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The Genealogy of the Early West Saxon Kings

OUR authorities for the genealogy of the early West Saxon kings, apart from some minor points on which we have incidental evidence from other documents, are the Chronicle and Florence of Worcester. These authorities have been carefully examined by Mr. Plummer, who shows that the evidence of the Chronicle is inconsistent, and that of Florence not independent.¹ The evidence of the Chronicle, all of which, so far as it is pertinent to our subject, dates either from the time of King Alfred or earlier, may be classed under four heads: first, the preface, consisting of a regnal table and a genealogy of King Ethelwulf continued to King Alfred; secondly, genealogical fragments contained in annals relating to a period prior to the conversion of Wessex; thirdly, genealogical fragments in annals beginning with the year 648 and ending with the year 728; and, fourthly, a genealogy of King Ethelwulf in the annal of 855.

Mr. Plummer regards the preface and the annal of 855 as being our primary authorities, and treats the annals prior to 728 as secondary and, indeed, as fictitious, so far as they cannot be made to agree with the preface and the annal of 855.² This method of dealing with our authorities, however, seems to be by no means free from objection. For example, the annal of 674 contains an elaborate genealogy of King Æscwine, a person of quite ephemeral interest. If the preface and the annal of 855, which were unquestionably written in the ninth century, are primary and the annal of 674 is secondary, we cannot place the composition of the annal of 674 before the ninth century; yet it is difficult to imagine why a genealogy should have been invented

¹ *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ii (1899), pp. 1, 2.

² *Ibid.* and p. 31 (note on annal of 678).

for King Æscwine more than two hundred years after his death. Again, the annal of 728 contains a genealogy of the Atheling Oswald, of whom the ninth century knew no more than that he fought against King Æthelheard in 728 and died in 730.¹ If the ninth-century compiler thought it worth his while to invent a genealogy for the atheling Oswald, why should he have neglected to invent genealogies for King Æthelheard himself and for Æthelheard's successors, Cuthred, Sigebryht, Cynewulf, and Beorhtric? These kings must have been far more interesting to a ninth-century writer than the atheling Oswald can have been. It is hardly necessary for me to pursue this argument. It will be sufficient to cite Professor Chadwick:

Many of the seventh-century [West Saxon] annals have all the appearance of being genuine records. Moreover, we may note that down to Ine we find the genealogy of almost every king, whereas those of all the succeeding kings are omitted—a fact which seems to point to a change of authorship.²

Mr. Plummer himself admits the probability that the ninth-century chronicler had written sources of the seventh and eighth centuries for his West Saxon annals.³

If then the annals of 648 to 728 are contemporary, while the other three classes of evidence furnished by the Chronicle date from the ninth century, is it possible that the early West Saxon writers had information respecting the genealogy of their kings which had been forgotten when the ninth-century Chronicle was compiled? Our answer will be that this is not only possible, but certain, if once we recognize that the annals of 648 to 728 were contemporary. For example, the ninth-century Chronicle assigns no less than five different fathers to the first Christian king, Cynegils.⁴ According to the preface, Cynegils was Ceolwulf's brother's son, and as a brother of Ceolwulf named Ceol had just been mentioned, this has been interpreted as meaning that Cynegils was the son of Ceol.⁵ According to the annal of 611, however, Cynegils was the son of Ceola, and although Ceola may be another form of Ceol, it is more accordant to analogy to regard Ceola as a hypocoristic form of a longer name, of which Ceol was only the first syllable. The annal of 676 makes Cynegils

¹ The date 728 is a mistake for 726 (p. 164, note 1 below). It is uncertain, therefore, whether Oswald lived two or four years after the accession of King Æthelheard.

² *Origin of the English Nation*, p. 27.

³ Plummer, ii, introd., par. 107, especially p. cxii, n. 4.

⁴ Perhaps six different fathers, if we distinguish Cuthwulf of the preface from Cutha of the annal of 855.

