

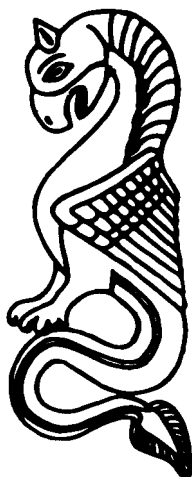
Leeds Studies in English

Article:

Peter Clemoes, 'Language in Context: Her in the 890 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 16 (1985), 27-36

Permanent URL:

https://ludos.leeds.ac.uk:443/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=123656&silos_library=GEN01



Leeds Studies in English
School of English
University of Leeds
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/lse>

LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT: *HER* IN THE 890 *ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE*

By PETER CLEMOES

Her at the beginning of an annal in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* may seem merely a piece of linguistic apparatus deserving no attention. Mostly we just translate it 'In this year' and then forget about it; after all, we are probably too busy consulting the *Chronicle* for other reasons. But we could be brushing aside something that matters. Old English prose is not uncommonly at its most serious when using ordinary, everyday words with special meaning derived from context - the sort of denotation no dictionary can ever do justice to: one has only to think of, for example, a preacher's reiterated use of "ponne" referring to the Day of Judgement.¹ The seeming insignificance of recurrent *Her* in the *Chronicle* might be deceptive. This repeated word might be a clue to a lost way of thinking. It might even be central to the kind of work the *Chronicle* was. We ought to spare it some consideration.

For one thing, to begin an annal with *Her* was distinctive, perhaps original, to the *Chronicle*: this word, or rather its Latin equivalent *Hic*, played no part in contemporary continental annals, for instance. We should do well to start by supposing that it had to do with another peculiarity of the *Chronicle*, namely its listing of every year from AD 1 to (in the 890 *Chronicle*²) 890,³ each represented by the abbreviation "a \bar{n} " and the appropriate number, whether or not there was any information about the year concerned. In our earliest surviving copy, the Parker *Chronicle*, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 173,⁴ 2v and 3r boasted no more than a single annal apiece, 3v none at all and 4r only two, as the late-ninth-century scribe wrote them. Steps were taken, in the Parker manuscript at any rate, to reduce this extravagance: the year numbers were arranged in two columns on such pages. But this was only a modification of a primarily single-column lay-out:⁵ we have to envisage a basic format in which the year numbers, each with its preceding abbreviation, were listed in a left-hand column on a page, every number having space alongside it for an entry. That the word *Her* was directly related to this structure is indicated by its demotion when the framework changed: it was not an essential component of the account of Alfred's later wars against the Danes, which was composed as a whole and, as Malcolm Parkes has pointed out, was given a "history", not an "annals", lay-out when added to the Parker manuscript at the beginning of the tenth century (16v-19v), each year number being placed near-centrally on a line of its own like a heading and the entry beneath it being copied in long lines across the whole width of the written space.⁶ The close relationship between year number and entry next to it was done

away with in this new arrangement and with its reliance on *Her*. The use of this particular word in the 890 *Chronicle* indicates that the number was then being thought of in its immediately adjacent position on the parchment page.⁷ *Her* was intended to form a bridge between such a number in the present and a statement "such-and-such happened" with a referent in time past: it both pointed referentially to the preceding number in the physical present and, as an adverb, modified an ensuing linguistic structure containing a verb in the preterite tense. With its meaning beamed to the present and its grammar to the past, it welded the two together in a regular, formulaic way.

The Latin *Royal Frankish Annals* tried to make the year number part of the historical narrative. For example:

804

The emperor spent the winter at Aachen. But in the summer he led an army into Saxony. [Then follows more information about this expedition and about a visit by the pope to the emperor in November. The annal then concludes] He [the pope] stayed with him [the emperor] for eight days and then, as was said, made his way back to Rome. And the date changed to

805

Not long afterward the capcan, a prince of the Huns, approached the emperor . . .⁸

This self-conscious technique hardly concealed the problem it was meant to efface. Evidently for the early medieval mind there was a distinction between applied numeration and the events to which it related. The virtue of the 890 *Chronicle* in its day was that it met the point elegantly: its *Her* formula (e.g., "*Her cupred feaht wiþ walas*") joined present token to past event in a single, compact span.

