essentials from the vocabulary of the final annals of the 890 Chronicle, the implications of this for a study of the compilation of the Chronicle are obvious: if material has been added, rather than just rearranged, then the author of the annals of the 870s could still have been collaborating in 890. However, as an alternative to the theory of the adding of material (perhaps marginalia initially overlooked by the scribe?), I would suggest the possibility of deletion of material, either because the scribe on reading through what he had copied found it (politically?) unacceptable, or simply because of accidental duplication or misplacing (see, e.g., fol. 12<sup>v</sup>). The writing on fol. 14<sup>r</sup> does not seem to me unduly compressed, and the scribe may not have stopped to think till he turned the page that deletion would entail a large blank space on the verso.

the first known circulated version may be, like the annals that follow, a continuation.<sup>1</sup>

This brings us to the much-argued question of the possible association of the 890 Chronicle with King Alfred. As we have seen, some scholars have assumed that the King was intimately associated with the compilation, inspiring it, arranging for its general circulation, and quite possibly dictating some of the material in it.<sup>2</sup> One of the main arguments for this association is based on supposed similarities of usage between the Chronicle and the Old English translation of Orosius.<sup>3</sup> Plummer, for instance, lists a number of correspondences in phraseology between the Chronicle and what he calls Alfred's translation of Orosius: 'No doubt', he says, 'some of these phrases are ordinary phrases which any two historical writers might use; but in many cases the resemblance goes much beyond this, and the total impression is strong that the two works are akin.' Plummer's views are shared by Cornelius Sprockel, who argues that 'the close resemblance in phraseology between the Chronicle and Alfred's Orosius . . . cannot . . . be dismissed as mere correspondences in contemporary works on similar themes'.<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Sisam, too, though not agreeing with the theory of Alfred's authorship of the Orosius, provisionally accepts 'the view now prevalent . . . that [Alfred] encouraged, or planned, or perhaps contributed information to the Chronicle of 892, but did not himself compile it', and gives as one possible explanation of the likeness with Orosius that 'the compiler (or a compiler) of the Chronicle of 892 and the adaptor of Orosius were the same person, whom the king commissioned to do both works'.<sup>5</sup> Sir Frank Stenton, on the other hand, with the support of Dorothy Whitelock, speaks out strongly against an Alfredian connection: 'there is nothing that can be called evidence to connect [the compilers] with the body of learned men who gathered round King Alfred and there are peculiarities of style and syntax

<sup>1</sup> It cannot be emphasized too strongly that a study of the vocabulary does not enable us to decide between the two alternatives. For the possibility that differences in arrangement of material in annal 851 are due to the presence of marginalia in the archetype of surviving manuscripts, see *EHD* i, p. 188 n. 13.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> Another argument is that it fits into Alfred's educational plan. See, however, D. Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', *PBA* xlviii, pp. 72-3.

<sup>4</sup> See Plummer, *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, pp. cvi-cviii, and C. Sprockel, *The Language of the Parker Chronicle*, i, The Hague, 1965, p. xix.

<sup>5</sup> Sisam, *PBA* xxxix, p. 335.



which place their work apart'.<sup>1</sup> What then can we learn from a comparative study of the vocabulary of the Chronicle and the other texts associated with Alfred and Alfred's reign? And what value as evidence has Plummer's list of resemblances between the Chronicle and the Orosius?

In his list Plummer includes a range of words and more particularly expressions both from the 890 Chronicle and from subsequent annals which for reasons of date have no possible connection with King Alfred. As far as the forms from the 890 Chronicle are concerned—and these are the only ones strictly relevant to this study<sup>2</sup>—the majority are by no means unique to the Chronicle and the Orosius, and most of the resemblances noted need be no more than the result of the handling of similar subjects by authors who were contemporaries and had the same common stock of language to draw on. For example, that both the Chronicle and the Orosius use the same words for 'pitched battle' (*folcgefeht*), and 'pirate' (*wicing*), is a fact of no special significance given the apparent normality of these terms.<sup>3</sup> The forms *gebære*, *ofstician*, *abrecan*, *bestelan*, *rices beniman*, picked out by Plummer as used by the Chronicle and the Orosius are likewise all part of the common stock, found also in other texts of the period, such as the Old English Bede, Werferth's translation of Gregory's Dialogues, the Martyrology, and Alfred's *Cura Pastoralis*.<sup>4</sup> As for the larger units of expression cited, some of these actually involve differences as well as similarities, which, to say the least, cancel one another out. For instance, Orosius's statement, *on norðhealfe [is] Orcadus þæt igland*, which

<sup>1</sup> Stenton, 'South-western element', *PASE*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Forms from other parts of the Chronicle could, of course, be used to show that agreement does not necessarily imply common authorship. It should be noted that although Plummer cites resemblance between the Orosius and the annals for 892–923, the first five of these being the first and only set to use a history layout, these annals too contain a number of features that seem to rule out the possibility of the author of the Orosius being responsible for their composition. See further my forthcoming edition of the Old English Orosius, Introduction, Section VI. 3.

<sup>3</sup> A synonym for *folcgefeht* (*folcgewinn*) is found once in Bo, in verse.

