

## Alfred The Great

Traces the life and accomplishments of the ninth-century British king

Very few King's earn the appellation 'Great'. Alfred is the only English King honoured with this name and is credited with various successes (the foundation of a navy, English education system and religious revival). His memory looms large in the English Imagination. The medieval 'Life' of King Alfred of Wessex purports to be written by Asser, a monk in the King's service. This account of one of England's best loved and most famous kings has been accepted as offering evidence on most aspects of life in early medieval England and beyond. It was used in Victorian times to create a 'Cult' of Alfred. Alfred Smyth offers a carefully annotated translation of the 'Life' together with a long commentary. He argues that the 'Life' is a forgery which has profound implications not only for our understanding of the early English and medieval past but also for the nature of biography and history. This close scholarly rendering of the text allows the reader access to the intricacies of medieval history.

Eleven major scholars of the Anglo-Saxon period consider Alfred the Great, his cultural milieu, and his achievements. With revised or revived views of the Alfredian revival, the contributors help set the agenda for future work on a most challenging period.

The unlikely king who saved England. Down swept the Vikings from the frigid North. Across the English coastlands and countryside they raided, torched, murdered, and destroyed all in their path. Farmers, monks, and soldiers all fell bloody under the Viking sword, hammer, and axe. Then, when the hour was most desperate, came an unlikely hero. King Alfred rallied the battered and bedraggled kingdoms of Britain and after decades of plotting, praying, and persisting, finally triumphed over the invaders. Alfred's victory reverberates to this day: He sparked a literary renaissance, restructured Britain's roadways, revised the legal codes, and revived Christian learning and worship. It was Alfred's accomplishments that laid the groundwork for Britain's later glories and triumphs in literature, liturgy, and liberty. "Ben Merkle tells the sort of mythic adventure story that stirs the imagination and races the heart?and all the more so knowing that it is altogether true!" ?George Grant, author of *The Last Crusader* and *The Blood of the Moon*

In an era darkened by the terror of Viking invasions, England's first and greatest king was a beacon of light. "This is the story of England's birth. A great story, beautifully told." (Bernard Cornwell, author of *The Pale Horseman*) Alfred was England's first king, and his rule spanned troubled times. As his shores sat under constant threat from Viking marauders, his life was similarly imperiled by conspiracies in his own court. He was an extraordinary character?a soldier, scholar, and statesman like no other in English history?and out of adversity he forged a new kind of nation. Justin Pollard's enthralling account strips back centuries of myth to reveal the individual behind the legend. He offers a radical new interpretation of what inspired Alfred to create England and how it has colored the nation's history to the present day. Justin Pollard, a Cambridge-educated archaeologist, is a documentary filmmaker and the author of *Seven Ages of Britain*.

The fascinating story of one of England's most famous monarchs, Alfred the Great, from his birth to the discovery of a piece of his pelvis in a cardboard box in a museum in Winchester

Horspool sees Alfred as inextricably linked to the legends and stories that surround him, and rather than attempting to separate the myth from the reality, he explores how both came together to provide a historical figure that was all things to all men.

King Alfred. Everybody knows that he is called "the Great," but few remember why. Forgetfulness is strange, for few men have led lives so full of physical, mental, and spiritual adventure, or influenced in so many ways the lives of people in every part of the globe. The Golden Dragon is his fascinating and moving story, told afresh with the aid of recent archaeological evidence and research in four languages.

Alfred's achievements have melted cynicism. Gibbon called him "the greatest of English kings"; Hume, "the greatest man in history." Voltaire declared, "I know not whether there has ever been a man on earth worthier of posterity's respect." When his kingdom was reduced to thirty acres, he fought back with such courage and genius that he expelled the Viking invaders and made possible the saving of Western civilization. His list of accomplishments is amazing: transcendent diplomat, Europe's greatest naval designer, notable architect, law giver, founder of the oldest literary tradition in the Occident, originator of a system of public education, and producer of translations that have endured a thousand years. The author's research led him to the conclusion that the ninth-century English kin was the superior of Charlemagne in almost every respect, and indeed was one of the greatest geniuses Western civilization has ever produced. Alfred's courage, faith, and temperance are enduring examples for modern men.

A witty and concise look at the beginnings of English history, when the nation consolidated after clashes between the Saxons and invading Vikings. In 871, three of England's four kingdoms were overrun by Vikings, the ruthless, all-conquering Scandinavian raiders who terrorized early medieval Europe. With the Norsemen murdering one king with arrows and torturing another to death by ripping out his lungs, the prospects that faced the kingdom of Wessex were bleak. Worse still, the Saxons were now led by a young man barely out of his teens who was more interested in God than fighting. Yet within a decade Alfred—the only English king known as the Great—had driven the Vikings out of half of England, and his children and grandchildren would unite the country a few years later. This period, popular with fans of television shows such as *Vikings* and *The Last Kingdom*, saw the creation of England as a nation-state, with Alfred laying down the first national law code, establishing an education system and building cities. *Saxons vs. Vikings* also covers the period before Alfred, including ancient Britain, the Roman occupation, and the Dark Ages, explaining important historical episodes such as Boudicca, King Arthur, and Beowulf. Perfect for newcomers to the subject, this is the second title in the new *A Very, Very Short History of England* series. If you're trying to understand England and its history in the most informative and entertaining way possible, this is the place to start.