There is an analogy between *Her* statements in the 890 *Chronicle* and *Hic* ones in a majority of the inscriptions on the Bayeux Tapestry. The combination of adverb and preterite verb is common to both.⁹ Usually attention is paid to the Tapestry inscriptions for the light they throw on the scenes they accompany;¹⁰ we shall need to look at the pictures to shed light on the inscriptions.

The portrayal of Harold's journey across the Channel below the inscription "*Hic Harold mare navigavit*" shows one of Harold's companions coming down the steps from the first-floor dining hall at Bosham, other men wading out to the ship and yet others, aboard, getting the ship under way. As Nicholas Brooks has remarked, "the artist did not regard a single scene as picturing a single moment in time, like a modern photograph."¹¹ Each scene represents a cluster of moments. It consists of a succession of actions. This means, for example, that the same actor may appear more than once in it. This is true of, for instance, the bearer of the dragon standard in the scene of Harold's death ("*Hic Harold rex interfectus*

est"): the standard bearer is portrayed, once, standing upright, and, a second time, falling to the ground. Likewise, in the scene of Harold learning about the approach of William's army the scout is shown twice, once watching the enemy and once, gesturing dramatically (in one of Lewis Carroll's Anglo-Saxon attitudes!), reporting back.¹² The tapestry medium itself conditioned the articulation and placing of individual actions within a cluster and the disposition of clusters in relation to one another. Both time and space became reorganized. While a left-to-right direction generally corresponds to the sequence of time this is not invariable. For instance, the portrayal of the falling dragon-standard bearer is to the left of the depiction of him standing upright before he fell. Or, again, the arrival of Duke William's messengers to Count Guido is to the left of their despatch. All the Tapestry artist did to validate this connection was to depict the messengers galloping between the two scenes from right to left. And similarly Tapestry space did not have to be realistic. For instance, the Norman cavalry had charged up the hill at Battle to deliver a frontal attack on the English infantry drawn up on the ridge at the top, but in the horizontally extended area of the Tapestry the charge became an attack from left and right on an English 'shield wall' placed centrally. Evidently a Tapestry scene was accepted as its own simplified reconstruction of what had actually happened. There was a gap between present picture and past event as there was between year number and event in the 890 *Chronicle* and the same bridging device was apt in both cases.

The independent identity and Englishness of the *Her/Hic* formula are demonstrated by the vernacular translations added to Latin titles describing the pictures in two illustrated manuscripts of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 23 and London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C. viii. Both manuscripts, produced in England, the one in the second half of the tenth century and the other at the very end of that century, had the translations inserted in them later in the Anglo-Saxon period.¹³ Noteworthy the *Her* plus preterite verb construction played a considerable part in these translations though it had no equivalent in the Latin original.¹⁴ The Latin titles, like the pictures they accompany, derived from a much older continental background. According to a study by Helen Woodruff,¹⁵ there were two traditions of entitling Prudentius pictures in Latin: one of using brief titles originated probably in sixth-century southern Gaul and one of using longer titles, as in the two English manuscripts, can be traced back as far as ninth-century northern France. Typically the Latin titles, whether in the shorter form or the longer one, relate directly to the pictures themselves, like a modern caption to a photograph. No. 44 in the series will serve as an example. The short version, as in Leiden, Bibliotheek der Riksuniversiteit, Voss. Lat. O. 15, reads "Mirantes obstupescunt" ('Marvelling, they are amazed'), the source being the words "obstupefacti" and "mirantur" in Prudentius' poem. The picture serves to visualize words in the text. The longer version, as in both CCC 23 and BL Cotton Cleopatra C. viii, describes the picture in its own right by reading "Viri deiectis armis sequuntur luxuriam". By contrast, the

two Old English renderings of this longer title, though independent of one another, both perform the double function of referring to picture and previous event in conjunction. The Corpus one reads "Her þæt folc lede his wæpna and filide ðære galnysse", and the Cleopatra one¹⁶ "Her weras aworpenum wæpnum fyligdon þære galnesse".¹⁷

Written language itself was understood to be a combination of physical presence and meaning, distinguishable from one another and yet complementary. Ælfric, for one, clearly grasped this when adopting from St Augustine an analogy between understanding a miracle and understanding written language (together with an attendant comparison between seeing and praising a picture on the one hand and seeing, but not reading, letters on the other):