<sup>4</sup> For *gebære* see, e.g., GD 108/2, Be 328/15, PPs xxxiv. 15; for *ofstician* see, e.g., Mart. 222/7; for (*burg*) *abrecan* see, e.g., Be 42/28, Bo 7/3, and CP 218/17; for *bestelan* see Be 326/21, CP 197/21; for *rices beniman* see Be 168/20, cf. Bo 113/14, 20/26, CP 251/10. The expression quoted by Plummer from annal 891, *on elpiodignesse beon*, is similarly found in Be, Mart, and CP. It should be noted that not all these forms can be said to represent the regular usage of the 890 Chronicle. Thus, for instance, beside 658, 755 *rices beniman* we have 887 *berædde æt þam rice*, 821 *his rices besciered*.

is cited alongside the Chronicle annal 47 (*recte* 46) *Eac swelce Orcadus þa ealond*, not only treats the proper name Orcades as singular where the Chronicle has the correct plural, but uses it with *igland*, the normal word for 'island' in this text, not its synonym *ealond*, which is the only form in the 890 Chronicle. And although Orosius 116/7–8, *he genom friþ wiþ þæt folc, 7 hiene siþþan aweg bestæl*, is certainly similar to the Chronicle entry for 865, *genamon friþ wiþ Cantwarum*, and (later in the same annal) *se here hiene on niht up bestæl*, the collocation *friþ geniman*, which is the rule in the Orosius, is the exception in the Chronicle, the normal usage being *friþ niman*, while the Orosius elsewhere uses *nihtes* with the verb *bestelan*, never *on niht*.<sup>1</sup> The resemblances are thus superficial, and do not extend to the 'core of familiar words that recur again and again'. Indeed only one of Plummer's principal resemblances is of real significance:<sup>2</sup> the reference to Titus's saying, that he lost the day on which he did no good act, which is found in both the Chronicle and the Old English Orosius and is without parallel in the latter's source. However, although in this particular instance the Orosius may certainly have derived its comment from the Chronicle, and I have discussed the possibility in detail elsewhere, this need not indicate more than knowledge of the one text by the author of the other.<sup>3</sup>

The similarities in phraseology noted by Plummer do not, then, require us to suppose that the author of the Orosius was

<sup>1</sup> For 'island' see below, p. 119. For the single instance of *friþ geniman* (with *wiþ* + dative) in the 890 Chronicle, see above, p. 113 n. 1; the normal usage, *friþ niman* (with *wiþ* + accusative), is found six times between annals 867 and 876. Or has eleven examples of *friþ geniman*, mostly collocated with *wiþ* + accusative. We may compare CP 353/11 *sibbe niman*. For *nihtes* (found in annal 876) see, e.g., Or 30/18–19 *7 þa nihtes on ungearwe hi on bestæl* and 51/23–4 *hie nihtes on frumslæpe on bestælan*.

<sup>2</sup> The collocation *þær wæs ungemetlic wæl geslægen*, which is found twice in the Orosius and once in the 890 Chronicle, has to be seen, on the one hand, as a modification of the collocation *micel wæl geslean*, which is found not only in the Chronicle and the Orosius but also in the Old English Bede, and, on the other, as utilizing an adjective of quantity found in a wide range of Old English texts. Significantly, on the two occasions where Or has *ungemetlic wæl* (46/32 and 68/15–16) there are respectively three and four other examples of the words *ungemet* and *ungemetlic(e)* in the same chapter. *Ungemetlic(e)* is found twenty-seven times in all in Or.

<sup>3</sup> See my forthcoming article in *ASE* viii. A second apparently unique correspondence is 60 BC *mid gefeohte cnysede*, Or 52/28–9 *mid gefeohte cnysedan*. However, the Chronicle is merely translating Bede Epitome *bello pulsauit*, using an accepted Old English rendering for Latin *pulsare* which is found also in CP and GD. See also Or 77/3–4 *swa wurdon Romane gecnysede*, for *Roma detrita est*.

also the author of the Chronicle. More significantly, there are a number of differences between the two texts, and also between the Chronicle and the accepted works of King Alfred,<sup>1</sup> which Plummer seems to have overlooked and which appear actually to rule out the possibility of common authorship. Because of the paucity of material provided by the 890 Chronicle, many of these are statistically non-significant.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, certain key concepts are of limited distribution, appearing only in the section of the Chronicle up to 855, or only in one or other of the sections after 855. However, enough occur in significant numbers in the texts to be used as evidence of their authors' normal usage. Among the concepts for which the Chronicle and the Orosius select different terms, for instance, we may cite not only 'island' but also 'Britain', 'the Danes', 'humble', and 'proud', and among the larger units the expressions 'on both sides' and 'subjugate', 'get under one's control'. As we have seen, for 'island' the 890 Chronicle consistently uses the variant *ealand*—though the concept is restricted to the section AD 47–716 (where it occurs seven times), the first instance of *igland* not appearing until the annal for 894. In this it agrees with the Old English Bede and Gregory's Dialogues, where *ealand* is the rule, instances of *igland* in the Bede apparently being the work of later scribes and in the Dialogues of scribes and reviser. The Orosius, however, has only the form *igland* (52×), while in the prose of the Boethius we find *ealand* three times, *igland* and its variants four times. *Igland* is the only form in the verse metres.<sup>3</sup> So too with 'Britain', the Chronicle's forms *Breten*, *Bretene*

