

Lesson 20

20.1 Reading. The annals are parsed for subjects & subject phrases (single underlines) and verbs/verb-phrases (double underlines). Also, where sentences have multiple clauses, a horizontal bar divides the clauses (main, subordinate, dependent, relative, etc.)

787. Her nam Breohtric cining Offan dohter Eadburge. And on his dagum comon ærest .iii. scipu Nordmanna of Hereða lande. And þa se grefa þær to rad, | and he wolde drifan to þes cininges tune | by he nyste hwæt hi wæron. And hine man ofsloh þa. Ðæt wæron þa erestan scipu Deniscra manna | be Angelcynnes land gesohton.

792. Her Offa Myrcena cining het Æðelbrihte þæt heafod ofslean. And Osred | be wæs Norþanhymbra cining | æfter wræcsiðe ham cumenum gelæht wæs, and ofslagen on .xviii. kalendas Octobris, | and his lic ligð æt Tinanmuþe; and Æðelred cining feng to niwan wife, | seo wæs Ælfled gehaten on .iii. kalendas Octobris.

793. Her wæron reðe forebecna cumene ofer Nordanhymbra land, | and þæt folc earmlice bregdon; þæt wæron ormete ligræscas, | and wæron geseowene fyrene dracan on þam lyfte fleogende. Pam tacnum sona fyligde mycel hunger. And litel æfter þam þæs ilcan geares on .vi. id. Ian. earmlice heðenra manna hergung adilgode Godes cyrican in Lindisfarena ee þurh reaflac and mansleht. And Sicga fordferde on .viii. kalendas Martii.

20.3 Grammar: Preterite-Present Verbs

Full, detailed comprehension of the peculiarities depends upon mastery of the PIE verb system, which is outlined to some extent in the Grammatical Appendix (sect. G). Given its summary nature, the more cursory account on pp. 188-191 no doubt in some ways will be unsatisfactory. Additional insight may be suggested by Roger Lass's remarks:

Some verbs combine features of both weak and strong conjugations. The preterite presents look at first more or less like strong verbs, but their PRET₁/PRET₂ – or what should be these forms – have present meaning, and their (actual) preterites are weak.

Since the past sense was lost in these historical perfects, new pasts had to be constructed; and since the weak conjugation even in early times was the only productive one, this is the natural source. Some of these verbs are of course the ancestors of our modern modal auxiliaries; the fact that the present is 'really' (historically) a strong preterite accounts for one major structural

anomaly: the lack of a 3 sg inflection (he can, not *can-s). Since the strong PRET₁ has no ending here, the descendants of these oe presents don't either. Therefore he can is really equivalent to he sang, not he sing-s. (Old English: A Historical Linguistic Companion [Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1994], 169-170)

20.6 Exercises

1. (gē) āgon
2. (þū) þearf
3. (hī) āgon
4. (gē) cuðon
5. (þū) þorftest
6. (hī) āhton
7. Wē witon hæðene men þone cyning ofslogon.
8. Ic wat þæt þū ærest wite to Rome.
9. Wē sculon gān to Lundene.
Wē sculon wītan to Lundene.
10. We s̄cēoldon gān to Lundene.
Wē s̄cēoldon wītan to Lundene.

Vocabulary Review, Lessons 16-20

1. to pour over, cover	14. attacking, harrying
2. to entrust, give, deliver (to)	15. body, corpse
3. to announce, proclaim	16. praise, love
4. to terrify, frighten	17. sky
5. royal offspring, prince(ss)	18. month
6. retainers, trusted troops	19. to begin, undertake
7. to go forth, pass away, die	20. to speak, say
8. to make known (to), tell	21. sign, token, portent
9. religion, belief, faith	22. slaughter, carnage
10. reeve, administrative representative	23. well, pool
11. to correct, amend, make right	24. to work, make, create
12. to go, depart	25. honor, worth
13. writ, letter, bulletin	