Dis wundor is swiðe micel, and deop on getacnungum.
Oft gehwa gesihð fægre stafas awritene, þonne herað
he ðone writere and þa stafas, and nat hwæt hi mænað.
Se ðe cann ðæra stafa gescead, he herað heora fæger-
nyse, and ræd þa stafas, and understent hwæt hi
gemænað. On oðre wisan we sceawiað metinge, and on
oðre wisan stafas. Ne gæð na mare to metinge buton
þæt þu hit geseo and herige: nis na genoh þæt þu
stafas sceawige, buton ðu hi eac ræde, and þæt andgit
understande. Swa is eac on ðam wundre þe God worhte
mid þam fif hlafum: ne bið na genoh þæt we þæs tacnes
wundrian, oþþe þurh þæt God herian, buton we eac þæt
gastlice andgit understandon.¹⁸

The latent paradox in the coincident corporeality and incorporeality of written language, which had been sharply presented by the Latin enigmatist Symphosius as a bookworm saying "Litera me pavit, nec quid sit litera novi",¹⁹ was blended in the 'Book-Moth' Riddle in the Exeter Book²⁰ with a more general sense that language as such is simultaneously real and insubstantial.²¹ A pervading attitude, common to this poet and his contemporaries, that language was primarily spoken and only secondarily, and specially, written, doubtless helped to make written letters seem part of the same order as written numbers, pictures and other visual signs. The runic characters which the poet Cynewulf saw fit to embed in his written texts²² differed only in degree from the letters that surrounded them. Acrostic poems, such as Aldhelm's preface to his *Carmen de virginitate*²³ and Dunstan's prayer beginning "O pater omnipotens, digneris ferre donanti",²⁴ and verse figures, such as those forming the first of the two books *De laudibus sanctae crucis* by Hrabanus Maurus,²⁵ attempted to exploit letters to span the divide between the two entities which Ælfric distinguished as observable bodily nature and unseeable spiritual power.²⁶ Artists elaborated sacred letters in gospel books for the same reason; and historiated initials, perhaps an English invention,²⁷ testify to the affinity between letters and pictures. Letters pertaining to narrative, whether vernacular, normally the domain of speech, or Latin, were the natural allies of year numbers or pictures. They too had something artificial about them. But that is not to say that the written *Her/Hic* formula was divorced from spoken language.

On the contrary. Applied to successive year numbers or pictures it had a 'voice' like that of a guide on a conducted tour. It kept saying "Look at this number or picture; it signifies that such-and-such happened". The long-vowelled opening monosyllable implies attention-directing stress and intonation. The formula was strong all round. It was striking visually,²⁸ idiomatically and referentially. Its systematic repetition braced the 890 *Chronicle* together.

Its job in the *Chronicle* was rather different from the one it did in the Tapestry. "Hic Harold rex interfectus est" in the latter accompanies a portrayal of a cluster of actions, but "Her edwine wæs ofslægen . . ." in the former stands unsupported: understanding of the relationship between year number and specific event depends solely on the wording. The number was glossed by the adjacent wording. "a̅n dclxxxuiii. Her Ine feng to wesseaxna rice . . ." means "'Year 688' = 'Ine succeeded to the kingdom of the West Saxons . . .'". Hence *Chronicle* prose is essentially an austere form, consisting of brief, simple sentences, eschewing descriptive adjectives and adverbs and repeating set phrases.²⁹ But the year numbers in themselves were not merely superficial. They were not just a tidy way of arranging facts. If they had been, it would be difficult to imagine the scribe of the Parker *Chronicle* and others before him mindlessly copying out large quantities of useless numbers, helpless victims of an Easter Tables set-up. A more positive motive is likely to have been built in. For all the years up to 449, when Hengest and Horsa arrived in England, the compiler of the relevant annals gleaned but a meagre twenty-four items of world history from the written sources available to him - or from a now lost epitome drawing on those sources - and did not even extract all the dateable items he might have done.³⁰ The particular completeness of supplying an annal for every year number could never have been his aim. It would have been beyond his wildest dreams. On the other hand a great deal of intellectual effort went into converting even this sparse material to an AD system of dating from the one based on regnal years in Idisore's *Chronicon*, the primary source.³¹ This single form of reckoning running right through was an important feature of the *Chronicle*; and evidently it was not enough to cite the reckoning just whenever there was an entry. The series of year numbers starting from Christ's birth must have been significant in its own right and its significance must have lain in its very continuity. Even though only occasionally glossed in the early period, by following one another the numbers represented the line of events leading to the happenings of the present from an illustrious origin, just as a 'so-and-so was the son of so-and-so' series authenticated a person's descent from a distinguished ancestor. This was not the history of cause and effect; it was a declaration of continuity. The compilers of the 890 *Chronicle* and the genealogist thought alike. The *Chronicle* was at one in spirit with the West Saxon regnal list and genealogy deriving Alfred from Woden which precede it in the Parker manuscript. The numbered annals began "a̅n .i. Octauianus ricsode .lxui. wintra 7 on þam .lii. geare his rices crist wæs acenned". Every *Her* statement, referring to an actual event, validated a physical year number. Byrhtferth of Ramsey's use of language to validate numbers