<sup>1</sup> CP, Bo, and So. For the possible inclusion of PPs in the Alfredian canon see Bately, *Anglia*, lxxxviii, pp. 454–6.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., annal 855 *weorþness*, Or and Alfred *weorþscipe*, *weorþmynd*, with Or also using *weorþfulnes* and CP *weorþung*, etc.; annal 27 *gyring* (transcript of G, erased in MS A), Or (and once CP) *gieme*, CP, Bo, PPs *giemen*, with *gieming* once, CP; annal 584 *herereaf genom*, Or *herefeoh gefon*; annal 853 *geaf his dohtor*, Or *his dohtor sealde* (*giefan* occurring only once in Or, in a different context); annal 871 *getruma* (2×), Or *truma*; 540 *steorran*, Or *tungul*; 501 *monna* (2×), Or only *mon*, *wer*, etc. For (ge)fultumian (797, 836, 853, and 868), Or normally (ge)fylstan, see Bately, *Anglia*, lxxxviii, p. 445.

<sup>3</sup> Under *igland* I include variants such as *iglond*, *eglond*; under *ealand* I include *ealond*. For scribal alterations see, e.g., Be, where MS B frequently has *igland* for the *ealand* of the other manuscripts; for possible editorial alterations see GD, where H has *igland* for the *ealand* of the other manuscripts. In the 'northern recension' of the Chronicle a preference for *igland* is shown both in the new material and in the old. All but one of the forms in Bo prose are in sections confined to MS B; the exception, 34/29, has *ealonde*, the reading of MS C and the Napier fragment.

(*land*)—found thirteen times from 60 BC to AD 601—have their counterpart in the Martyrology, prose Guthlac, and Bede, while the Orosius regularly uses *Brettania*, *Brittannia* (*þæt lond*) with a single instance of *Bretland*.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it is Orosius's form *Dene* that corresponds to the Old English Bede's *Daene*, while the Chronicle annals 833–85 have the alternative *þa Deniscan*.<sup>2</sup> Alfred's usage is in both these cases unknown.

In the case of the concepts 'humble' and 'proud' it is variety of word-formation that is of potential significance, the Chronicle forming the adjectives in *-mod* and *-mede* (828 *eapmodre*, 750 *ofermedan*), while the Orosius has *-modig* (*eapmodig*, *ofermodig*). In this the Chronicle differs in part also from Alfred, who normally uses *eapmod*, *ofermod*, and from the Old English Bede and Gregory's Dialogues where we find *eapmod* beside *oferhygdig*, *oferhygd*.<sup>3</sup> As for the collocation 'on both sides', in both the Chronicle and the Orosius this occurs in conjunction with the statement 'there was much slaughter', the Orosius's rendering being *þær wæs micel wæl geslægen on ægpere healfe* and the Chronicle's *þær wæs micel wæl geslægen on gehwæpere hond*.<sup>4</sup> Similarly alien to the Orosius's usage is the Chronicle's rendering of 'subjugate', with Bede Epitome 46, *in deditionem recepit* translated *on his geweald onfeng*. Certainly the author of the Orosius uses the collocation *on his geweald*, but with *underfeng* not *onfeng*, while *anweald*, *onweald* is far more common than *geweald*: in any case, the preferred collocation in this text is with *geniedan* or (*ge*)*don*. The equivalent expression in Alfred's Boethius is *in anwald gerehton*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 787, 836, and 866 *Angelcynnes lond*. Or has only *Brettas*, where the Chronicle uses *Brettas*, *Bretwalas*, and *Walas*; compare Mart with *Brytwalas* and Be with *Brettas*, *Bret* only, also the northern recension with the form *Brytwalas* in the new material. See also annals 650 and 660 *Galwalas* (also Mart), Or *Gallie*, *Gælle*.

<sup>2</sup> *þa Deniscan* is found ten times in this section of the Chronicle beside *Deniscne here* (837 and 845) and *Deniscra monna* (882 and 886). Cf. 787 *Deniscra monna* in a comment obviously made some time after that year.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed survey of the representation of the concept 'pride' see H. Schabram, *Superbia: Studien zum altenglischen Wortschatz*, i, Munich, 1965. *Eadmod*, *eapmod* is the normal usage of Mart. CP, however, has a couple of instances of *eapmodlic* beside normal *eadmod*, *eapmod*, and also *oferhygd* beside *ofermod*. For a verb never found in Or or Bo see *agan*, s.a. 6, 616, 655 and 745, and cf. Or 35/23–4.

<sup>4</sup> For *on gehwæpere hond* see annals 853 and 871 (2×); *on ægpere healfe* occurs eleven times in Or. See also Or 98/21–2 *þæt him þa gepuhte swelc þæt mæste wæl*, beside annal 839 *Her wæs micel wælsliht* (also 592 *wælfyll*).

