

MANUSCRIPT LAYOUT AND THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE¹

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In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to the complex question of the origins and textual history of the seven texts known collectively as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle², and a number of important theories have depended upon assumptions drawn from the physical appearance of one of them, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS 173, fos. 1–32r, generally known as MS A.³ This manuscript has been credited with exceptional authority. Indeed, in his seminal study, Malcolm Parkes takes the greater part of it to be very close to what he sees as an ongoing process of compilation at a centre in Winchester:

The handwriting of scribe 1 is consistent with the end of the ninth century and his booklet was therefore probably contemporary with the revision itself . . . [Scribes 2 and 3] seem to have been copying from exemplars which were themselves 'booklets' and which must have been close to the originals if not the originals themselves.⁴

And of the hypothetical source of an entry in hand 3, containing material accidentally omitted by scribe 1, Parkes says,

I suggest that this now lost Winchester witness to the original was the very collection of booklet exemplars whose existence is indicated by the palaeographical evidence of layout and cancels in the first booklet of the Parker manuscript. I suggest that this collection of booklet exemplars with their added material and reworked passages

¹ The Toller Memorial Lecture delivered in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester on Monday, 9 March 1987.

² See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, gen. eds. D. N. Dumville and S. Keynes (Cambridge, 1982 –). Also *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, with Supplementary Extracts from the Others. A Revised Text on the Basis of an Edition by John Earle*, ed. C. Plummer (2 vol., Oxford, 1892–99; rev. imp. by D. Whitelock, 1952). For a convenient survey of the manuscript versions see *English Historical Documents: Volume 1: c. 500–1042*, ed. D. Whitelock (2nd. edn., London, 1979), 109–21.

³ See *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, iii: MS A, ed. J. M. Bately (Cambridge, 1986). For a facsimile, see *The Parker Chronicle and Laws (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 173): A Facsimile*, ed. R. Flower and H. Smith, E.E.T.S. (London, 1941).

⁴ 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), 153–5. For the term 'revision' see p. 153: 'the original – the revision which Plummer called the 'common' recension ending in 891.' For the missing annal 710 see MS A, ed. Bately, xlvii, n. 151.

constituted perhaps the first fair copies on parchment of the original drafts and that Winchester was the home of this collection.⁵

Moreover, noting the way in which 'blank', or 'barren', annal-numbers are all recorded, Parkes further suggests that the first scribe's exemplar was 'based closely either on something resembling Easter tables or on a collection of material abstracted from notes to Easter tables.'⁶ The conclusions which Parkes draws from the physical appearance of MS A are exciting and attractive ones. However, some of them are also highly controversial and have failed to gain general acceptance. Thus, for instance, David Dumville has challenged the special status accorded to MS A, seeing it as 'by no means as close as we should like to the lost original in textual authority or date.'⁷ He uses arguments from layout to support his own hypothesis that scribe 1 (responsible for the first section to 891, part 1) was collaborating with scribe 2 (responsible for annals *891, part 2 – *912)⁸ and that they were working together many years after the completion of the late ninth-century compilation.⁹ My own view is that both Parkes and Dumville attempt a more precise dating than the evidence allows and that Ker's description of the first hand of MS A as 's. ix/x' must stand.¹⁰ However, even if Parkes' late ninth-century date for hand 1 is correct, it does not follow that MS A necessarily represents the original more accurately than do other surviving manuscripts. The textual evidence is that these later versions sometimes have readings which are significantly closer to the original than A's are.¹¹ So whether or not we assume with Parkes that the first sections of MS A were copied directly from the original drafts,¹² we must examine not only MS A but also

⁵ Parkes, 'The palaeography', 165. For reservations about Winchester as the home of the collection, see J. M. Bately, 'The compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 60 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as evidence', *PBA*, lxiv (1978), 124, n. 5, and D. Whitelock, *Alfred the Great* (rev. and ed. J. M. Bately and S. Keynes, forthcoming).

⁶ See Parkes, 'The palaeography', 154 and 149: '[MS A] seems to reflect the nature and sometimes even the format of the various exemplars from which it was copied'.

⁷ General editors' foreword, *MS A*, ed. Bately, ix.

⁸ In this paper the asterisk is used to indicate a reconstructed annal-number.

⁹ See D. N. Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Cambridge, 1988), chapter 3. Dr Dumville generously allowed me to see this chapter in draft and to answer it in detail in my edition.

¹⁰ See N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), 57–9, and *MS A*, ed. Bately, xxi – xxxv and cxi–cxlii, where it is argued that changes in aspect and layout in the section from fo. 16r to 25v are best interpreted as due to the involvement of a succession of scribes and that the case for collaboration between scribes 1 and 2 remains at the very least unproven.

¹¹ See *MS A*, ed. Bately, lxxiii – lxxxix. It is generally assumed that even MS A (which stands textually apart from the rest) is at two removes at least from the original: see, e.g. *English Historical Documents*, ed. Whitelock, 111 and 121. I shall be examining the bases for this assumption in a forthcoming article, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', in *Reading Medieval Studies*.

¹² If they were so copied, then to explain the textual evidence we would have to assume that there were other direct copies made, from which other manuscripts were descended.

MSS B, C, D and E¹³ if we are to reconstruct the layout of the late ninth-century compilation.

MS D (the eleventh-century British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.iv)¹⁴ and MS E (the twelfth-century Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 636)¹⁵ stand together and slightly apart from the other three manuscripts, since they represent a now lost revision of the common stock of the Chronicle, traditionally known as the Northern Recension.¹⁶ MS B (British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A.vi) and MS C (British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.i) are also closely allied textually to one another, with MS B written in the last twenty years or so of the tenth century and ending with annal 977,¹⁷ and the earliest hands of MS C dated by Ker 's.xi med.'¹⁸ The most recent account of the relationship between MSS B and C is that of Simon Taylor. Taylor begins by assuming as his working hypothesis that C had B as its exemplar until annal 652 and probably also from annal 956 to the end of B at 977, but that for the central section the second scribe of C may have used not B but B's own exemplar.¹⁹ A somewhat different set of conclusions is reached by Cyril Hart, according to whom differences and similarities between B and C are due to the fact that 'the compiler of the C-text (or its precursor) appears to have had before him as exemplars for the annals down to 977 the A text, the B text, and the *Mercian register*. He modelled his text chiefly on B, and his chronology on A'.²⁰ Some of Hart's arguments are based on details of manuscript layout and will be considered later in this paper. Taylor's arguments are also based in part on the physical appearance of the Chronicle

¹³ I exclude MSS F and G from this list since it is generally accepted that the compiler of MS F (London, British Library, MS. Cotton Domitian viii) used an archetype of E, but also had MS A before him (see, e.g., *English Historical Documents*, ed. Whitelock, 116), while MS G (London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B.xi) is apparently a direct copy of MS A; see *Die Version G der Angelsächsischen Chronik: Rekonstruktion und Edition*, ed. A. Lutz (Munich, 1981).

¹⁴ See *An Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from B.M., Cotton MS., Tiberius B. IV*, ed. E. Classen and F. E. Harmer (Manchester, 1926). For the theory that the text of MS D shows evidence of collation with a C-type manuscript see *English Historical Documents*, ed. Whitelock, 113-4 and *The Peterborough Chronicle (The Bodleian Manuscript Laud Misc. 636)*, ed. D. Whitelock and C. Clark (Copenhagen, 1954), 28-9.

¹⁵ ed. Plummer, in *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, i, and, in facsimile, in *The Peterborough Chronicle*, ed. Whitelock and Clark.

¹⁶ See Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ii, esp. lxxviii-lxxi and *English Historical Documents*, ed. Whitelock, 113-4. See also the comment by Cyril Hart, 'The B text of the *Anglo-Saxon chronicle*', *JMH*, viii (1982), 279: 'the existence of a "northern recension" of the chronicle has been one of the most enduring myths of Anglo-Saxon historiography.' For the theory that MS E contains material from MS A, see A. L. Meaney, 'St Neots, Æthelweard and the compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A survey', *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (Albany, N.Y., 1986), 198.