visually in the diagrams of his early-eleventh-century *Enchiridion* was not dissimilar in kind;³² the 890 *Chronicle* was a sort of diagram.³³ Its column of roman numbers, page after page, formed a chain of eventful years anchored by Christ's birth in the reign of Octavian and still being forged in the tough metal of the reign of Alfred.³⁴ The makers of this chain did not see it altered by later additions³⁵ as we do. Their eyes were not on posterity but on the here and now. Their artifact strengthened the strenuous actions of their own times with a line of descent; it gave social and political assurance in the dangerous present; it was a token of security. Written record was meeting an old need in a new way. A manuscript of the *Chronicle* circulated c. 890 bore the stamp of originality. It was a technological innovation.³⁶

NOTES

- 1 A passage in the second Vercelli homily provides an example; see *Die Vercelli-Homilien, I.-VIII. Homilie*, ed. Max Förster, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 12 (Hamburg, 1932; repr. Darmstadt, 1964) no. II, lines 19, 21, 22, 23 and 26.
- 2 I adopt this form of reference from Janet Bately's study, "The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 60 BC to AD 890: Vocabulary as Evidence", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 64 (1978) pp.93-129.
- 3 On the rarity in annals at this time, perhaps originality, of applying an AD dating to earlier periods, see Janet M. Bately, "World History in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: its Sources and its Separateness from the Old English Orosius", *ASE* 8 (1979) pp.177-94, at pp.185-6. For the possibility that the complete listing of year numbers may antedate the 890 *Chronicle*, see Bately, "Vocabulary as Evidence", pp.114-15, where it is concluded that the bulk of the annals up to the early ninth century may have been the work of a single compiler active at any time during the period starting with the year of his last annal and ending with 890.
- 4 See *The Parker Chronicle and Laws: a Facsimile*, ed. Robin Flower and Hugh Smith, EETS OS 208 (London, 1941).
- 5 lv in the Parker manuscript was begun with long lines and then continued with the two-column lay-out; the long-line lay-out was resumed towards the foot of 4v. It looks as though the scribe's exemplar did not have the two-column arrangement, because he seems not to have anticipated returning to the long lines until he had nearly reached the bottom of 4v.
- 6 M.B. Parkes, "The Palaeography of the Parker Manuscript of the *Chronicle*, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries", *ASE* 5 (1976) pp.149-71, at p.155. The scribe of this run of entries introduced the new lay-out on 17r. On 16v he modified the old arrangement to the extent that he did not set out his two year numbers in a distinct column on the left-hand side: he began the lines of text further to the left, where the year numbers had been started on previous pages, and merely protruded the year numbers slightly to the left of the text. The blurring "Her on þysum geare" opens the first complete annal he entered, but otherwise *Her* does not occur in the run of annals concerned.
- 7 For this reason I take the "añ" before a number to be an abbreviation of "annus" rather than "anno".
- 8 *Carolingian Chronicles*, trans. Bernard Walter Scholz (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1970) pp.83-4.
- 9 In the Tapestry *Hic* is used in conjunction with a verb (or verbs) in a past tense twenty-seven times and with a verb (or verbs) in the present tense sixteen times. Eight more inscriptions employ a finite verb; four of these begin with *Ubi* (twice with a verb in the present tense and twice with one in the preterite) and the other four begin *Isti* or *Iste* (three times with a verb in the present tense and once with one in the preterite). See Francis Wormald, "The Inscriptions", in Sir Frank Stenton et al., *The Bayeux Tapestry* (2nd ed., London, 1965) pp.189-92. Wormald wavers in the face of verbs which could be either present or preterite: in two out of seven occurrences he translates *venit* as a present and on its only occurrence translates *apprehendit* likewise. But *venit* is twice linked with verbs which show by their form that they are preterites ("... reversus est . . . et venit . . ." and "... transivit et venit . . .") and never

with verbs necessarily present, and the equivalent plural, *venerunt*, is always (four times) explicitly preterite; *apprehendit* too is linked with manifest preterites ("... apprehendit ... et duxit ... et ... tenuit"). Accordingly I have counted all three of these presents of Wormald's among the preterites.