<sup>5</sup> Bo 7/4. Cf. Be 30/18 *on anweald onfeng*, translating the same Latin expression, also CP 35/15–16 *ðone anwald onfeng ðæs rices*. The construction

A no less significant group of differences between the texts is one where the 890 Chronicle has a greater variety of renderings for a given concept than either the Orosius or indeed the accepted writings of Alfred, with the distribution patterns of these variant forms usually corresponding to major divisions in the compilation. For example, the normal representation of the concept 'die' in the Orosius and in the works of Alfred, including his will, is *gefaran*. As we have seen, however, the most common form in the 890 Chronicle is *forþferan*, occurring seventy-one times, with *gefaran* (6×) restricted to a handful of annals, mainly belonging to the group centred on the 870s. In this use of *forþferan*, in preference to *gefaran*, the 890 Chronicle agrees with the Bede, Gregory's Dialogues, and the Martyrology, though these have as their normal alternative not *gefaran* but (*ge*)*leoran*, and that apparently originally distributed throughout the texts.<sup>1</sup> And this is not the only area where the 890 Chronicle, in spite of its shortness and lack of variety, has a range of choices not found in Orosius and Alfred. For the concept 'have the victory', for instance, the Chronicle, Alfred, and the Orosius agree in their use of *sige habban* (885, 890, i.e. second set of Alfredian annals only), but the Chronicle's *sige agan* (871, 885) and *sige niman* (used ten times between 800 and 871) are never found in either Alfred or the Orosius. Bede here agrees with the Chronicle in using *sige habban* and *sige agan* but has only one, exceptional, instance of *sige niman*; the Dialogues collocate *agan* and *habban* with *sigor*.<sup>2</sup> Again, in rendering the concept 'succeed to the throne' the Orosius, the Chronicle, and Alfred all employ the formula *fon to rice* with the variant *fon to þæm rice*. These are the only forms in the Orosius, Alfred, and the Chronicle from in annal 46 (MS A alt. to 47) is also notable for its use of *onfon* + accusative, the preferred usage of this part of the Chronicle and of the Bede but rare in Or and Bo, which normally employ genitive or dative.

<sup>1</sup> *Gefaran* 'die' is found twenty-four times in Or, *forþferan* nearly sixty times in Be. An instance of the verb *geleoran* in PPs cited in Bosworth and Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* is in fact an editorial misreading of MS *geteorode* as *geleorode*. Other words for the concept 'die' in the Chronicle are *swealt*, *aswalt*, and *his feorh gesealde* (annals 3, 46, and 855), the first two of general if relatively infrequent occurrence in texts of the period, the last found also in GD and (with *sealde*) Mart. Although both the instances of (*a*)*sweltan* in the Chronicle refer to evil rulers, the verb was not, as is sometimes claimed, used only of the evil: see, e.g., Mart where it is used of saints.

<sup>2</sup> *Sige habban* occurs thirty-five times in Or, twice in CP, and once each in Bo and PPs. Other verbs collocated with *sige* in these texts are *gefeohstan* (Or 2×, CP 1×), *gefaran* (Or 2×), *geræcan* (Or 3×), *purhteon* (Or 1×), *gewinnan* (CP 1×).

836. However, up to the annal for 828, including Bede Epitome material, the Chronicle also has the variant *onfon rice*, *onfon rices* (8×, beside *onfon biscopdom*, etc.), a collocation never found in the Orosius and Alfred though it occurs not infrequently in the Old English Bede.

It is, however, not only differences in choice between the texts that are significant, nor the existence of a wider range of expressions in one than in another, but also their preferences, and here again all the major divisions of the Chronicle can be shown to differ in some respect or other from the Orosius and the works of Alfred. For instance, although regnal lengths are sometimes given with the collocation *rice habban* and sometimes with the verb *ricsian* in both the Orosius and the Chronicle, the normal formula in the Orosius, *rice* or *anwald habban*, is the least usual in the Chronicle, where there are only two instances of *rice habban* coupled with a regnal length (626, 716), and the variant *anwald* is completely absent. On the other hand, *rice healdan* (14× in the Chronicle between 611 and 755, including Bede Epitome material) is never found in the Orosius, though *healdan* is used there once in connection with the consulship. *Ricsian*, found sixteen times in the Chronicle between AD 1 and 871 (including Bede Epitome material), occurs only once in the Orosius in association with a regnal length.<sup>1</sup> So, too, with the representations of the concept 'to fight'. In the Chronicle the commonest form is *gefeohtan* (50× in MS A), followed by *feohtan* (22×) and *winnan* (5×) in that order, with single instances of *onfeohtan* and *gewinnan*. Even allowing for disagreements between the surviving manuscripts, *gefeohtan* predominates in every section.<sup>2</sup> No other major text of the Alfredian period has this order of preferences. Alfred and the Orosius both have a preponderance of examples of *winnan*, with the order *winnan*, *gefeohtan*, *feohtan* in the Orosius and *winnan*, *feohtan*, never *gefeohtan* in Alfred.<sup>3</sup> In the Old English Bede the order is

<sup>1</sup> See Or 37/26 and 40/14, and cf. annal 827 where the collocation *rice habban* occurs without regnal length.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., annal 455 A, E, F *fuhton*, B, C *gefuhton*, and 552 A *gefeahrt*, B, C, E, F *feahrt*. In MS A the pattern is *gefeohtan*: *feohtan* roughly in the proportion 6:5 up to the end of the eighth century. Between 800 and 855 there are ten instances of *gefeohtan*; between 860 and 890 there are eighteen, with only two instances of *feohtan* (835 and 870). Of the five instances of *winnan* three occur between 835 and 878, *gewinnan* in the sense 'fight' is found only once, s.a. 741.