¹⁷ See *MS B*, ed. Taylor, xxiii-xxiv.

¹⁸ For an edition of MS C see *The C-Text of the Old English Chronicles*, ed. H. A. Rositzke (Bochum-Langendreer, 1940); for the dating of the hands see Ker, *Catalogue*, 252-3. Ker suggests that annals 1046, 1047, 1048 may have been written up year by year.

¹⁹ *MS B*, ed. Taylor, xxxvii.

²⁰ See Hart, 'The B-text', 287. For the 'Mercian Register' (MR), see, e.g., Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ii, lxxii f. and cxviii f.

manuscripts, including the use in B and C of certain unusual letter-forms and – a negative feature – the absence of the majority of annal-numbers from B's central section but their presence in C.²¹ This is not the place for a detailed examination of the case for and against use by C of either B or B's exemplar. However, my own recent investigations lead me to refine on my earlier view, that for the section after 652 C was using an authority which 'could have been an ancestor, or be derived from an ancestor, of B',²² and to rule out completely the possibility that C was using B's own exemplar.²³ My investigations also lead me to challenge the view that scribe 2 of MS C reverted to MS B as an exemplar from 956 to the end of B (at 977) and to consider at the least unproven the theory that C had B as its exemplar from 60 BC to AD 652,²⁴ that is the opening section of the 'common stock' which formed the late ninth-century compilation.²⁵

The oldest surviving copy of the 'common stock' of the Chronicle is, as we have seen, that in MS A. The salient features of A's layout are the entry of every annal-number, whether 'barren' or 'fruitful', from AD 1 onward, preceded by the abbreviation *AN*;²⁶ the use of separate columns for annal-number and annal-entry; the use of capitals for the first letter of each entry, which, from annal 189 (on fo.3r), is offset in the margin; the placing of the column of annal-numbers to the left of the annal-material; and the saving of space by skilful arrangement of 'barren' annal-numbers alongside the second and subsequent lines of the preceding annal or by allowing annal-material to spill over on to text-space belonging to a preceding or following fruitful annal. A special feature of the opening folios, from 1v6 to 4v31, is the further space-saving which results from the division of the page into two and the entry of two sets of annal-numbers and annal-material in place of one.²⁷ Finally, lengthy passages of annal-material are sometimes divided up by 'paragraphing' (that is, by the leaving of a space at the end of a line within an annal and the use of an offset capital at the beginning of the line following) or by the use of capitals within a line.²⁸ The scribes of subsequent sections of the Chronicle version in MS A

²¹ See, especially, *MS B*, ed. Taylor, xxxiv–xliv.

²² See Bately, 'The compilation', 97.

²³ See Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', forthcoming.

²⁴ See Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships, forthcoming. I shall be attempting to demonstrate that the arguments on which this belief was founded are less conclusive than they at first sight appear and that there are some significant differences between the two manuscripts.

²⁵ For the extent of the 'common stock', which comprises the opening section from BC 60 to the beginning of the last decade of the ninth century, see, e.g., Bately, 'The compilation', 93–129, and idem, 'The compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle once more', *Leeds Studies in English*, N. S., xvi (1985), 7–26.

²⁶ For accidental omissions see *MS A*, ed. Bately, xcvi–xcvii.

²⁷ See *MS A*, ed. Bately, xlvi–lviii. It should be noted that some of the efforts at 'space-saving' in fact save no space at all, and in these instances it may have been in the scribe's exemplar that special arrangements of material were desirable.

²⁸ See *MS A*, ed. Bately, lxiv – lxv.

mostly follow the pattern established by scribe 1. However, the scribe of annals *892 and *893²⁹ merely offsets the opening letters *AN* and *d*, the scribe of annals *912 to *920 drops the introductory *AN* from annal *915 onward,³⁰ the scribe of annal-numbers *894 to *896 enters them in the centre of the line above the annal-material, the scribe responsible for barren annal-numbers 989 to 992 enters them in a continuous line across the page,³¹ while several of the scribes allow the annal-material to spill over from time to time into the annal-number column.

A number of the features characteristic of MS A are found also in MSS B, C, D and E. Thus, allowing for scribal errors and special circumstances, such as the failure of the scribe of MS B to enter the bulk of either barren or fruitful annal-numbers in the section beginning 653,³² every annal-number from AD 1 onward is entered in B, C, D and E, as in A. Moreover, in all these manuscripts the beginning of a new entry is carefully signalled. Each annal normally begins on a new line, the annal-number is normally introduced by the abbreviation *añ* or *AN*,³³ and the first word of annal-material invariably begins with an enlarged letter or capital. However, there are several places in MSS B and C where a new annal starts half-way along a line, the first part being taken up by the preceding entry,³⁴ while not all the scribes accept the abbreviation *AN* immediately. MS C has two instances of *ANNI*, with annal-numbers 14 and 46, and MS E opens with a mixture of *ANN* and *ANNO*, not adopting *AN* until annal 55.

Another feature of the layout of MS A which is shared by other manuscripts is the use of enlarged letters either alone or accompanied by what I shall call paragraphing. This feature is found mainly in the section containing the common stock. So, for instance, special prominence is given to the sentences referring to the accession of Æthelwulf of Wessex's two eldest sons (in annal 855) and the accession of their brother Alfred (in annal 871).³⁵ The only important difference

²⁹ Scribe 2a. For the hands of annals *891 part 2 to *920 see *MS A*, ed. Bately, xxv–xxxiv.

³⁰ This scribe may have been influenced by the length of these numbers.

³¹ For the reasons for this layout see *MS A*, ed. Bately, lix–lxii. All these scribes continue to enter every year-number. The only gap is between scribe 2c's *920 and scribe 3's *924. However, this is due not to omission but to the fact that before scribe 3 came to make his entries another reader had 'corrected' scribe 2c's 920 to 923. See *MS A*, ed. Bately, xcvi–xcix.

³² See *MS B*, ed. Taylor, xxviii–xxxiv. I shall be examining the possible reasons for omission and insertion of annal-numbers in 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships'. I do not agree with Hart, 'The B-text', 269–70, that the scribe of B usually enters lines of 'blank' annals only where there is some change in the nature of his exemplar and he wishes, for instance, 'to record the resumed synchronisation of chronology between the A text and its precursor'.

³³ The use of *AN* stops in MS A at annal-number 999, after which we find *m̄*, *m̄.i* (followed by *m̄.ii*–*m̄.v*, now erased) and then, in a new hand, the sequence *i.ii*, *i.iii* etc. A similar change is found in E, with *AN millesimo* for 1000 and *millesimo* subsequently. MS C has *mille aññ*, followed by *m̄.i* etc., and D *mille anni*, followed by *mille i*.

³⁴ See below, 26–7.

³⁵ See further Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', forthcoming.

in respect to this particular feature is the use in MSS B and C of an offset enlarged *O* in the word *ond*, in annal 878. This occurs immediately after a passage referring to the Vikings' raven banner, which is absent from MS A, and may provide support for the theory that that passage is an addition to the common stock, made to the common exemplar of BCDE, but not finding its way into A.³⁶

Along with these similarities, however, there are a number of major differences between MS A and some or all of MSS B, C, D and E. Several of these are the direct result of different editorial decisions concerning the placing of annal-numbers. Thus, whereas MSS A, B and C normally have 'fruitful' annal-numbers set apart from the body of annal-material and offset the first letter of this material, MSS D and E only exceptionally separate the annal-numbers from the annal-material in this way, normally beginning a new line with the number, immediately followed by the corresponding material, and so the letter that they offset is the initial *A* of *AN*.³⁷ In MSS A, B and C, in contrast, the 'fruitful' annal-numbers are normally entered in the margin – in the case of MSS A and C in a specially ruled column of their own – and only occasionally encroach on the text-space, that is to say on the area which is normally reserved for annal-material. Exceptions in MS A are confined to the sections added to the first compilation and written by scribes 2a, 2b and 3.³⁸ Exceptions in MS B are found at both beginning and end of the manuscript. These are placed in the text-space, quite possibly as the result of scribal error, and are mostly preceded or followed by a long string of barren annal-numbers. So, for instance, the annal-number 430 (on fo.3v) is the last of a long string of annal-numbers, beginning with *AN*. *ccccix*. It is followed by a space of about one-third of the text-space and the annal-material with which it is conventionally associated has been entered on the line that follows, as though it were independent of it.³⁹ We may compare the position of annal-number 970 (altered from 971), which is the last of a sequence of eleven numbers and occurs at the beginning of the text space of fo.33r, line 12. Its accompanying annal-material is entered on line 13 and again gives the impression of being totally unconnected.⁴⁰ MS C's usage is normally similar to that

³⁶ MSS D and E here have the abbreviation 7. See further *MS A*, ed. Bately, lxxvii.