- 10 This is true of, e.g., the excellent study by N.P. Brooks and the late H.E. Walker, "The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry", in *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies I, 1978*, ed. R. Allen Brown (Ipswich and Totowa, N.J., 1979) pp.1-34 and 191-9.
- 11 *Ibid.* p.21.
- 12 One is reminded of Carroll's joke about the White King having two messengers, one to come and one to go.
- 13 See N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957) nos. 31 and 145. Both translations, together with the Latin translated, have been printed by Julius Zupitza, "Englisches aus Prudentius-handschriften", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum* 20 (1876) pp.36-45.
- 14 Of the seventy-nine Latin inscriptions employing a main finite verb, none includes *Hic*. Four begin with *Ubi*, three times in conjunction with a present verb and once with a past. Only one other verb is preterite. 120 extant Old English inscriptions are equivalent to the seventy-nine Latin ones reckoned above. Over two-thirds of them (eighty-seven) employ *Her*; in almost all of these (eighty-four) there is also at least one main finite verb which is readable. In thirty-four of the eighty-four with readable verbs the tense of the verb(s) is preterite and in forty-nine present. In the other one a present verb and a preterite are coupled. In the remaining thirty-three of the 120 at least one finite main verb is used without initial *Her*; in the great majority of them (twenty-six) the tense of the verb(s) is preterite and in only six is present. In the other one a preterite verb and a present are coupled.
- 15 *The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1930; repr. from *Art Studies* 7, 1929) esp. pp.46-9.
- 16 I have taken my reading direct from the manuscript (19r).
- 17 An eleventh-century inscription accompanying a scene carved on a stone in St Nicholas's Church, Ipswich (Elisabeth Okasha, *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, 1971) no. 58i), exemplifies the use of *Her* in another medium. It reads "Her Sċe [M]ih[a]e[l] feht wið ðane draca" (or "... dracan"). "Feht" may have been intended as present or preterite. The Franks Casket, made of whalebone in the north of England probably c. 700, takes the *Her/Hic* convention much further back in time and to another region. The main inscription accompanying a scene carved on the back of the box, partly in English and partly in Latin, and partly in runes and partly in roman characters, employs it, and so may the vernacular, runic inscription accompanying a scene carved on the right-hand side, but all the four verbs concerned are certainly or probably present in tense; see R.I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes* (London, 1973) pp.178-82.
- 18 *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The First Part, containing the Sermones Catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. Benjamin Thorpe (2 vols., London, 1844-6) I, p.186; for the Latin source, see *Sancti Aurelii Augustini In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*, CCSL 36 (Turnhout, 1954) tractate XXIV.2. ('This miracle is very great, and deep in significations. Often someone sees beautiful written letters, then he praises the writer