<sup>3</sup> Or has over 100 instances of *winnan*, 59 *gefeohtan*, and 35 *feohtan*, and *winnan* is also frequent in Bo (usually metaphorically), with *feohtan* only 2×.

*feohtan*, *winnan*, with *campian* in third place, followed by *gefeohtan* and *gewinnan*.<sup>1</sup>

Another significant difference of choice between the Chronicle, on the one hand, and Alfred and the Orosius, on the other, involves what may be called the 'naming' formulae. In the pre-855 annals the preference is, as we have seen, for *þe is gecweden* (7×), *þe is (ge)nemned*, *þe mon nemneþ* (8×), and *þam wæs noma* (2×), with *se wæs haten*, *þe hi heton*, and *þæs fulluhtnama wæs* confined to the annals for 755, 878, and 890.<sup>2</sup> In the Orosius and Alfred, on the other hand, it is the constructions with *hatan* that are most common, while Alfred uses not *þam* but *þæs wæs nama* and the Orosius has neither *nama* construction.<sup>3</sup> Finally, we find the Chronicle agreeing with the Orosius against both Alfred and the Mercian texts with invariable *opiewan*, 'show', where the Bede, the Martyrology, and Gregory's Dialogues normally use *æteowan* and related forms with the prefix *æt-*, and Alfred has a marked preference for *ge-eowian*, *eowan*, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Cf. CP *winnan* (15×), *feohtan* (8×); PPs *winnan* (3×), *feohtan* (3×). See also the Laws of Alfred with *feohtan* (13×), and *gefeohtan* (5×). *Gewinnan* in the sense 'fight' occurs only very exceptionally, in Or (2×) and Be (1×).

<sup>1</sup> I have found no instances of *campian* in early West Saxon prose texts; however, in addition to Be it appears in GD, Mart, and the prose Guthlac, all apparently texts of Mercian origin. For the prose Guthlac see Jane Roberts's unpublished dissertation, *Guthlac: an edition of the Old English prose life together with the poems in the Exeter Book*, ed. J. Crawford, Oxford, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> The instance s.a. 878 occurs in a passage absent from MS A and therefore possibly a later addition. See also 688 *se papa hine heht Petrus*. The construction with *hatan* is favoured by the northern recensionist.

<sup>3</sup> *Nemnan* and *(ge)cweþan* occur only very rarely in Or and the works of Alfred, with *(ge)nemnan*, for instance, only six times in Or and *gecweþan* in the sense 'call', 'describe as' only once. Mart and Be, however, show a preference for these forms. With annal 794 *þam was oþer noma nemned Præn* cf. Or 59/30-1 *þe oðre noman wæs haten Tarcuatus*, etc. (17×) and Bo 43/7 *se wæs oðre naman haten Tullius*; see also GD *þam is nama*.

<sup>4</sup> See annals 540, 678, 729, and 773. *Ætiewdon* in MS A 540 is a correction from original *oðiewdon*, original *ætiewan* first appearing s.a. 892. In other manuscripts of the Chronicle there is a tendency for *opiewan* to be replaced by a form with *æt-*. In the works of Alfred and associated texts *ætiewan* and related forms occur in significant numbers only in CP and even there they are outnumbered by *(ge)eow(i)an*. *Opiewan* occurs only once in Bo prose (three times in verse) and in PPs, with two instances in CP, while *(ge)eow(i)an* is found eight times in Bo prose and some twenty-four times in CP. I have noted *ætiewan* and related forms twenty-one times in CP, once in PPs. See also the choice between *adrifan* and *adrafan*, the former occurring five times in the 890 Chronicle between 592 and 823, with *drifan* s.a. 787, the latter being confined in MS A to annals 755 (2×), 874, and 878, with *drāfde* s.a.

From this brief survey it can be seen that although there may be significant disagreements in usage between the various parts of the 890 Chronicle, they all agree in their selection of lexical items alien to the Orosius and the works of Alfred.<sup>1</sup> What then are the affinities of the constituent parts of the Chronicle? It is generally accepted that the dialect in which the 890 Chronicle was written is a West Saxon one,<sup>2</sup> and many would identify what Plummer describes as the 'headquarters' of the compilation with Winchester.<sup>3</sup> However, although Mr Parkes has recently produced highly convincing arguments both for an association of Hand 1 of MS A, the Parker Chronicle, with Winchester and for the putting together there of the various booklets that make up that manuscript,<sup>4</sup> there seems nothing in the evidence currently available that requires us to suppose that the actual composition of the section up to 890 was necessarily undertaken in a Winchester scriptorium.<sup>5</sup> What is more, that the Chronicle

887 (MSS D and E *adræfde*). Although Or uses these two forms with almost equal frequency, with *adrifan* 10×, *adræfan* 11× (unlike the Chronicle, however, employing *ut* only with *adrifan*), the surviving manuscripts of Alfred's works show a marked preference for *adrifan* (Bo 11×, CP 12×, Solil 2×) as do Be and GD, first version. In these texts I have noted *adræfan* only twice—once each in CP and Be, with the instance in Be occurring in the list of chapter-headings—with *todræfed* in the OCa version of Book III ch. 16–20 of Be (Miller, ii, p. 227). For the possible implications of the contexts of the examples in Be see above, p. 95 n. 4.