³⁷ The letter *A* is not, however, offset in annal-numbers 1, 2 and 3 of MS D.

³⁸ Annal-numbers *892 – *898 and 937–946.

³⁹ See also annal-numbers 16, 26, 102, 110 (followed by a string of barren annal-numbers) and annal-numbers 69, 81 and 167 (preceded by a string of barren annal-numbers). Annal 381 occurs on a page otherwise entirely devoted to barren annal-numbers and the number itself straddles the end of the text-space of the line on which it is written. The annal-material opens the next line, with first letter offset.

⁴⁰ Only on three occasions is an exceptional placing found after an annal-number with annal-material, with annals 70 and MR 904 each taking up no more than half a line on fos. 1v and 30r respectively, and annals 71 and MR 905 immediately following them on the same line and with annal 957 the second of a group of three sets of annal-numbers with accompanying annal-material.

in MSS A and B, except that the initial letter of annal-material is not offset. However, the practice of setting fruitful annal-numbers apart from the annal-material is not adopted until the second full page of the text and annal 44. On the first full page the layout is very different. Thus, the first two annal-numbers (*AN i* and *AN ii*) have been placed in the line above the annal-material to which they refer, immediately following the end of the preceding annal; annal-number 35 is placed with the beginning of its annal-material in the middle of a line, immediately after the end of the preceding annal, and the first letter of the annal-material is offset. Subsequently, exceptions are few. Thus, annal-number 71 follows the concluding words of annal 70; annal-number 189 begins a new line, but it is entered in the text-space, not in the margin, and is written in black not in red, as though the scribe was expecting to enter a line of barren annal-numbers; annal-number 449 is again not entered in the margin, but follows the barren annal-number 448 in the text-space. Subsequently, the only deviations are in the section after annal 977, where the scribes are entering material unique to C.⁴¹

It is MSS C, D and E, however, which agree with MS A against MS B in respect of another and very important feature, the position of the annal-number in relation to the annal-material. Throughout MSS A, C, D and E, the 'fruitful' annal-numbers are normally entered on the left-hand side of the page, immediately before the material to which they relate. Deviations are relatively few and are found mainly in material added to the original compilation. Thus in MS A the only departure from the norm is in the section written by scribe 2b, who centres the annal-number in the middle of its own line, preceding the annal-material, in what Parkes describes as a history layout.⁴² In MS D the number is invariably on the left until annal-number 1052, on fo.74r, when it is shifted temporarily to the right of the page and to the end of the previous entry.⁴³ So too with MS E, where entry on the right of the page begins at annal 1124 on fo.83r.⁴⁴ In MS C, there is a similar shift in the section beginning with annal 978, from which point there is some variation, with numbers apparently randomly distributed on both left and right of the page.⁴⁵ However, as we have seen, this manuscript also has two entries on the right-hand side of the page at the very beginning of the text – though these, being placed at

⁴¹ Here, for instance, we find annal-numbers 983, 984 and 988 on the right, in the text-space above the annal-material, but 985 on the left in the margin. 987 is omitted.

⁴² Parkes, 'The palaeography', 155. Although Parkes cites the Old English Orosius as a model, the layout of this is in fact very different from that of the Chronicle and does not set the year-numbers apart from the text.

⁴³ So, for instance, annal-numbers 1053 to 1056 on the right on the line above, beside 1057 on the left.

⁴⁴ On the line above the annal-material. E reverts to entry on the left on fo.87r, with annal-number 1129, but subsequently varies the position.

⁴⁵ See above, n. 41.

the end of the annal-material on the line above their own annal-material, do in fact precede it.⁴⁶

Unlike MSS C, D and E, MS B concludes with annal *977 and so it does not have the additional material which they arrange so variously. However, also unlike them, its deviations from the usage of the generality of manuscripts occur throughout the manuscript. Thus, up to and including annal 652, the norm is for 'fruitful' annal-numbers to be entered on the left-hand side of the page only on the verso of a leaf, when they are written immediately before the opening of the annal-material, usually in the margin. On the recto they are normally entered on the right, at the end of the first line of material, and again usually in the margin. However, there is a fairly large number of exceptions. Sometimes the scribe enters the annal-number to the left of the annal-material on the recto: thus, annal-number 167 on fo.2r is found in the text space immediately before its annal-material. Sometimes the scribe enters the annal-number on the right on a verso, on the line above the annal-material, as apparently in the case of annal 430 on fo.3v. In one instance, annal 39, the number is entered at both the beginning and the end of the single-line annal, on a verso,⁴⁷ while, as in MS C, the whole of annal 70 and the opening of annal 71 are entered together with their annal-numbers consecutively on the same line. In the section after annal 652, B ceases to insert annal-numbers, whether fruitful or barren, until annal-number 766. Although the page is a verso, this annal-number has been entered in the text space on the right. Subsequently, annal-numbers are entered only sporadically, up to annal-number 947, after which twenty-five numbers out of a possible thirty-one are included. In all, a maximum of seven fruitful annal-numbers are entered for the entire period 653 to 977.⁴⁸ These are, with one pair of exceptions, placed on the right of the annal-material to which they apparently refer, though in the case of one instance, the entry *AN. dcccclxxii (recte 772)* on fo.12v, the page is a verso and according to the scribe's earlier practice the number here should be on the left.⁴⁹ The only place where annal-numbers are entered on the left of the annal-material in this section is at fo.30r,

⁴⁶ Annal-numbers 1 and 2.

⁴⁷ Cf. Taylor, *MS B*, 2: 'No doubt the scribe erroneously thought himself, for a moment, to be writing on a recto-page, where the annal-number always follows (the first line of) the entry.' Another possible explanation is that the scribe was deliberately changing the practice of his exemplar, but here neglected to eliminate his exemplar's number 39 when he reached the end of the annal. Annal-numbers 34 and 35 had already been correctly entered on the left and the error is not repeated. The second instance of annal-number 39 is the first of a string of four annal-numbers which fill the rest of the line. For a possible double entry of annal-number 456 see *MS B*, ed. Taylor, 13.

⁴⁸ Annal-numbers 872 (for 772), MR 904, MR 905, 956, 957, *959, *977. I am not convinced that all these numbers indeed refer to the adjacent annals.

⁴⁹ Cf. Taylor, *MS B*, 27: 'The scribe wrote [872] by mistake. The annal-number is smudged as if an attempt had been made to erase it while the ink was still wet.' It should be noted that the number is in the text-space not in the margin.

where Mercian Register annals 904 and 905 are exceptionally found on one and the same line, and this order is therefore necessary for comprehension. However, annal-numbers 956, 957, *958,⁵⁰ 973 and *977 are correctly placed on the right on fos.33r and 34r.

Another major difference between the manuscripts is the way in which they economize on space. In MS D every annal-number up to 1052, whether or not it has annal-material attached to it, is entered on a new line. As a result, there is considerable wasting of space in those sections where there are large numbers of barren annal-numbers. In all other manuscripts there has been some attempt at economy, either through division of the page into two parts or, where appropriate, through the arrangement of annal-numbers and annal-material in space normally allocated to preceding or following annals.

