

# The Alfredian 'Common Stock'

The original work, comprising annals up to 892; used by Asser as the basis for his *Life of King Alfred* (893)

CS 1

'The Annals of St Neots'  
Cambridge, Trinity College R.7.28  
Latin annals, extending to 912;  
compiled at Bury St Edmunds,  
in the 1120s or 1130s

*Chronicle of Æthelweard* (c. 990)  
with additional details from the  
south-west, and some access to  
annals for the tenth century

## Copy of the Common Stock

introducing 'chronological dislocation'  
in annals 756-845

CS 2

Asser's *Life of King Alfred*  
(893), for annals 851-87

## Copy of the Common Stock

introducing omission of sentence by  
homoeoteleuton in annal 885

CS 3

## Copy of the Common Stock

adding an erroneous reference to the  
death of Earl Sidroc at Englefield (871)  
as well as the reference to the capture of  
the Raven Banner (878) and additional  
material in annal 883

CS 4

## Copy of the Common Stock

without any continuations, taken north in the  
late tenth or early eleventh century, where it  
became the basis for the **Northern Recension**,  
compiled probably at York, perhaps in the first  
half of the eleventh century.

CS 5

SDK 1981, rev. 2015  
subject to further refinement

West Saxon regnal list and  
genealogy, serving as preface

**MS. A**

Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll. MS. 173  
Known as 'The Parker Chronicle'. Written  
probably at Winchester in the early 890s,  
incorporating some of the additional blocks  
of annals, with several 'local' annals of its own.  
Extends to 1001, with continuation to 1070. Ker,  
*Catalogue*, no. 39.

**MS. G**

BL Cotton Otho B. xi  
Copy of MS. A, c. 1000.  
Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 180.

**MS. B**

BL Cotton Tiberius A. vi  
(with Tib. A. iii, fol. 178)  
Extends to 977; later at  
Canterbury. Ker, *Catalogue*,  
no. 188.

**MS. C**

BL Cotton Tiberius B. i  
Abingdon. Breaks off in  
1066. Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 191.

**MS. D**

BL Cotton Tiberius B. iv  
York or Worcester.  
Extends to 1079. Ker,  
*Catalogue*, no. 192.

## THE 'MERCIAN REGISTER'

Offering a different perspective.  
Annal numbers 896-901, and annals  
904-24, entered en bloc in MSS B & C,  
after annal 914; incorporated in MS D.

## A MIDLANDS RECENSION

A version of the 'Common Stock' incorporating various  
additional sets of annals, including the 'Mercian Register';  
apparently at Abingdon, Ramsey or elsewhere in the  
mid-970s; incorporating a distinctive set of annals (BC  
957, 971, 976, 977, 978-82), with information on abbots  
of Abingdon in 985, 990, 1016.

## THE 'NORTHERN RECENSION'

The product of serious historical revision.  
1. New preface, from Bede, *HE* i. 1.  
2. Annals from *HE* v. 24 replaced by material  
drawn from the main text; with additions,  
e.g. 603, 626  
3. Annals drawn from 'First Set of Northern  
Annals' (732-802)  
4. Annals drawn from 'Second Set of Northern  
Annals' (888-957)  
5. Annals for 959-80, including two (959, 975)  
seemingly in the style of Archbishop Wulfstan  
6. A version of annals for the reign  
of King Æthelred, etc., covering 983-1022  
7. Annals 1028-31 (for 1027-30), on expeditions  
of King Cnut overseas

## Copy of the 'Northern Recension'

brought south after c. 1030, to Canterbury,  
where it would serve directly or indirectly  
as the archetype of MSS. E and F. Incorporating  
some Latin entries from the 'Annals of Rouen'.  
Some readings (e.g. 892) and some annals (e.g.  
924, 934, 944, 945) inserted from MS. A when  
both at Canterbury.

**MS. F**

BL Cotton Domitian viii  
Canterbury, Christ Church.  
Text in English and in Latin.  
Extends to 1058. Ker,  
*Catalogue*, no. 148.

**MS. E**

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Laud Misc. 6  
Peterborough. Written in one stage  
to annal 1121. First continuation 1122-31,  
written in six blocks by the original scribe.  
Second continuation 1132-54, added c. 1154.  
Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 346.

**MS. H**

BL Cotton Domitian ix, f. 9  
Fragment, covering events  
in 1113-14. Ker, *Catalogue*,  
no. 150.

## ADDITIONAL BLOCKS OF ANNALS

**THE LATER WARS OF KING ALFRED**  
Annals 893-6 (a well informed account of King  
Alfred's war against the viking army which arrived  
in 892). In MSS. AG; also in MSS. BC and D, but not  
E. Also in *AStN*.

**PREPARATIONS FOR RECONQUEST**  
Annals 897-914 (a West Saxon account of the  
opening stages in the 'reconquest' of the Danelaw),  
in MSS. AG; also in MSS. BC and D, but not E. Also in *AStN*.

**THE CAMPAIGN OF EDWARD THE ELDER**  
Annals 915-20 (a West Saxon account of the later stages of  
the 'reconquest', culminating with the submission to  
King Edward the Elder in 920), found only in MS. A.

**THE MAKING OF ENGLAND**  
Annals 934-75, including poems at 937 (*Battle of  
Brunanburh*), 942 (*Redemption of the Five Boroughs*),  
973 (*Coronation of King Edgar*) and 975 (*Death of King  
Edgar*), in MS. A, and also in MSS. BC and D.

**THE REIGN OF KING ÆTHELRED AND ITS AFTERMATH**  
Annals 983-1022, (an account of the reign of King  
Æthelred the Unready, with a short continuation into  
the opening years of Cnut's reign), in MSS C, D, E, F;  
difficult to localise, though possibly composed by  
someone based in London. The account found its way  
into an ancestor of MS. C, into an ancestor of MSS.  
EF, and also into MS. D.

**ENGLAND IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY**  
For the reigns of the Danish kings, Edward the Confessor,  
and William the Conqueror, and thereafter, see boxes  
marked 1-4. It is difficult, in this format, to do  
justice to the relationships and complexities.

1. A SET OF 'MIDLAND' ANNALS  
Instinctively opposed to Earl Godwine.  
Annals for 1023-56 and 1065-6, with signs of  
Abingdon origin in 1044, 1047-8, 1050.  
Material in annals 1043-4 (?-48) shared with  
E. Annals (or parts of annals) 1034-8, 1040-2,  
1049, 1052, 1054-6, 1065-6 taken over into  
MS. D, by a process of conflation, and edited.

3. A SET OF KENTISH ANNALS  
Clearly in support of Earl Godwine.  
Annals for 1023-61 (+), probably  
composed in Kent, at St Augustine's,  
Canterbury (esp. 1045-6, 1048-9,  
1061). Material in annals 1043-4  
(or -48?) shared with MS. C.

4. ANNALS OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST  
Annals in MS. E, for the later eleventh and early twelfth  
centuries (from 1060s to 1121), possibly composed at  
Westminster or London. Those for 1065-76 (and parts of  
1053, 1058-60) also found their way into MS. D.

Manuscripts of the *Chronicle* were used by Florence and John of Worcester (Worcester Latin Chronicle), by William of Malmesbury, and by Henry of Huntingdon, among others. For further details of the manuscripts, see the volumes in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition*, published by Boydell and Brewer, and entry on ASC in the *Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of ASE*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2014), pp. 37-9.