<sup>1</sup> I have not attempted to assess differences of syntax, though these may well be equally significant in terms of authorship. For the expanded verb forms see G. Nickel, *Die Expanded Form im Altenglischen*, Neumünster, 1966, B. Mitchell, 'Some problems involving OE periphrases with *Beon/Wesan* and the present participle', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* lxxvii (1976), pp. 478–91, and *The Old English Orosius*, p. lxxv. Other syntactical variations with potentially significant distribution patterns that might repay detailed investigation include the use of *sunne*, *mona*, and *steorra*, with and without demonstrative and the use of accusative, genitive, and dative with *onfon*.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., C. Sprockel, *The Language of the Parker Chronicle*, i.

<sup>3</sup> *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ii, p. cxii.

<sup>4</sup> See Parkes, *ASE* v, pp. 149–71.

<sup>5</sup> There are two separate issues: (i) is there any evidence that the first draft of the 890 Chronicle was either made or kept at Winchester?, and (ii) can the version in MS A be shown to be so close to the first draft that it must be assumed that both necessarily came from the same scriptorium? The answer to (i) appears to be 'no'. The insertion in a tenth-century hand of the annal for 710, apparently accidentally omitted by the first scribe of MS A, certainly suggests the presence in Winchester at that time of a copy of the Chronicle other than MS A, but there is nothing to suggest that this must have been the 'very collection of booklet exemplars' which 'constituted



is silent about at least one important event occurring in the neighbourhood of Winchester but includes a number of 'local' details relating to the south-west, has led both Sir Frank Stenton and Professor R. H. C. Davis to reject a Winchester origin for the compilation and to look instead to the Sherborne area.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, we know nothing of the sub-dialects of early West Saxon; we cannot even localize the king's English, that particular form of West Saxon that King Alfred spoke, nor can we be sure how far his written language was influenced by advisers.<sup>2</sup> So we cannot use a study of the vocabulary of the 890 Chronicle to determine the place of origin of its compilers. Indeed, the most we can say of the vocabulary of the extant manuscripts is that by and large it is that associated with West Saxon, with typically Anglian words usually conspicuous for

perhaps the first fair copies on parchment of the original drafts' (see Parkes, p. 165). As Professor Whitelock comments (private communication): 'Winchester may have acquired the version with annal 710 along with one of its bishops or other ecclesiastics.' See further *EHD* i, p. 171 n. 1. My answer to (ii) is also 'no'. MS A does not suggest to me the work of someone necessarily very close to the compiler. It appears to have been at least two removes from the original (see *EHD* i, p. 121) and although changes in its layout probably do reflect decisions by the scribe (see Parkes, p. 154), and we may assume that its exemplar had year numbers in single columns, we cannot guess how long the hypothetically original single column layout may have survived copying. Moreover, there are several possible explanations for the 'new material added or existing material rearranged' on fol. 14 (see above, p. 115 n. 2), while although the inclusion of every single year number from AD 1 on must surely represent an editorial decision (and could well reflect a hope that additional material would be found to fill at least some of the gaps), already in MS A as in the later manuscripts the original function of the annal numbers as part of a piece of historical information seems to have been forgotten: see, e.g., fols. 4<sup>v</sup> and 111<sup>r</sup> below, p. 129 n. 1. Finally, if a number of copies of the 890 Chronicle were produced—as seems to have been the case—the compiler's scriptorium might have needed outside help. See K. Sisam, *Studies in the History of OE Literature*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 140–7, and CP, pp. xvi–xvii.

<sup>1</sup> Thus there is no mention in the Chronicle of the raid on Southampton in 842. See further Stenton, 'South-western element', *PASE*, pp. 107–10, and Davis, *History*, lvi, p. 173. Stenton points out that Winchester was important in the tenth and eleventh centuries, not in the ninth, and also that there is no attempt to give a list of the bishops of Winchester in this period; he also rejects Sherborne as the actual place of compilation (see p. 113). There is of course no reason to suppose that the compiler himself necessarily spoke the dialect of the area where his scriptorium was situated, nor that the scriptorium had developed its own special usage, as Winchester seems to have done later (see Gneuss, *ASE* i, pp. 63–83).