Space-saving through the division of the page vertically into two parts makes it possible for strings of barren annal-numbers to be entered with reasonable economy. It is found not only in the opening section of MS A, but also in the opening section of the much later MS E. In MS A the division begins with annal-number 4 on fo. 1v and ends with annal-number 448 on fo.4v.⁵¹ In MS E the division begins with annal 17 on fo.1v and ends with annal 480 and the end of fo.7v.

A second kind of space-saving involves the placing of barren annal-numbers in the margin or in a special annal-number column but alongside the second and subsequent lines of annal-material belonging to the preceding fruitful annal-number. This type of space-saving is practised only by the scribes of MSS A and B.⁵² In MS A this arrangement is the norm.⁵³ In the opening section of MS B it occurs on nineteen occasions, with barren annal-numbers on the left or right according to the position of the fruitful annal-number. Thus, for instance, annal-number 5 is set in the right-hand margin alongside the second line of annal 3, annal number 82 is set on the left, alongside the second line of annal 81, annal-number 101 alongside the second line of 100, and annal-numbers 450 to 453 alongside the second to fifth lines of 449.⁵⁴ However, MS B shows a great deal of variation. Thus, on a number of occasions the scribe has paired a barren with a fruitful annal-number and placed both in the left-hand margin on the same line, when the page is a verso; on a number of occasions he has followed a fruitful annal-number with a barren one in the right-hand

⁵⁰ As Taylor observes (*MS B*, 54): 'this annal could be for 958 or 959'.

⁵¹ The last annal to be arranged for two-column entry is 430, extending from fo.4va 11.13–17. MS G follows MS A in this arrangement, except for fo.39 where an accidental sideways drift in MS A has prompted the division of the page into three columns not two. See *MS A*, ed. Bately, lvii–lviii.

⁵² For a slightly different arrangement in MS E see below, 40.

⁵³ See *MS A*, ed. Bately, xlvi – xlix.

⁵⁴ See also annal-numbers 31, *48–*52, *492, 598, 599, 600, 602, 605, 615, 637, and 638. Hart, 'The B-text', 269, is wrong in claiming 'a radical change of policy' with annal 449 and in implying that this arrangement of annal-numbers is found only on fos.4v and 6v.

margin on the same line on a recto. Thus, annal-numbers 3 and 4 and 6 and 7 are paired on fo.1r, annal-numbers *43 and 44⁵⁵ and *46 and 47 on fo.1v. Similar arrangements are found on fo.3v, with 454 and 455, and on fos.4v and 5v, with 507 and 508 and 551 and 552. Occasionally this arrangement is used to enter two or three barren annal-numbers and a single fruitful one. Thus, on fo.1v we find the sequences 64 to 69 and 72 to 81, with annal-numbers *66, 67 and 68 set immediately before the fruitful annal-number 69, and barren annal-numbers *78, 79 and 80 alongside the fruitful 81. Paired in the text-space are annal-numbers 16 and 17. Another variation unique to MS B is the placing of a pair of barren annal-numbers in this way. Thus, annal-numbers 31 and *32 are set in the right hand margin of fo.1r, alongside the second line of annal 30, while *48 and 49, and *50, 51 and 52 are set alongside the second and third lines respectively of annal 47 on fo.1v.⁵⁶ In MS E, as in MS D, the normal setting of annal-numbers within the 'general' writing area precludes any such arrangement. However, on fo.1v, where the page has been split in two and there are two columns of barren annal-numbers, scribe 1 has arranged annal-numbers 3 to 10 and 14 and 15 horizontally, but annal-numbers 16 to 22 and 23 to 26 vertically.⁵⁷

A third kind of space-saving involves the entering of barren annal-numbers consecutively in the text-space, with up to five or six numbers per line. This is the norm in MS C and also occurs with great frequency in MS B. Exceptions in MS C are very few. Sometimes barren annals begin a new line even where there is space on the line above: so, for instance, annal-numbers 662 and 663. C also has a single paired entry, with a string of barren annal-numbers from 431 to 448, the entry for 449 following barren annal-number 448 and thus beginning halfway across the page. MS B shows greater variation. On a number of occasions annal-numbers are allowed to spill into margins and sometimes even to run on into the following line. Thus, for instance, annal-number 428, on fo.3v, begins on line 9 and finishes on line 10. Moreover, as we have seen, some sequences of barren annal-numbers begin in the left-hand margin and are followed in the same line by a fruitful number and its accompanying annal-material. This practice of entering barren annal-numbers in strings is continued in the section after 652.⁵⁸ The only occasion on which this type of space-saving is practised in MS A is on fo.29v, where unexpected additions to the text have forced scribe 5 not only to erase previously entered numbers but also to introduce a line of barren annal-numbers

⁵⁵ Taylor does not suggest a position for the missing annal-number 43, which (in contrast with 45 and 46) he marks as physically lost. See *MS B*, 2. However, it was probably entered as the first of a pair and was lost through cropping or other damage to the edge of the leaf.

⁵⁶ For the extent to which the asterisked numbers are recoverable see *MS B*, ed. Taylor.

⁵⁷ See facsimile.

⁵⁸ See Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', forthcoming.

arranged not vertically but horizontally. In MS E it is used on fo. 1v for the sequence of annal-numbers 3 to 10, with numbers arranged in two lines and spaced to form four columns.⁵⁹

Finally, several manuscripts achieve space-saving through the arrangement of material belonging to one annal in the text-space otherwise filled by another, either above or below it. Scribe 1 of MS A regularly saves space in this way. Thus, for instance, the material belonging to annal 2 is entered not only on two lines of its own, but also alongside the final words of annal 1, while material belonging to annal 3 is placed alongside the final words of annal 2 on line 7 and in a position which brings it in line with the second column of annal-material that otherwise may be said to begin with line 9 and annal 33. MSS B and D, however, employ this expedient only very occasionally. Thus, for instance, in MS B, fo. 10v, the final word of annal *736 has been placed in a space on the line above the bottom line of the page, instead of being entered at the top of a new page, and on fo. 11r the final word of annal *750 is similarly entered on the line above the rest of the annal-material, alongside the end of annal *747/8.⁶⁰

What deductions can be made from these similarities and differences of layout between MSS A, B, C, D and E? How far do they support current theories of manuscript relationship and textual transmission? As we have seen, Parkes suggests that the first scribe of MS A was working very close to the original compiler or compilers.⁶¹ However, in Parkes' view the layout of MS A does not represent the layout of the original, though the manuscript may well represent the first fair copy on parchment. Changes of layout on fos. 1v and 4v of MS A, he says, represent decisions taken by this scribe.⁶² Hart develops Parkes' theory further, taking the sudden change in format at an. 449 as evidence that the scribe 'was using two (or more) consecutive sources; as a corollary we may assume that he could not have been working from a single exemplar, for at this point he was constructing his exemplar as he went along.'⁶³ Hart also draws attention to the fact that the scribe of B likewise adopts 'a radical change in policy' at 449

⁵⁹ MS E also has occasional pairs of barren numbers: thus, 67 and 68 and 594 and 595. In both cases scribal error and miscalculation elsewhere on the page seem to be responsible.

⁶⁰ For the implications of Taylor's theory of an unfinished manuscript (*MS B*, xxxvi), see Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', forthcoming.

⁶¹ See above, 21–2.

⁶² Parkes, 'The palaeography', 154.