- and the letters, and does not know what they mean. He who knows the art of the letters, praises their beauty, and reads the letters, and understands what they mean. In one way we look at a picture, and in another way letters. There is no more to a picture than that you should see and praise it: it is not enough that you should look at letters unless you also read them, and understand the meaning. So also it is in the miracle which God worked with the five loaves: it is not enough that we should marvel at the sign, or praise God on account of it, unless we also understand the spiritual meaning.')
- 19 'Writing has fed me and I do not even know what writing is.' For the Latin, see *The Enigmas of Symphosius*, ed. Raymond Theodore Ohl (Philadelphia, 1928) p.48.
- 20 *The Old English Riddles of the "Exeter Book"*, ed. Craig Williamson (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1977) no. 45.
- 21 See Fred C. Robinson, "Artful Ambiguities in the Old English 'Book-Moth' Riddle", in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Essays in Appreciation for John C. McGalliard*, ed. Lewis E. Nicholson and Dolores Warwick Frese (Notre Dame and London, 1975) pp.355-62, at p.362.
- 22 Discussed Page, *English Runes*, pp.205-12.
- 23 *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Rudolphus Ehwald, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* 15 (Berlin, 1919) pp.350-2.
- 24 Ed. and trans. by Michael Lapidge as Appendix IV(b) to his "The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature", *ASE* 4 (1975) pp.67-111, at pp.108-11.
- 25 PL 107.149-264. For manuscripts of this work in England, see Helmut Gneuss, "Manuscripts Written or Owned in England up to 1100", *ASE* 9 (1981) pp.1-60, nos. 12 and 178.
- 26 This distinction runs through his discussion of water in baptism and bread and wine in the eucharist (*Homilies*, ed. Thorpe II pp.268-72). I am grateful to Dr M.R. Godden for a helpful conversation on this topic and on the one referred to above, p.30 and n.18.
- 27 The earliest surviving examples are in the Vespasian Psalter, produced possibly as early as the 720s (see *The Vespasian Psalter*, ed. David H. Wright, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* 14 (Copenhagen, 1967) p.64 and (for date and localization) pp.79-80), and the Leningrad Bede, of c. 746.
- 28 In the 890 *Chronicle*, on the evidence of the Parker manuscript, each initial *H* was made prominent by size, shape and spacing. In the Parker manuscript, from 7v (by which page the scribe had settled down to a standard technique) to 16r inclusive, left- and right-hand vertical guidelines were scored to bound regularly sized and shaped *H*s in their own column, carefully spaced from the year numbers to the left and from another vertical guideline to the right bounding the *er* of *Her* and the start of any run-ons.
- 29 See Cecily Clark, "The Narrative Mode of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* before the Conquest", in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971) pp.215-35, esp. p.216.

- ³⁰ See Bately, "World History", p.177 and pp.178-89. The *Chronicle* refers to the accession of only six out of eleven emperors who ruled between 60 BC and AD 110 but the conversion to AD dating involved in this partial information depended on knowledge of other regnal lengths as well. Probably the compiler was responsible for this arbitrary selection, for, even if he was not the AD converter himself and had derived the system from a pre-existing epitome, it is unlikely that he would have found an unnecessarily patchy coverage of this sort in those particular formal surroundings.
- ³¹ Bately, "World History", pp.186-7. The compiler could hardly have been unaware of this, even if he himself was not the converter.
- ³² See, e.g., the diagram of the four Ember fasts, the two solstices, the two equinoxes and the twelve months supported by three virtues, *Byrhtferth's Manual*, ed. S.J. Crawford, EETS OS 177 (London, 1929) plate facing p.90.
- ³³ In the 'standard' pages of the Parker manuscript (7v-16r; see above, n.28) the positioning and size of the abbreviation "añ" and of the year number were as carefully regulated by guidelines as were the placing and size of the letter *H*: two vertical scored lines defined the writing space for "añ" and another, judiciously distanced from the right-hand edge of the "añ" column, set the starting-point for a separate column of year numbers.
- ³⁴ Canon tables in gospel books, traditionally framed in decorated arcading, as in the Lindisfarne Gospels, were an analogous formal disposition of a complete set of significantly related numbers, though, of course, the likeness is only general.
- ³⁵ The Cynewulf and Cyneheard material in the annal for (*recte*) 757, of a circumstantial, extra-annalistic type but already in the Parker manuscript, may have been a very early addition to the scheme, for it was interpolated into an annal which once existed without it: "Ond þy ilcan gear" introducing the statement that Æthelbald, king of Mercia, was killed refers back to the year in which Cynewulf became king of Wessex and not to the year of his death which has been recounted subsequently. On the differences of the vocabulary of the Cynewulf and Cyneheard material from that of its surrounding annals and on some affiliations with that of the annals centred on the 870s, see Bately, "Vocabulary as Evidence", pp.106-7 and pp.111-13.
- ³⁶ In an article published since the above was written ("*Étude Typologique de la Chronique Anglo-Saxonne*", in *La Chronique et l'Histoire au Moyen Age*, ed. Daniel Poirion (Paris, 1984) pp.137-48) André Crépin has pointed out, as I do, that the *Her* plus preterite verb formula in the *Chronicle* constitutes "un nœud remarquable" between the date on the manuscript page and the past event stated, and he too has drawn attention to the 'exact parallel' of the *Hic* plus preterite verb inscriptions of the Bayeux Tapestry. He relates the *Her* formula to a general aim of objectivity in the *Chronicle*'s record.