<sup>2</sup> See Sisam, *Studies*, p. 294, 'Alfred's literary language was peculiarly subject to Mercian influence'.

their absence. There are admittedly certain forms in the Chronicle, mostly but not exclusively found in the section up to 855, which are normally associated with Anglian and in particular with Mercian dialects. These are *nænig* (418, 755), *eac swelce* (47, *recte* 46), and the preposition *in* (35–878),<sup>1</sup> a list to which I will venture to add the (non-lexical) use of *mid* with the accusative (189, MSS B, C only), the uncontracted verb form *restep* (716), and the reduplicated preterite *heht* (688).<sup>2</sup> However, these words and usages are not confined to indisputably Mercian (or Anglian) texts, all but *heht* being found in the Orosius and the majority also occurring very occasionally in either the works of Alfred or documents intimately associated with the king.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Chronicle *in* is found in greatest numbers between annals 35 and 661, including BEp material. It is also apparently favoured by the 'northern recensionist', and the use of *in* in the latter's new material, beside frequent *on* for the *in* of other manuscripts in the 'original' material, suggests that substituted *on* was already present in his exemplar. In MS A *in* is found eighteen times in the section up to 700. After 700 *in* occurs only four times, in annals 709 (2 ×), 855, and 878. Other manuscripts frequently have *on* for MS A *in*; MS A only once has *on* for their *in*: see annal 501 and see further above, p. 114 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> For identification of these forms as Mercian or Anglian see, e.g., Vleeskruyer, pp. 27, 30, 32, 142, and 147. For a useful survey of ninth-century Anglian features as found in Mart see C. Sisam, 'A fragment of the Old English Martyrology', *RES*, ns, iv (1953), p. 216.

<sup>3</sup> Isolated instances of *nænig* are found in Alfred's will, the prologue to the Laws of Ine, one manuscript of the Cura Pastoralis, and the Orosius (in the account of Wulfstan's voyages, for which see above, p. 95 n. 4). There are no fewer than twelve instances in the verse metres of Bo. Vleeskruyer sees the appearance of these forms in what he calls archaic West Saxon as 'probably . . . attributable to the influence of Mercian usage' (p. 43 n. 4); however, in view of the tendency of later West Saxon scribes to replace *nænig* by *nan* (see, e.g., Mart 44/12, etc.), no really firm conclusion about the status and distribution of *nænig* in the ninth century can be reached. Of 'Anglian and especially West Mercian *in*' Vleeskruyer remarks that it is 'rare already in eWS, its more frequent occurrence in Orosius being due to the influence of the Latin original . . . possibly also to the somewhat stronger influence of Mercian spelling in this text'. See, however, Or, pp. xxxix ff. and above, p. 114 n. 1. Of the thirty-five instances of *in* in Or only eight in fact correspond to *in* in the Latin 'original'. *In* is also frequent in the first part of the Laws in the mid-tenth-century MS E and occurs seven times in CP, four in Bo. As for *eac swelce*, although the only other early West Saxon text to use this form is Or (where it occurs three times, not once as Vleeskruyer states), it is found also in late WS, in the writings of both Ælfric and Wulfstan, and so its presence in the Chronicle does not necessarily require us to suppose either exceptional Mercian influence or Mercian authorship of the BEp material. Finally *mid* + accusative and third person singular present indicative forms without syncope occur

At the same time, it must be noted that certain words apparently typical of early West Saxon as we know it are either rare or of limited occurrence, and in its choice of terms for a number of concepts where recognized dialectal differences are not involved the Chronicle generally agrees with the three Mercian texts, the Old English Bede, Martyrology, and Gregory's Dialogues, against Orosius and the works of Alfred. The section closest in its usage to these last-named texts is that centred on the 870s, with *gefaran* not *forþferan* and *winnan*<sup>1</sup> as well as *(ge)feohtan*. However, even this section has its differences, with, for instance, a relatively high proportion of forms of the verb *feran* (though not as high a proportion as in the Mercian texts), the rest of the Chronicle sharing the preference of Alfred and the Orosius for *faran*.<sup>2</sup>

I would claim, then, that a detailed examination of the vocabulary of the 890 Chronicle shows Plummer, Hodgkin, and the long line of scholars who have seen affinities between King Alfred's usage and that of the Chronicle, and have interpreted them as due to the king's involvement in that work, to be mistaken—and I would add in passing that none of the arguments for Alfred's involvement takes into account either the absence from the Chronicle of many pieces of information that the king and his officials might be expected to have been able to supply,<sup>3</sup> occasionally in all the Alfredian texts and Or, while *heht* appears in the (Anglian?) inscription on the Alfred jewel and in CP.

<sup>1</sup> One instance of *winnan* in the pre-855 section, however, links it with GD and Be rather than with the Orosius and Alfred, *feaht 7 won* (597) being a feature of the former never found in the latter; compare the construction (unique in Or) *he winnende wæs 7 feohtende*, Or 62/31.

<sup>2</sup> In Or and the works of Alfred *faran* far outnumbers *feran*. Thus, for instance, Or has nearly 200 examples of intransitive *faran* with *gefaran*, 'go' 34 × (six of these being past participles), and *feran* 6 ×. Bo has *faran* 24 × in prose and *feran* 3 ×, while in CP *faran* outnumbers *feran* more than 5:1. In GD, Mart, and Be, on the other hand, it is *feran* that is the preferred form, though the usage in GD (even in the first version) is approaching the Ælfrician situation, with *faran* present tense and past participle and *feran* preterite. For the appearance of *feran* in the early eighth-century annals see above, and p. 111 n. 1. The figures for the Chronicle, MS A, are *faran* 35 ×, *feran* 7 ×.