⁶³ Hart, 'The B-text', 244. The reason for this, Hart would suggest, is that 'the entries from 449 onwards were both longer in content and closer together in time than their predecessors, so that they could not possibly have been accommodated in a two-column format, if the year-numbers were to continue to occupy successive lines.' See also *The Parker Chronicle, 832–900*, ed. A. H. Smith (London, 1935; 3rd. edn. 1951), 2: 'the first scribe of the Parker MS was still influenced by these primitive [Easter table] annals when he wrote a series of year-numbers on successive lines on the assumption that a single line would suffice for each year – only to find that he needed two or more. This explains why some of the annals are opposite

for he entered the next four year numbers (for blank annals) successively beneath each other in the left-hand margin, alongside the four additional lines of text needed for this long entry. The alteration in layout copies exactly the format of the A text, which . . . changes at this point; the corresponding change in the B text forms one of the strongest pieces of evidence that the B chronicler was copying the A text directly for these years, and not some lost intermediate text.⁶⁴

Certainly B's arrangement of barren annal-numbers alongside material from annal 449 resembles that adopted by scribe 1 of MS A already from annal 6. However, as we have seen, the scribe of B had used this layout on several occasions previously, beginning at annal-number 5, while the change in MS A at annal 449 is a change from two columns of annal-material to one column, not a sudden adoption of the type of space-saving used by B at this point. More significantly, MS E also moves from one to two columns of annal-material per page and back again in its earliest section, a fact which must suggest that the arrangement was in an archetype common to both these manuscripts.⁶⁵ That full-page layout in MS A begins with annal 449 (the last entry in half-page layout being annal 430), whereas in E the change occurs with annal 481 at the beginning of fo.8r, can be explained very simply in terms of the immediate context. Starting from the hypothesis that a common exemplar of both MS A and MS E changed from half-page to full-page layout, with annal 449 at the top of a new page, then we may suppose that the scribe of MS A faithfully followed his exemplar, even though he was writing at the bottom of a page intended for two sets of entries, while the scribe of E, reaching annal 449 at the top of a new leaf, fo.7r, decided to continue in two columns on both sides of that leaf.⁶⁶ Several different explanations have been put forward for this change from half-page to whole-page entry. One is that either the compiler or a subsequent copyist was reacting to a marked increase in the amount of annal-material at 449.⁶⁷ A second is that the compiler's source-material changed at this point.⁶⁸ A third is

several year-numbers'. See also Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles*, ii, cxiii–cxiv. That the scribe had as his intent to allow the annal-numbers to occupy successive lines is a dangerous assumption. In fact there are a number of entries at the very beginning of the manuscript where this is patently not the case. See annal-numbers 1, 2, 33, 34, *44, *45, *46, 83, 84, 90, 91. And of course the change in layout does not bring about the supposedly desired result, with a gap occurring as soon as annal 455.

⁶⁴ Hart, 'The B text', 269. See also Meaney, 'St. Neot's', 227: 'The fact that B too shows a small change at [449] may indicate that it was general through all the archetypes'.

⁶⁵ Presumably the two-column layout was decided on after the material had been assembled and put together, since only then would the extent of potential wasted space have become evident.

⁶⁶ The copy of the 'common stock' used by the author of the 'Northern recension' may also have reached the beginning of annal 449 in the course of entering material on a page already laid out in two-column format and so continued to use this format until the end of the page or leaf.

⁶⁷ See Hart, 'The B text', 243–4, and cf. Meaney, 'St Neot's', 227.

⁶⁸ With the implication that he adopted the practice of his new exemplar. See Hart, 'The B-text', 243–4.

that the compiler or a subsequent copyist was anxious to avoid over-running of material from the bottom of one column to the top of the next and so switched from half- to whole-page layout at the bottom of a page.⁶⁹ My own preferred explanation is that the compiler or scribe changed from half-page to whole-page layout because of a significant decrease in the number of barren annal-numbers, which removed the advantages of the half-page layout.⁷⁰

The change from whole-page to half-page layout at the very beginning of MSS A and E may similarly be explained in terms of a common archetype. Fo.1v of MS A gives the impression of being carefully planned in advance, with maximum space-saving and a very complicated inter-weaving of the material belonging to the first four annals.⁷¹ Annals 60 BC to AD 3 appear to have been conceived as a single unit. They are not only entered in long lines right across the page, whereas subsequent annals are entered in two columns, but their annal-material has a different left-hand margin from the annals that follow. MS E similarly isolates the opening annals from what follows.⁷² Indeed, it does not give a separate entry for A, B, C and D's annal 3, but makes the entry concerning the death of Herod part of the entry about the coming of the three magi and the massacre of the innocents. In MS C, as we have seen, annals 1 and 2 are also distinguished from the rest, this time by the placing of annal-numbers on the right-hand side of the preceding line in the manner of chapter or section headings in other manuscripts.⁷³ In MS D, annals 1, 2 and 3 stand apart from the rest in not having their annal-numbers offset. That the author of this opening section conceived of it as a unit distinct from what follows is suggested by the absence of the normal *Her* formula not only from 60 BC (which begins *Ær Cristes geflæsnesse .lx. wintra*), but also from what the scribes of surviving manuscripts number as *AN. i* (*Octavianus ricsode lxvi wintra 7 on þam lxii geare his rices Crist was acenned*) and *AN.ii* (*þa tungelwitgan of eastdæle cuomon*).⁷⁴ If so, the annal-numbers 1 and 2 may have been introduced not by the compiler but by subsequent scribes.

⁶⁹ Cf. Meaney, 'St Neots', 227 and MS A, ed. Bately, lii–lviii.

⁷⁰ That the amount of material involved need not have been a significant factor can be demonstrated from MS E. As a result of heavy revision of the earlier parts of the Chronicle, MS E's two-column section contains far more annal-material than A, B or C, with a number of substantial entries. Annal 449, for instance, takes up fifty-one 'half-lines'.

⁷¹ Note, for instance, the arrangement of material belonging to annal 2 partly on the line above the first line of the annal and partly below. The end of annal 3 is placed in a position (on l. 7) that anticipates the two-column layout that begins on l. 9.

⁷² As in MS D, the first annal, BC 60, has been replaced by an introductory section based on the opening of the main body of Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

⁷³ The annal for BC 60 begins at the bottom of fo.115v, immediately following the end of the Gnostic verses.

⁷⁴ Æthelweard rewrites the opening of the Chronicle, beginning with the creation and moving from the birth of Christ directly to his baptism: see *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (Edinburgh, 1962).

Of course the evidence of MS C is only relevant if its scribes are not making a direct copy of MS B and, as we have seen, the view of B's most recent editor is that from the beginning of C to 652 we have such a copy. However, as I shall show elsewhere, agreements in orthography and spelling are not conclusive, while what agreements in layout there are between B and C against the other surviving manuscripts do not require us to postulate a particularly close relationship.⁷⁵ Indeed, one of the apparently most significant points of agreement, the entry of annal 71 on the same line as material from annal 70 in both B and C, also includes one significant difference: C, like A, D and E introduces annal 71 with *Her*; B omits it. So it could well be that the same line arrangement was already present in a common exemplar.⁷⁶ In this connection it should be noted that a pairing of annals later in MS B (MR 904 and MR 905) is not found in MS C, while a pairing in C (34 and 35) is not paralleled in B. Shared errors in the copying of numbers occur twice, but once again the errors could have arisen in a common archetype and been copied mechanically by not just one scribe but at least two.⁷⁷ At the same time, C has errors that are hard to comprehend if B were the scribe's immediate source. Thus, for instance, its scribe was obviously unprepared to find annal-material attached to annal-numbers 189 and 381, entering the number 189 in the wrong colour and with A not offset and failing to rubricate the opening letter of 381. In MS B, however, it is perfectly clear that annal-number 189 is a fruitful one and that the words *Her Maximus* (381) begin a new annal. Finally, although it has been argued that from annal 956 to the end of B at annal 977 the scribe of C was once again copying B, there are a number of features which appear to me to rule this out. Thus, for instance, MS C does not follow B's practice in this section of entering annal-numbers on the right of the page on a recto, yet in the section after 977 (which is not found in B) this arrangement is immediately adopted. If the scribe had been automatically shifting numbers from right to left, why should he abruptly cease to do so at this point?

The possibility must therefore be considered that C's exemplar had only some of the peculiarities present in MS B and that other features of B are the result of the scribe inadequately superimposing a new layout on that provided by his exemplar. In support of this supposition is the large number of inconsistencies in the handling of annal-numbers in the first section of B, a state of affairs which suggests

⁷⁵ See further Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', forthcoming.