⁵ On this interpretation, however, it is not clear why the chronicler, if he meant 'son of Ceol', did not write 'Ceoling' instead of 'Ceolwulfes brothur sunu'. If, however, Ceolwulf was a brother of Cuthwine, the statement could be harmonized with the annal of 688.

the son of Ceolwulf, while the annal of 688 gives Cuthwine as the name of the father of Cynegils and Ceolwald. Finally, according to the annal of 855, Ceolwald, the brother of Cynegils, was not the son, but the grandson, of Cuthwine. It is obvious, therefore, that the ninth-century chronicler was unable to ascertain the paternity of Cynegils. On the other hand, we have no reason to suppose that Cynegils's paternity was considered doubtful by his contemporaries. Consequently, we shall be inclined to think that the ninth-century chronicler's work on these genealogies is equally worthless with that of Florence of Worcester. Mr. Plummer observes that Florence's pedigree was formed merely by piecing together the different pedigrees in the Chronicle, an attempt being made to reconcile their inconsistencies by duplicating and triplicating names.¹ The chronicler's own work betrays evidences of a similar method. He has duplicated Cuthwine and its hypocoristic form Cutha. Instead of 'Ceolwald Cuthwining, Cuthwine Ceawlining', which the annals of 685 and 688 require, the annal of 855 has 'Ceolwald Cuthaing, Cutha Cuthwining, Cuthwine Ceawlining', and the preface goes a step further by identifying Cutha with the hero of the annal of 571, Cuthwulf. It should have been obvious to the annalist of 855 that, as both the Cutha of the annal of 685 and the Cuthwine of the annal of 688 are described as sons of Ceawlin, Cutha must either be the same person as Cuthwine or else Cuthwine's brother. Instead of adopting either of these conclusions, he has absurdly made Cutha a son of Cuthwine. The fact that Ceadwalla was in 685 regarded as *heres regni* instead of Ine proves that Cutha is to be identified with Cuthwine; otherwise Ine would have been more nearly related to Kings Cenwalh and Cynegils than Ceadwalla was.

Our next step will be to set aside the ninth-century chronicler's work, and to rely exclusively on the annals of 648 to 728. The genealogical portions of these annals are brief enough :

648. Here Cenwalh gave Cuthred, his kinsman, three thousands of land by Ashdown: which Cuthred was Cwichelming, Cwichelm Cynegilsing.

661. Cuthred Cwichelming and Cœnbryht cyning died in one year.

674. Here began to reign over the West Saxons Æscwine, who was Cenfusing, Cenfus Cenferthing, Cenferth Cuthgilsing, Cuthgils Ceolwulfing, Ceolwulf Cynricing, Cynric Cerdicing.

676. Here Æscwine died . . . and Centwine began to reign; and Centwine was Cynegilsing, Cynegils Ceolwulfing.

685. Here Ceadwalla began to fight for the throne: which Ceadwalla was Cœnbryhting, Cœnbryht Cading, Cadda Cuthaing, Cutha Ceawlining, Ceawlin Cynricing, Cynric Cerdicing.

688. Here Ine became king of the West Saxons and reigned thirty-

¹ *Op. cit.* ii. 2.

seven winters. . . . Now Ine was Cenreding, Cenred Ceolwolding; Ceolwald was Cynegils's brother, and they were Cuthwine Ceaulining's sons, Ceaulin Cynricing, Cynric Cerdicing.

718. Here Ingild, Ine's brother, died; and their sisters were Cuenburg and Cuthburh.

728.¹ Here Ine travelled to Rome and Æthelheard became king of the West Saxons and reigned fourteen years; and in that year fought Æthelheard and Oswald the Atheling: which Oswald was Æthelbalding, Æthelbald Cynebalding, Cynebald Cuthwining, Cuthwine Ceaulining.

These genealogical fragments are not entirely free from textual errors.² In the annal of 661 the context requires, instead of the word 'cyning', a patronymic to correspond with Cuichelming. The annal of 688 shows that the missing patronymic is Cading, and accordingly 'cyning' in the annal of 661 requires to be corrected to 'Cading'. A more serious error may underlie the text of the annal of 676. From the annal of 688 it is clear that King Cynegils was the son, not of Ceolwulf, but of Cuthwine. If we could be sure that Centwine was the son of King Cynegils, we might suppose that our author, in composing the annal of 676, had inadvertently written the name of the predecessor, instead of the name of the father, of Cynegils; or again, we might attribute the words 'Cynegils Ceolwulfing' to an annotator who confused Cynegils with the Cuthgils of the annal of 674. In that case, the original text would have been merely 'Centwine Cynegilsing', and, as a comparison with the annal of 648 will show, this would have been quite sufficient, if the Cynegils in question had been King Cynegils. There is good reason to believe, however, that Centwine was not the son of King Cynegils. In the first place, Bede's treatment of the reign of Centwine is rather strange: 'cumque mortuus esset Coinualch . . . acceperunt subreguli regnum gentis et divisum inter se tenuerunt annis circiter decem . . . devictis atque amotis subregulis, Caedualla suscepit imperium.'³ Sir Charles Oman does his best to follow Bede, but finds it difficult:

We have during this period a mention of two kings—Centwine, brother of Cœnwulch, and Æscwin, his distant cousin, a representative of the house

¹ As Ine reigned thirty-seven winters from 688 and Æthelheard's reign of fourteen years ended in 740, it seems clear that the annal of 728 really belongs to 726.

² It was the practice of the West Saxon royal family to arrange their generations in alliterative pairs. Cerdic's sons' names must begin with C, but not necessarily his grandsons' names. Whatever initial his grandsons might have, their sons' names must correspond. Consequently, it is clear that a name alliterating with Cynebald has fallen out of the annal of 728. I am inclined to think that the lost name is Ceolwald, the last three letters of which are the same as the last three letters of Cynebald and Æthelbald. In that case Cynebald would be a brother of Cenred, Ine's father, and we should understand better why Oswald claimed to succeed Ine.

³ *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 12. The acknowledgement which Bede makes in his preface to Bishop Daniel for information respecting Wessex seems to be a mere compliment,

of Ceolwulf—who may have been either rivals, or else two royal ealdormen, who in a time of general confusion successively took upon themselves the kingly title . . . we hear of Centwine fighting with Britons, and driving them to the sea : presumably this implies that the Damnonians had taken advantage of the weakness of Wessex in order to invade it, but were driven back to the shores of the Bristol Channel. Certainly no advance of the Saxon border is implied, as some historians seem to have inferred. This was a time of chaos, not of growth.¹

Sir Charles, as we see, is not unprepared to reject Bede's explicit statement that the subreguli were reigning concurrently, but reads into Bede's words an idea which may be implied, but is certainly not expressed, that the period of the subreguli was a period of weakness, or even of chaos. Sir Charles has, perhaps, overlooked the fact that it was only in 685, Centwine's ninth and last year, that Ceadwalla began to fight for the throne ('ongon æfter rice winnan').

Fortunately, we have in St. Aldhelm's poem *De Basilica aedificata a Bugge* a first-hand authority on King Centwine, since St. Aldhelm himself had been a subject of that king. St. Aldhelm tells us that Centwine reigned well ('rite regebat') and successfully ('feliciter') for several years, that he waged three wars triumphantly, and that Ceadwalla succeeded him as heir to the kingdom ('successit . . . regni possessor et heres').² If then it was not the weakness of the subreguli that caused Bede to speak so slightly of them, we must look for a different reason. There is a somewhat similar tone in a passage of Bede relating to Kent : 'ac post eum idem Edric anno uno ac dimidio regnavit ; quo defuncto, regnum illud aliquod temporis spatium reges dubii vel externi disperdiderunt donec legitimus rex Uictred . . . gentem suam ab extranea invasione liberaret.'³ Bede's *legitimus rex* and St. Aldhelm's *et heres* seem to point to the true explanation of Bede's slighting reference to the subreguli. The rule of succession to the old English kingdoms is no longer understood,⁴ but it is clear that in Bede's opinion there was a rule,

as the references to Wessex in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* are not only vague and unsatisfying, but usually appear to be derived from other than West Saxon sources. In the present case, Bede is, I suspect, following a life of Ceadwalla ; and, as Ceadwalla died in Rome, it is likely that his life was written for visitors to that city.

¹ *History of England*, i. 288.

² *Aldhelm's Opera*, ed. Giles (1844), p. 115. St. Aldhelm also implies that Centwine resigned the crown and adopted the monastic life from choice. If so, Ceadwalla may have begun to fight for the crown after Centwine's resignation and Bede's 'devictis atque amotis subregulis' may be a hyperbolic way of saying that Ceadwalla had to use force to persuade the witenagemot to elect him king. In any case there can be no doubt, in view of St. Aldhelm's evidence, that Bede's description of the subreguli is inaccurate.

³ *Hist. Eccl.* iv. 24.