A history of Britain in the violent and unruly era between the first Scandinavian raids in 789 and the final expulsion of the Vikings from York in 954. In 865, a great Viking army landed in East Anglia, precipitating a series of wars that would last until the middle of the following century. It was in this time of crisis that the modern kingdoms of Britain were born. In their responses to the Viking threat, these kingdoms forged their identities as hybrid cultures: vibrant and entrepreneurial peoples adapting to instability and opportunity. Traditionally, Alfred the Great is cast as the central player in the story of Viking Age Britain. But Max Adams, while stressing the genius of Alfred as war leader, law-giver, and forger of the English nation, has a more nuanced narrative approach to this conventional version of history. The Britain encountered by the Scandinavians of the ninth and tenth centuries was one of regional diversity and self-conscious cultural identities, depicted in glorious narrative fashion in *The Viking Wars*.

In the spring of 878 at the Battle of Edington the tide of English history turned. Alfred's decisive defeat of Guthrum the Dane freed much of the south and west of England from Danish control and brought to a halt Guthrum's assault on Alfred's Wessex. The battle was the culmination of a long period of preparation by Alfred in the wilderness - a victory snatched from the jaws of catastrophic defeat. As such, this momentous turning point around which an entire nation's future pivoted, has given rise to legends and misconceptions that persist to the present day. Paul Hill, in this stimulating and meticulously researched study, brings together the evidence of the medieval chronicles and the latest historical and archaeological research to follow the struggle as it swung across southern England in the ninth century. He dispels the myths that have grown up around this critical period in English history, and he looks at Alfred's war against the Vikings with modern eyes.

The Great Army of the Danes invades Wessex, and, after two sieges, Alfred forces King Guthrum to agree to withdraw. When the leader of the Great Army breaks his word and invades Wessex in early winter, he nearly succeeds in capturing Alfred and destroying the last independent Saxon kingdom in Britain. King Alfred hides in the forest, until he finds a base deep in the fastness of a marsh. From there he starts to strike back. He deals with the traitors within, and sends the word for his fyrd to gather in when winter ends. Spring finds his men

rallying to his banner, and Alfred defeats the Danes. Britain is saved.

A history of King Alfred the Great, which examines the myths and legends that have surrounded the philosopher-king since the 12th century, whose learning and piety were probably even more remarkable than his heroic stature and military acumen.

Alfred the Great is a rare historical figure from the early Middle Ages, in that he retains a popular image. This book provides a reassessment of the famous ruler of Wessex, informed by current scholarship, both on the king as a man in history, and the king as a subsequent legendary construct. Daniel Anlezark presents Alfred in his historical context, seen through Asser's *Life*, the Anglo Saxon Chronicle, and other texts, and explores how this ninth-century king of Wessex came to be considered the "Great" king of legend.

Alfred was the only English king to ever be given the title 'Great'. Why? He successfully defended Britain from wave after wave of Viking invaders, formed the first English army and navy, encouraged English people to talk in their mother tongue and set up the beginnings of a renowned, progressive legal system. Suitable for readers aged 8+, each book in *History Starting Points* explores the life and times of a key historical figure, from Alfred the Great to Hatshepsut. It tells the story of the subject's life, using vital primary source material, such as what contemporary people wrote about the figure. Alongside this, each book builds up a vivid picture of the historical era in which the person lived, from Anglo-Saxon Britain to the civilisations of ancient Greece and Egypt. Included throughout are cross-curricular links to other key subject areas such as literacy, science or geography, and the text is supported by cartoon, myths and legends and fun craft projects to make.

Based upon two conferences held in 1999 the papers that comprise this collection present a full contextualization of King Alfred by setting him against contemporary rulers across the whole of Europe.

The discovery earlier this year in Winchester of human remains, almost certainly of Alfred the Great or his eldest son, has sparked renewed interest in England's most celebrated monarch. King Alfred's historical achievements, saving his kingdom from invasion by marauding Vikings and attempting both to expand and educate his realm, made him the founding mythic figure of England. The only English sovereign ever to be called 'the Great' - despite the fact that he was never even king of all England - Alfred used to be remembered as much through the stories told about him as his recorded accomplishments. This book offers a vivid picture of Alfred and his England, a place snatched from extinction at the hands of Viking invaders, but also of the way that history is written, and how much myth has to do with that. The book brings this story right up to date with the tale of the strange journey of Alfred's mortal remains, and their final discovery in his capital of Winchester.