⁷⁶ It could be argued that the scribe of MS C inserted the word *Her* to bring the annal in line with other annals. However, there is no evidence elsewhere of scribes making this kind of adjustment. See, e.g., 889, *894 and 1018(D) etc.

⁷⁷ See the entry 619, *recte* 609, and the omission of annal-number 629, later restored in MS C by alteration. For copying of a very obviously incomplete sentence by both B and C see MR 924.

imperfect rearrangement of a very different layout in its exemplar.⁷⁸ The scribe appears on occasion to be improvising as he goes along, modifying the layout of his exemplar to fit his own scheme, but sometimes forgetting to make the changes he intended and sometimes misinterpreting his exemplar. However, it is not possible to be sure whether certain features were altered by the scribe of B or by his predecessor. What may safely be assumed is that the entry of annal-numbers in the right-hand margin of rectos after the opening of the annal itself was an innovation. Such innovation would explain some at least of B's inconsistencies and illogicalities. And so would the theory that annal-numbers had been rearranged to achieve greater space-saving, with barren annal-numbers sometimes spilling into the margins and sometimes deliberately entered there.

The balance of the evidence, then, is in favour of a shared archetype for all the surviving manuscripts, with annal-numbers in the left-hand margin and with space-saving both by the division of the page where appropriate and by the arrangement of barren annal-numbers alongside annal-material. In view of the conventional annal opening *Her*, or occasional alternatives such as *On þiſsum geare*, it seems probable that the author(s) of the first compilation also expected the annal-numbers to precede the annal-material.⁷⁹ However, it should be noted that left-hand placing of annal-numbers was not so thoroughly established a principle in annal-writing of the early middle ages that it was automatically followed by all scribes or (more significantly) adopted by all the contributors of supplementary material to the common stock.

The balance of evidence also favours a shared archetype giving every year-number from AD 1 onwards. Several different but related explanations have been given for this comprehensiveness. For instance, Parkes, noting the way in which barren annal-numbers have all been recorded in MS A, comes, as we have seen, to the conclusion that 'the survival of the superfluous years in quite this form suggests that [the manuscript's exemplar] was based closely either on something resembling Easter tables or on a collection of material abstracted from notes to Easter tables.'⁸⁰ Hart agrees with Parkes that 'it is a fair assumption that up to [fo.4v] the source used by the scribe of A was in the form of short annals set in the margin of an Easter table', and at the same time appears to suppose that part at least of the compiler's purpose in recording all the numbers was to allow for subsequent insertions of material. Thus he sees the scribe of B as throwing away the chance to add material retrospectively by setting

⁷⁸ See above, 28–30.

⁷⁹ On the use of *Her* see P. A. M. Clemoes, 'Language in context: *Her* in the 890 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *Leeds Studies in English*, xvi (1985), 27–36.

⁸⁰ Parkes, 'The palaeography', 154.

out barren annal-numbers in a continuous line.⁸¹ Audrey Meaney similarly postulates an Easter table format for a hypothetical proto-chronicle used by Æthelweard before it was modified to form the archetypal Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:

It might appear that the ancestor of Æthelweard's exemplar of the ASC had at the beginning only an occasional entry taken from the New Testament and a whole series of blank annal numbers (in an Easter Table?). A reader may then have decided to try to enter events from the lives of the apostles against the AD dates.⁸²

That annalists of the middle ages, in addition to deriving material from entries in the margins of Easter tables, also used these tables as a model is a common assumption amongst modern scholars. So, for instance, Reginald Lane Poole writes:

If we find Annals in which every year is entered, whether any event is recorded under it or not, they are taken from an Easter Table. The essentials of such a Table for Church use – the Golden Number, the Epacts and the like – have dropped out, but the complete series of years remains. It is at a later stage that only the years are entered for which events are recorded.⁸³

We may compare Antonia Gransden's definition of a 'living' as opposed to a 'dead' chronicle:

The appearances [sic] of 'living' chronicles is determined by their nature. The date of the year AD is in the left-hand margin. One line is usually left blank for each annal: the framework for the annals is sometimes drawn up for many years after the author's time . . . Some annals cover more than their allotted space and overflow into the next year-space, and annals are not entered for every year . . . The earliest 'living' Chronicles were written in the margins of tables drawn up to give the date of Easter for a series of years.⁸⁴

But what are Easter tables? What evidence is there for their use as receptacles for historical detail,⁸⁵ and do we need to connect the layout of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle with them?

Easter tables appear first to have been composed in the fourth century though dating *anno Domini* was not introduced until the sixth century, when Dionysius Exiguus drew up a set of nineteen-year

⁸¹ Hart, 'The B-text', 269. The same practice is followed by the short Latin chronicle in Oxford, St. John's College MS 17, printed by Hart, 'The B-text', 295–6. However, I do not agree with Hart that this is a translation of MS B or indeed of any other of the surviving manuscripts. See Bately, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Texts and textual relationships', forthcoming.

⁸² Meaney, 'St Neot's', 218.

⁸³ R. L. Poole, *Chronicles and Annals* (Oxford, 1926), 42.

⁸⁴ A. Gransden, *Historical writing in England c. 550 – c. 1307* (London, 1974), 29–30.

⁸⁵ For an invaluable survey of the subject, with detailed bibliography, see K. Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History to A. D. 900* (Cambridge, 1976), especially chapters 3 and 4. In the interests of economy and for ease of reference I have cited this book wherever possible in preference to older works.

cycles calculated for a period extending from 532 to 626. A second series covered the period from 627 to 721. Only two columns were required on such a table, one containing the year-number, the other giving the date of Easter in that year. However, the tables normally also gave other details, such as the indictional year and the Epacts.⁸⁶ When Easter tables were first used for the entering of historical material is not known. The earliest surviving examples date from the seventh century. However, it is generally assumed that the practice of annotation began much earlier. Thus, the seventh-century Gotha Herz. Bibl. MS 75 has a set of Victorian tables which have an entry dated *anno passionis* 474 (i.e. AD 501), and this is taken by Jones to be copied from a contemporary entry in the scribe's exemplar.⁸⁷ The oldest surviving Irish example dates from the ninth century; however, Ó Croínín suggests that contemporary entries were already being made in Ireland in the sixth century.⁸⁸

Instances of annotated Easter tables written in Anglo-Saxon England are even later in date. Significantly, very little historical material is recorded in them. Thus, British Library Cotton Titus D. xxvii (s.xi¹, from Winchester)⁸⁹ has a number of pages of Easter tables, each with twelve columns of calculations. There is no column devoted to annal-material, but the extreme left-hand margins contain a handful of obituary notices. For instance, 978 *Hic interfectus est eadwerd rex*, 983 *Hic obiit ælfhere dux*, 984 *obitus sancti aþelwoldi episcopi*, recalling certain marginal entries in the final section of MS A of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.⁹⁰ Another English manuscript containing annotated Easter tables is British Library MS Cotton Caligula A.xv, fos.132v – 135 (s.xi², from Christ Church, Canterbury) with eleven columns.⁹¹ This manuscript has both obituary notices and brief annalistic entries in Old English, introduced by the same *Her* formula as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, beginning with the death of Dunstan in 989. So, for instance, 1058 *Her benedictus papa sende stigande þone pallium*, 1011 *Her wæs cantwara byrig gewunnan* and 1012 *Her wæs sancte ælfh gemartyrod*.

These surviving English Easter tables were written at a time long

⁸⁶ See Harrison, *The Framework*, 30–51 and C. W. Jones, *Bede, Opera De Temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1943), 98. For facsimiles of two late tenth-century Easter tables from Einsiedeln, see Poole, *Chronicles and Annals*.

⁸⁷ See, e.g., C. W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1947), 9–11 and idem, *Bede*, 118, but see also Harrison's words of caution, *The Framework*, 45–50.

⁸⁸ D. Ó Croínín, 'Early Irish annals from Easter tables: A case restated', *Peritia*, ii (1983), 77 referring to the ninth-century MS Angers Bibliothèque Municipale 447 from Brittany. This manuscript has 8-column Dionysiac tables, with annotations in left- and right-hand margins.