⁴ For example, when Cenwalh died, his nearest kinsman seems to have been Ceadwalla, who was too young to succeed him. After Ceadwalla and his younger brother Mul, the next heir seems to have been Cenred. It seems clear that Cenred was passed

and that this rule had been neglected in Kent between Edric and Wihtrred and in Wessex between Cenwalh and Ceadwalla. If so, it is impossible to believe that Centwine was the son of King Cynegils, and therefore the brother of King Cenwalh: otherwise his claim to the throne would have been far better than Ceadwalla's. Moreover, St. Aldhelm's poem supplies us with negative evidence which points in the same direction. The poem was intended as a compliment to Bugge, the daughter of King Centwine. It is as Bugge's father that Centwine finds a place in the poem. After Centwine, the poet mentions his successors Ceadwalla and Ine, who were only distant kinsmen of Bugge. Is it conceivable that the name of King Cynegils, the first Christian king of Wessex, should have been omitted from this poem, the subject of which was the building of Bugge's new church, if he had really been Bugge's grandfather?

It seems clear, therefore, that the Cynegils of the annal of 676 was not the king of the West Saxons of that name. If his father Ceolwulf is to be identified with Ceolwulf Cynric of the annal of 674, we must assume that some names have been accidentally lost in the annal of 676, the immediate cause of this omission being the similarity of the names Cuthgils and Cynegils. Accordingly, Centwine's pedigree would have to be conjecturally reconstructed as follows: Centwine Cynegilsing, Cynegils Cenferthing, Cenferth Cuthgilsing, Cuthgils Ceolwulfing. Such a reconstruction, however, would be too bold to command general confidence, and, fortunately, it is not necessary. Besides the Ceolwulf of the annal of 674, we have King Ceolwulf, the predecessor of King Cynegils. If King Ceolwulf left a son, who was too young to succeed him in 611, that son may well have been the Cynegils whose son Centwine came to the throne in 676.¹ If we may trust the preface, King Ceolwulf was the brother of Cuthwine Ceawling,² and we obtain the pedigree printed on p. 167.

In the tables of the genealogy of the West Saxon kings as they are commonly printed, not only does the rule of succession appear to be chaotic, but kings and athelings whom we know to have been contemporaries are separated by two or more generations.³ The pedigree now proposed is entirely free from

over in favour of Æscwine, who, if our pedigree is right, also passed over Centwine. In 676 Cenred was again passed over, this time for Centwine. In 685 Ceadwalla was, perhaps, rightly chosen in preference to Cenred, but in 688 we have a still greater surprise, for Cenred is then for a third time passed over and this time in favour of his own son, Ine.

¹ If the text of the annal of 676 is sound, it is almost necessary to assume that Ceolwulf is the king of that name, since all the other genealogical fragments are carried back to the name of a king.

² Cynegils Cuthwining was, according to the preface, King Ceolwulf's brother's son.

³ Thus Æscwine, who reigned from 674 to 676, is placed in the sixth generation from Cynric, while Centwine, who reigned from 676 to 685, is placed in the fourth generation

these objections, and accordingly, although some details may be doubtful, it is clear that we have been guided by a true instinct in distinguishing the annals of 648 to 728 from the rest of the materials furnished by the Chronicle. The genealogical entries of 648 to 728 are, accordingly, to be regarded as the work of a well-informed contemporary author, and consequently not inferior to any other sources that we possess for the West Saxon history of the seventh and eighth centuries.

These genealogical entries, however, cannot be isolated from the annals to which they belong, that is to say, the annals from the conversion of Wessex (635) to the reign of Æthelheard (726-40), or even to the reign of Cuthred (740-54). As the genealogies of Æthelheard and Cuthred are missing, we ought, perhaps, to regard the entries for their reigns as additions by another hand to the work of the author of the genealogies. Professor Chadwick has shown that the annals from 755 to 840, and perhaps to 855, are the work of a writer of the time of King Ethelwulf, and that the compilation of the Chronicle in something like its present form (so far as it relates to Wessex) dates from the same period.¹ It has generally been assumed that the ninth-century chronicler obtained the annals for the period preceding the conversion of Wessex from the same source as that from which he obtained the annals of 635 to 754, but the annals of the period preceding the conversion include genealogical entries under the years 597 and 611,

from the same Cynric. Again, Ceolwulf, the great-great-grandfather of Æawine, is identified with King Ceolwulf, who died in 611. This is to allow about sixteen years as the average length of a generation.