<sup>3</sup> A strong personal conviction that Alfred's direct involvement is ruled out by the absence from the 890 Chronicle of any traces of the quality of mind and intellectual curiosity displayed by Alfred as author of the Boethius and Soliloquies, and to a lesser extent in the Cura Pastoralis is of course not evidence. It was in any case not until 887 that, according to Asser, Alfred first began to read and compose. However, Alfred the strategist and Alfred the general had manifested themselves long before. If Alfred had been the

or the presence of certain features that it is hard to reconcile with the theory of his participation.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing in the vocabulary, on the other hand, to refute Sir Frank Stenton's theory that someone commissioned the work quite independently of Alfred, though our present knowledge of West Saxon dialects does not allow us to define the region from which he—or rather his chroniclers—came. Stenton further suggests that the private commissioner of the 890 Chronicle copied Alfred's methods in subsequently circulating the work.<sup>2</sup> This is of course possible, though it raises certain problems of chronology.<sup>3</sup> At the same

inspirer and instigator of the Chronicle, whether the 890 or an earlier version, then one might have expected him to have provided the annalists he commissioned with such information as the location of the sea-battle in 882, or the manner in which the *here on East Englum* broke its peace agreement in 885, or the steps necessary to occupy London in 886. And what about the men of importance in church and state who must have been known personally to King Alfred and played a part in his rebuilding of Wessex—did none of them take up office or die in the period 872–87? We are told of several royal marriages: why are we not told of Alfred's marriage, or of that of his daughter to the ealdorman of Mercia? So too with earlier parts of the Chronicle: King Alfred and his circle would surely have had access to older as well as contemporary archives and had the knowledge to enable them to expand and indeed comment on the significance of the material used here. Even the author of the Orosius is uninhibited in his treatment of world history. See also Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 692–3, 'when compared with the great Frankish annals of the ninth century, which seem to descend from an official record, the *Chronicle* has definitely the character of private work'. For a detailed discussion of the 'missing material' and a refutation of the theory that the Chronicle was intended as an exercise in propaganda see *The importance of the Battle of Edington, A.D. 878, A lecture given by Dorothy Whitelock at the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Edington Priory Church, August 27 1977, Edington, 1978*.

<sup>1</sup> Notably the account, s.a. 853, of the boy Alfred's consecration as 'king' (see *EHD* i, p. 123), also perhaps the 'autumn dating of annals from about 850 until just after the reign of Alfred', which Harrison, p. 141, sees as 'idiosyncratic enough to suggest a group of clerks with a secular outlook'.

<sup>2</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 693, 'The focus of its interest lies in its south-western shires, and it was most probably composed in that country. That in its present form it reflects the example of Alfred's English writings need not be doubted, and it is probable that the despatch of copies to different centres of study, soon after 892, was in imitation of the practice which the king was known to have adopted for the circulation of his own works.' See also P. Hunter Blair, *Roman Britain and Early England*, Edinburgh 1963, p. 12. For doubts as to the possible south-western origin of the Chronicle, see *EHD* i, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> The only work of Alfred's which is known to have been circulated is CP, and the date of its circulation can only be guessed at from names mentioned in the prefatory letter: see *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*, revised by Dorothy

time, there is an alternative explanation. That is, that the private commissioner of the work or an associate sent a copy of his chronicle to Alfred and that Alfred then arranged for it to be circulated unmodified, perhaps as the first step in the compilation of a national chronicle, and possibly with the request that recipients should add to it any further information that happened to be available to them. This might help to explain the inclusion in surviving manuscripts of every single year number from AD 1 on, even where there is no entry related to that year, and it might help to account for the presence of additional material in these manuscripts and in the Latin versions of Asser and Æthelweard.<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, pure conjecture: we do not even have incontrovertible proof that there was a deliberate act of circulation.<sup>2</sup> The evidence that a study of vocabulary provides merely suggests that in Alfred's reign at least two chroniclers may have been at work, either simultaneously or separately, one apparently having contributed, rewritten, or revised some of the material relating to the period before Alfred's accession, and that though the 890 Chronicle appears to be a West Saxon compilation, there is nothing in the vocabulary to support the theory of a particularly close connection between the compilers and either King Alfred or the author of the Old English Orosius.

Whitelock, p. 225, 'The preface to the *Cura Pastoralis* cannot have been written before 890, but the translation may be earlier. It was circulated before the death of Swithulf of Rochester'. The date of Swithulf's death Professor Whitelock now puts as 892-5.

<sup>1</sup> For the inclusion of all year numbers—extraordinary, in spite of the precedent of Easter Tables—see above, p. 124 n. 5. We may compare the practice in Bede Epitome and Regino of Prüm, where year numbers are only given where corresponding annals exist. In view of the surprising waste of valuable parchment, with entire leaves consisting of virtually nothing but year numbers (see, e.g., MS A fol. 3<sup>v</sup>, MS B, ff. 2<sup>v</sup> and 3<sup>r</sup>, and MS E, ff. 4<sup>v</sup> and 5<sup>r</sup>), it is hard to explain the initial adoption of this practice in any other way.

<sup>2</sup> That is, as opposed to the casual passing on of manuscripts between ecclesiastics from one house to another. Cf. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'The Franks and the English in the ninth century', *History*, xxxv (1950), p. 214, 'Whatever force it was that disseminated manuscripts of the Frankish annals among the *scriptoria* of Northern France in the ninth century also disseminated the *Chronicle* among the English houses.'