⁸⁹ Ker, *Catalogue*, item 202; H. Gneuss, 'A preliminary list of manuscripts written or owned in England up to 1100', *ASE*, ix (1981), item 380.

⁹⁰ See, e.g., 988, margin, *Hoc anno obiit sanctus Dunstanus archiepiscopus*.

⁹¹ Ker, *Catalogue*, item 139 and Gneuss, 'Manuscripts', item 411. See also Felix Liebermann, *Ungedruckte angelnormannische Geschichtsquellen* (Strassburg, 1879), 1–8.

after the first compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. However, in the light of the continental evidence, it is reasonable to suppose that similar tables were already being used in England for the sporadic recording of historical material before the mid-seventh century, and a collection of sets of such tables could well have been used by the compilers of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, as it is sometimes assumed they were used by Bede.⁹² The question that needs to be asked, then, is not so much whether the compiler(s) of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle derived material from Easter tables, but what direct influence, if any, Easter tables had on the layout of the Chronicle.

As we have seen, Easter tables provide a precedent for a column of year-numbers, with every year entered on its own line, and for sporadic entries of historical material. In addition, they provide a precedent for the occasional over-running of annal-material on to empty space below. However, they do not collectively provide a precedent for the placing of material to the right of the year-number, nor do they introduce each year-number with the word *anno*, although it is normal for the column of year-numbers to have an identifying heading. And they provide no precedent for the division of the page into two parts. Moreover, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that in the case of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle there is absolutely no evidence that the person responsible for the original layout initially assigned only one line to each *annus Domini*, a major argument used for an Easter table origin for annals. What has been taken by some scholars to be evidence for such a layout in the opening sections of MS A is in fact a combination of very careful space-saving by its scribe and occasional miscalculation.⁹³

At the same time it must be acknowledged that the compiler or compilers of the common stock made use of not just one but a variety of sources. Easter table annals there must surely have been amongst them, but we must not forget that, even where the compiler can reasonably be supposed to have used Easter table material, this may very well either have been entered in a number of unrelated sets of nineteen-year cycles, or consist of excerpts from discarded Easter tables. As Charles Jones observes, 'supplanted Easter tables are useful only to the antiquarian and are usually destroyed as worthless.'⁹⁴

⁹² cf. Hart, 'Byrhtferth's Northumbrian chronicle', *EHR*, xcvi (1982), 559-60: '[Bede, Epitome] drew, one supposes, upon a series of Latin annals entered against an Easter Table; possibly he was responsible for compiling the annals in the first place.' And again, of the *Continuatio Bedae*, 'some of these entries however seem too long for them to have been written against a particular year in a table, and it could well be that by this time they were being copied independently in the form of a Chronicle'. For 'paschal annals' in Bede, *Chronica Maiora*, see Harrison, *The Framework*, 49. It should be noted that the format of surviving copies of Bede's *Epitome* and *Chronica Maiora* displays no evidence of influence by Easter tables.

⁹³ See further Harrison, *The Framework*, 102, n. 7. For a rebuttal of claims that the first scribe of MS A had planned to use single-line entries, see above, n.63.

⁹⁴ Jones, *Bede*, 25; also *idem*, *Saints' Lives*, 10. For diffusion of material among several monastic houses, see, e.g., Harrison, *The Framework*, 45.

Moreover, the earliest Anglo-Saxon material was presumably drawn not from Dionysiac Easter tables (which after all seem not formally to have been adopted in England until the Synod of Whitby in 664)⁹⁵ or from other documents using AD dating, but from older annotated tables, giving dating *anno passionis* or by Indictions, from excerpts from such tables or from regnal and episcopal lists.⁹⁶ Some information might even have been derived from calendars.⁹⁷ Surviving calendars from the Anglo-Saxon period have a one-date one-line format and normally include a column for notices. Surviving regnal and episcopal lists are also arranged in columns of numbers and names.⁹⁸

However, some of the material in the late ninth-century compilation demonstrably did not come from Easter tables, calendars or lists, and the possibility must be considered that the sources from which this material was taken could also have provided possible models for the compilers. One of these sources was the Epitome or Recapitulation which concludes Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Others, I have suggested elsewhere, were Isidore's *Chronicon*, the *Liber Pontificalis* and Rufinus' translation of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, with material also from Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*.⁹⁹ Not drawn on by the compilers of the common stock, but certainly familiar to vernacular writers of the late ninth century, are Orosius' History, the body of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the chronological section of Isidore's *Etymologies* and Jerome's version of Eusebius' Chronicle.¹⁰⁰ Four of these – *Liber Pontificalis*, Isidore's *Chronicon* and the two works by Jerome – occur together in at least one eighth-century continental manuscript, MS Lucensis 490. The Chronicle of Rufinus-Eusebius and the Latin and Old English versions of the histories of Bede and Orosius all use a 'history', not an annalistic, framework and so their material is divided into books, chapters and sections. Isidore's *Chronicon* is composed of a sequence of summaries of events grouped in dated paragraphs.¹⁰¹ The *Liber Pontificalis* and Jerome, *De Viris* deal with individuals and not with chronology and are also divided up

⁹⁵ So, e.g., R. L. Poole, *Studies in Chronology and History* (Oxford, 1934), 32–3 and Harrison, *The Framework*, 49.

⁹⁶ For the probable use of episcopal and regnal lists and other sources by Gregory of Tours, see Harrison, *The Framework*, 48.

⁹⁷ See, e.g., B. L. MS Cotton Titus D.xxvii, with both Easter table and calendar. Cf. the details concerning Grimbald inserted in MS A, annal *902. For a typical calendar of the early Middle Ages see *Patrologia Latina*, xc, 759–88.

⁹⁸ See, e.g., B. L. MS Cotton Vespasian B.vi and the Parker MS, fos.53r–55v.

⁹⁹ See J. M. Bately, 'World History in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Its sources and its separateness from the Old English Orosius', *ASE*, viii (1979), 177–94.

¹⁰⁰ The histories of Orosius and Bede were translated into Old English at this time, while the *Etymologies* and Jerome-Eusebius were used by the author of the Old English Orosius as sources of additional information. See *The Old English Orosius*, ed. J. M. Bately, E. E. T. S., s.s. 6 (1980), lxi.

¹⁰¹ So too Bede, *Chronica Minora* and *Chronica Maiora*.

into chapters or sections. In all of these works, except the later sections of the Bede, dating is in terms of *annus mundi* or imperial years.¹⁰² None of them bears any close resemblance in layout with the Chronicle. The other three texts, however, do provide parallels with, and therefore possible sources for, the layout of the Chronicle. Thus, Bede, Epitome resembles the Chronicle in being composed of a series of brief annals, each of which begins with the date, introduced by the word *Anno*.¹⁰³ All dates except the first are *ab incarnatione*. In some, though not all, of the surviving early copies a new line is assigned to a new entry and in some manuscripts the page is divided vertically into two parts. Thus, for instance, the scribe of the version of the Epitome in the eighth-century British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius C.ii sets out his material in two columns, offsets the initial *A* of *Anno*, practises space-saving by arranging material on lines both above and below the annal to which it belongs¹⁰⁴ and starts a new line with each new entry. The Leningrad Bede (Leningrad, Public Library, Lat. Q. v.i.18) similarly employs a half-page layout, with the *A* of *Anno* offset in the margin. The columns contain an average of four words per line. The Moore MS (Cambridge, University Library Kk. 5. 16, s.viii¹) in contrast has whole-page layout and sets out the epitome material as continuous text.¹⁰⁵ However, a major difference between Epitome and Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is the citing only of those year-numbers for which there is annal-material in the Epitome, a practice followed in the Chronicle only at the very beginning, with BC 60 followed immediately by AD 1.¹⁰⁶ The chronological survey in Isidore, *Etymologies* consists of a consecutive series of historical events, dated in some but not all the surviving manuscripts, and in those manuscripts that I have seen its material is normally entered in paragraphs. However, in the early tenth-century English copy, Cambridge, Trinity College MS B. 15. 33 (368) each dated detail is entered on a line of its own and introduced by *Anno*.¹⁰⁷ Finally, the Chronicle of Jerome-Eusebius has a highly elaborate layout, with as many as eight

¹⁰² AD dating is used twice in Bede, *Chronica Maiora*, with reference to 532 and 716.