¹ *Origin of the English Nation*, pp. 25-7.

which are inconsistent with those of 648 to 728. There is reason to believe that these annals of 597 and 611 are ninth-century work. The preface to the Chronicle, Alfredian in its present form, but obviously based upon a document of the time of Ethelwulf, contains material from an early source, independent of the source from which the annals of dates prior to the conversion of Wessex were drawn. This early source, however, though it doubtless gave the kings' names, their order of succession, and the number of years that each reigned, cannot have given the relationship of each king to his predecessor, because the clauses expressing these relationships can be shown to be, in the main, of ninth-century origin. The preface uses a phrase, 'whose kin goes to Cerdic', which corresponds with that which occurs in the annals of 755 and 784, but in none of the other annals. Mr. Chadwick writes :

But between the years 754 and 823 we find probably only five West Saxon entries in sixty-eight years. Moreover, these differ entirely in character from the preceding entries. The entries for 755 and 784 are summaries of reigns which must have been written after the reigns were ended. . . . There seems to be reason therefore for supposing that the materials for the ninth-century chronicle included a collection of West Saxon annals extending to the middle of the eighth century or somewhat later, and that this collection was brought up to date by the addition of a few entries giving summaries of the reigns of Cynewulf and Berhtic, which were of course not beyond the reach of living memory in the time of Æthelwulf.¹

We may, therefore, reasonably attribute to the time of Ethelwulf the phrase, 'whose kin goes to Cerdic', wherever it occurs in the preface. He used it in all cases where he found a genealogy of a king in the annals of 648 to 728, except in the case of Centwine. He would have been well advised to use it in this case also, but unfortunately he erroneously identified Cynegils the father of Centwine with King Cynegils, and consequently thought it sufficient to add 'Cynegilsing' to Centwine's name. He also used the phrase for Ceolwulf (597-611), but not for Cynegils (611-43), though each of these kings has a genealogy in the annals of the period preceding the conversion. Hence we conclude that the genealogical part of the annal of 611 is not earlier than the ninth century. The other genealogy, that of Ceolwulf, occurs in the annal of 597, which, from its reference to Picts and Scots, appears to be of late origin.² The phrase, 'whose kin goes to Cerdic', is also used in the preface for the eighth-

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 26.

² Oman, p. 249, suggests that the statement that King Ceolwulf (597-611) fought with Picts and Scots is due to confusion with Ceolwulf of Northumbria (729-37). If so, the annal can hardly have been composed before the ninth century.

century kings Æthelheard, Cuthred, Sigebyrt, Cynewulf, and Beorhtic. Since this ninth-century phrase occurs so frequently in the preface it is reasonable to suppose that other phrases in the preface expressing the relationship of kings to their predecessors, and especially the words, 'Ceolwulfes brothur sunu', added to the name of Cynewulf, are also due to the Ethelwulfian chronicler. The words, 'Ceolwulfes brothur sunu', may have grown out of a misunderstanding of the annal of 676, from which the chronicler derived 'Ceolwulfes sunu', the word 'brothur' being inserted to bring the statement into harmony with the annal of 688, which postulates, not Ceolwulf, but Cuthwine, as the name of the father of Cynewulf. There is no reason, however, why Ceolwulf should not have been the brother of Cuthwine, and accordingly I have accepted the statement in this sense, though I do not altogether trust it.

Apart from the list of kings with the number of years that each reigned, the ninth-century chronicler had one or more written sources from which he derived the names of kings and princes who fought battles, with the names of the places at which such battles were fought and with occasional details as to the name of the enemy, the persons killed, and the results achieved. What chronological information the chronicler found in his sources beyond the length of each king's reign it is difficult to determine. There are traces of an octennial arrangement of the sixth-century battles and a septennial arrangement of the early seventh-century battles, but if the chronicler found this arrangement in his sources, he must have modified it considerably in reducing his materials into the form of annals. We have no less than four dates for the beginning of Wessex, 494, 495, 500, and 519.¹ The two earlier dates are assigned to the invasion, and the two later dates to the establishment of the monarchy, but the primitive tradition is hardly likely to have made this distinction, which may with some confidence be attributed to an effort on the part of the chronicler to harmonize the chronological discrepancies which existed, either in his sources, or in his interpretation of them. If we assume that the pedigree, Cerdic begat Cynric, Cynric Ceawlin, Ceawlin Cuthwine, Cuthwine Cynewulf, is correct, we shall see no reason to quarrel with the dates assigned for the reigns of Cerdic (519-34), Cynric (534-60), Ceawlin (560-92), and Cynewulf (611-43). Tradition, however, seems to have known other kings; and, accordingly, we have indications of a tendency to introduce additional names. The existence of divergent traditions respecting the origin of the kingdom is indicated by the annal of 501 relative to Port, Bieda, and Mæglá, and by the annals of 514, 534, and 544, so far as they relate to Stuf and Wihtgar. The period subsequent to the invasion seems