¹⁰³ Cf., e.g., *Anno ab incarnatione Domini* (46, 189), *Anno incarnationis dominicae* (167), *Anno* (381 etc.)

¹⁰⁴ See, e.g., the entries for 538 and 593.

¹⁰⁵ For facsimiles see *The Moore Bede*, ed. P. Hunter Blair and R. A. B. Mynors, E.E.M.F., 9 (Copenhagen, 1959), and *The Leningrad Bede*, ed. O. Arngart, E.E.M.F., 2 (Copenhagen, 1952).

¹⁰⁶ Non-comprehensiveness continues to be a feature of Latin chronicles, for instance those of Regino of Prum and Ado of Vienne. Although there are some similarities in layout between some Frankish and Irish chronicles and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (as, for instance, the opening of an annal with *AN* followed by the annal-number); these are not significant enough to suggest possible influence of one on the other and so have not been considered in this paper.

¹⁰⁷ Gneuss, 'Manuscripts', item 176. The entering of year-numbers is not a feature of all the surviving MSS; see *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911; repr. 1971), V. xxxix, note to paragraph 2.

sets of numbers and accompanying material, each with its own pattern of dating.¹⁰⁸ Important agreements in layout with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are the entering of every year-number (in this case from the beginning of the world) on a separate line and the regular use of space-saving by allowing the material from one entry to spill over into the text-space alongside a 'barren' year-number.¹⁰⁹

So it is very possible that the raw material used in the compilation of the common stock consisted of a number of manuscripts of a variety of shapes and sizes. If, as I have suggested elsewhere, several people were engaged together in the task,¹¹⁰ then one or more might have been entrusted with the task of looking for early materials and imposing uniformity upon them, another or others busy dealing with the most recent material.¹¹¹ One of the first problems to confront them must have been whether to begin *ab orbe condita* (that is, with *annus mundi*), *ab incarnatione* (that is, with *annus Domini*), from the Roman invasions (that is, with 60 BC) or as in the genealogical regnal list from the arrival of Cerdic (that is, with AD 494).¹¹² In the event, they seem to have adopted a compromise, opening with Bede's first entry, concerning the invasion of Julius Caesar in 60 BC, but beginning their full sequence of dates with *annus Domini*.

If the reconstructed archetype reflects the layout of the first fair copy on parchment, then we may suppose that the decision to begin each piece of annal-material with its year-number may have been taken under the influence of the layout of either Bede, *Epitome* or of Jerome-Eusebius or of both.¹¹³ Placing of the annal-number at the beginning of a new line is also a feature of Jerome-Eusebius and appears as a variant in manuscripts of Bede and of Isidore, *Etymologies*. Prefacing of the year-number by *Anno* is again a feature of Bede, *Epitome* and also of the annalistic material in Isidore's *Etymologies*. I have not found the abbreviation *AN* in any of the manuscripts of these texts that I have seen. However, it was a well-established Latin abbreviation.

Entry of year-numbers in columns is a distinctive feature of the

¹⁰⁸ For a facsimile see *The Bodleian Manuscript of Jerome's Version of the Chronicle of Eusebius*, ed. J. K. Fotheringham (Oxford, 1905).

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., fo.73v of Fotheringham's facsimile. For the layout of the Chronicle see the introduction to this facsimile.

¹¹⁰ Bately, 'The compilation', esp. 109–116.

¹¹¹ There is fairly clear evidence that much of the material relating to the ninth century was set down a number of years after the events described. See Whitelock's opinion, quoted by Bately, 'The compilation', 112 n.4 and 113, n.3. See also annal 755, with its anticipation of events properly included in annal 784.

¹¹² *þy gear'þe wæs agan fram Cristes acennesse cccc wintra 7 xciiii uuintra*. See *MS A*, ed. Bately, 1.

¹¹³ However, the arrangement is a not uncommon one in chronicles of the early Middle Ages, with Prosper following Jerome-Eusebius and with a number of Frankish and Irish chronicles also having this arrangement – at least in surviving, generally late, copies.

Chronicle of Jerome-Eusebius.¹¹⁴ Division of the page into two parts, for two sets of such year-numbers, is very common in manuscripts of the Old English period, including those of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. So it could be a copy of the Epitome that gave scribe or compiler the idea for this arrangement or it could be common practice in his scriptorium. As for another kind of space-saving, that achieved by allowing material to run over into the text-space alongside a barren year-number, this is part of the design of the Chronicle of Jerome-Eusebius,¹¹⁵ while a variation of it – space-saving by the insertion of annal-material in the text-space belonging to an adjacent annal – is a feature of a number of manuscripts of Bede, Epitome.

Finally, the entering of all the year-numbers from AD 1 in a chronicle is to say the least unusual,¹¹⁶ and it is the major argument put forward for an Easter-table model for the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. However, it is highly unlikely that the first step taken by the compilers of the common stock was to compose Easter tables for some eight hundred and ninety years,¹¹⁷ laboriously calculating the date of Easter for each one of them and allowing one line per year. It is far more likely that the process of compilation began with work in smaller sections, with the links between these sections made fairly late on in the proceedings.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, a major task for the person responsible for compiling the section 60 BC to AD 110 must have been to reconcile the material from Bede, Epitome with AD dating, with material from other sources, such as Isidore, *Chronicon*, using *annus mundi* or imperial dating.¹¹⁹ Obviously, as an aid to the putting together of such disparate material, arranged in different fashions, the construction of a framework giving all the year-numbers to AD 110 (the death of Ignatius) would make good sense. It would be simple enough in a subsequent fair copy to insert all other barren annal-numbers.

Comprehensive entering of year-numbers in a nineteen-year cycle in the Easter tables is for a strictly practical purpose, the calculation of the date of Easter during that period. It is also predictional. The entering of all the year-numbers from Creation, alongside other sets of

¹¹⁴ See facsimile.

¹¹⁵ See above, 40–1.

¹¹⁶ For a post-Conquest example see B. L. MS Cotton Nero D.ii, fos.238v–41, in hands of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

¹¹⁷ Assuming that the first compilation dates from the 890s. See also Harrison, *The Framework*, 102, n. 7.

¹¹⁸ For a somewhat different picture of the behaviour of the author of a new chronicle see Harrison, *The Framework*, 49, 127. Harrison's chronicler resembles some of the later scribes of MS A (see *MS A*, ed. Bately, xxxix, lviii–lxii). For differences between paschal annals and a chronicle see Harrison, *The Framework*, 51. For the evidence of the position of genealogical material see Bately, 'The compilation', 105, n. 3.

¹¹⁹ The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is highly unusual in its adoption of AD rather than AM dating from the birth of Christ and may well owe this usage to Bede, Epitome. See Bately, 'World history', 185–6.

numbers, in Jerome-Eusebius, has a very different purpose, aiming at charting the course of this world's history and the rise and fall of some of its great nations.¹²⁰ I would venture to suggest that the compilers of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle deliberately entered every year-number of their own millennium, along with occasional comments about the number of years that had passed since the creation,¹²¹ in order to demonstrate visually the passing of time.¹²² And I would conclude that, although the compilers of the first Chronicle may well have derived some of their information from annotated Easter tables, the evidence of the surviving manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is that the layout of the first version of that work was based on the layout of certain key Latin texts containing historical material.

¹²⁰ For a similar purpose on the part of Bede, *Chronica Maiora*, see Harrison, *The Framework*, 77.

¹²¹ See, e.g., annals 6, 33 and 616.

¹²² In this respect, see Jones, *Bede*, 119.