to have known as kings Creoda and Cwihelm, who are omitted from the regnal table. Creoda's name, indeed, is actually inserted in some of our manuscripts both in the preface and in the annal of 855; while Cwihelmeshlæw, in Berkshire, has preserved the name of Cwihelm, who, as he had a heathen burial, must be distinguished from Cwihelm Cynegilsing, a convert to Christianity. Thus the annal of 593, 'Here Ceawlin and Cwihelm and Crida perished', may be due to a harmonistic effort of the chronicler's.

There is one characteristic of these early annals which deserves notice. The names of the kings and princes whose battles are recorded usually occur in pairs. Sometimes the names of the pairs are alliterative. The practice, already¹ alluded to, of arranging the generations in alliterative pairs continued, indeed, until the time of King Edmund,² but its original purpose was, doubtless, mnemonic, and accordingly it belonged to a time when historical records were entrusted, not to writing, but to the human memory, for their preservation. Such records, doubtless, took the form of alliterative verse. The battles which belong to the alliterative class are :

495. Cerdicesora	}	Cerdic and Cynric.
508. Natanleah		
519. Cerdicesford		
527. Cerdicesleah		
556. Beranburh	}	Cynric and Ceawlin.
568. Wibbandun		
577. Deorham	}	Ceawlin and Cuthwine, or Cutha.
584. Fethanleah		
614. Beandun	}	Cynegils and Cwihelm.
628. Cirenceaster		

Mr. Chadwick thinks that the traditional number of years for the reign of Ceawlin was seventeen.³ If so, its extension to thirty-two may be due to the octennial arrangements of his battles. The battles of Wibbandun, Deorham, and Fethanleah divide Ceawlin's reign into four periods of approximately eight years each, the fourth octennium being completed by Woddesboorh (592), when Ceawlin was 'driven out'. The feat of Cuthwulf, recorded in the annal of 571, by which he dispossessed the Britons of Lenbury, Aylesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham, does not belong to the octennial arrangement. It is hardly credible that Buckinghamshire was still in the hands of the Britons in

¹ p. 104, n. 2, above.

² Perhaps even to the end of the dynasty. Edmund and Edgar are not strictly alliterative, since the first syllables are identical, but a similar identity occurs much earlier in the case of Cenferth and Cenfus.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 24 n.

571, and it seems likely, therefore, that Cuthwulf lived long before the time of Ceawlin.

In this inquiry into the sources of the early West Saxon annals of the period preceding the conversion of King Cynegils, I have merely attempted to collect such indications as may help to illustrate the character of the materials which lay before the ninth-century chronicler. I have, in general, tried to avoid dealing with the dates assigned by the chronicler to the individual entries and with the historical worth of the entries themselves. There is, to all appearance, a connexion of some kind between the entries relating to Kent (449-88) and Sussex (477-91), and those relating to the commencement of Wessex and the reigns of Cerdic and Cynric (495-560). Not only are there curious resemblances in the general ideas and the wording of these entries, but there is also a puzzling conformity in the arrangement of their dates;¹ and a suspicion may arise that the chronicler, having hit upon 449 as the date for the invasion of Kent and 560 as the date for Ceawlin's accession, was influenced in some degree by a desire to distribute his materials as evenly as possible between those dates.

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¹ Chadwick, p. 36 and p. 24 n. I do not share Mr. Chadwick's suspicion of what he calls the etymological element in these annals. I think that the local names are derived from old poems or versified records with the rest of the entries to which they belong, and that many of these local names existed only in the poet's imagination; compare Mr. Stevenson's remarks on the temporary character of the name 'Fethanleah', *ante*, xvii. 637 n.