Story of the life of Alfred the Great, how at twenty-two he inherited a land overrun by savage pirates,-a restless ignorant, defenseless land, and how he fought the Danes and restored the country to a condition of peace and safety. When he inherited his kingdom at twenty-two, the king was not safe in his palace, the priest in his church. There was little opportunity for agriculture; laws were not executed; schools had disappeared, the very wish to learn had disappeared; the whole land was rapidly sinking into ignorance and barbarism, and was exhausted by its sickening dread of the horrors that the next moment might bring

During his reign (871-899), King Alfred revolutionized the governance of Wessex, advancing the process that would end in the creation of the kingdom of England. This book offers an analysis of Alfred's achievement.

This book is a comprehensive study of political thought at the court of King Alfred the Great (871-99). It explains the extraordinary burst of royal learned activity focused on inventive translations from Latin into Old English attributed to Alfred's own authorship. A full exploration of context establishes these texts as part of a single discourse which placed Alfred himself at the heart of all rightful power and authority. A major theme is the relevance of Frankish and other European experiences, as sources of expertise and shared concerns, and for important contrasts with Alfredian thought and behaviour. Part I assesses Alfred's rule against West Saxon structures, showing the centrality of the royal household in the operation of power. Part II offers an intimate analysis of the royal texts, developing far-reaching implications for Alfredian kingship, communication and court culture. Comparative in approach, the book places Alfred's reign at the forefront of wider European trends in aristocratic life.

Alfred the Great was king of Wessex from 871 till his death in 899, and without him there would never have been an England. He came to the throne the last of five brothers, his nearest sibling, King Æthelred, having died of wounds picked up in battle against the Vikings. Alfred's reign was plagued by Danish Viking invasions and irruptions: even when he acceded Wessex was in extremis after a year of battles. He instituted a seismic shift in the West Saxons' defensive structure and these military reforms saved Wessex, the last English kingdom, from falling into Scandinavian hands. At the same time as restructuring the nation's defences, he established a mini-renaissance of culture and education, personally translating various religious bedrocks from Latin into the vernacular, including Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*. This same renaissance saw the creation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which provides us with much of our knowledge of the early mediæval period, and the writing of a contentious biography of Alfred by his friend Bishop Asser. Through Asser and the chronicles, we know more about Alfred than any king who preceded him, in fact any Anglo-Saxon who came before him, but it is still tantalizingly little and many questions remain. Why did Alfred visit the pope in Rome at the age of three or four? Why did his brother rebel against their father, then later marry his father's widow, his own stepmother? How could Alfred's mother still be alive 20 years after his father had remarried? Why did Alfred become king when Æthelred left two male heirs? How did he recover in 878 after being forced to flee through Selwood Forest to the marshlands of Somerset? How did he go about securing the succession of his son Edward the Elder when his cousins had at least as good a claim to the crown? This publication tells the story of Alfred's reign from beginning to end and attempts to resolve some of these puzzles. It is designed particularly for those coming new to the Dark Ages and the twilight world of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

From the author of *The Gateway to the Middle Ages*, "a fascinating portrait of an enlightened monarch against a background of darkness and ignorance" (Kirkus Reviews). Filled with drama and action, here is the story of the ninth-century life and times of Alfred—warrior, conqueror, lawmaker, scholar, and the only king whom England has ever called "The Great." Based on up-to-date information on ninth-century history, geography, philosophy, literature, and social life, it vividly presents exciting views of Alfred in every stage of his long career and leaves the reader with a sharply etched

picture of the world of the Middle Ages

Bachelor Thesis from the year 2010 in the subject English - Pedagogy, Didactics, Literature Studies, grade: 2,0, University of Göttingen, language: English, abstract: In the long list of English rulers there is only one king who achieved to be honored with the epithet the Great. Alfred the Great is known today as one of the most successful kings of England and has become a national hero. The role of the national failure, however, has been ascribed to King Ethelred II, who is known as Ethelred the Unready. Both kings ruled in Anglo-Saxon times, their reigns are only about one hundred years apart and both had to face the same enemy: the Vikings from Scandinavia. Although it seems as if the two kings ruled under the same prerequisites, their reigns had very different outcomes and they have opposing reputations today. King Alfred, who ruled the kingdom of Wessex from 871 to 899, is today remembered and glorified as a great Christian king, who defeated the Vikings, who continuously invaded and plundered England in the second half of the ninth century. Apart from great military and political achievements, Alfred also stands for educational reform and is credited for having laid the foundations for what was to become the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. King Ethelred ruled this kingdom from 978 to 1016. Today, he is seen as a weak and powerless king, who did not manage to fight off the Vikings who were attacking the Anglo-Saxon kingdom during his reign, especially at the beginning of the eleventh century. He is accused of having lost control over his kingdom and having handed it over to the Vikings without developing a coherent strategy of defense. In order to find out how and why King Alfred and King Ethelred acquired such different reputations and whether they are justified, one has to have a close look at their reigns and especially at the actions they took to keep the Viking invaders from plundering and conquering their kingdom. Despite these problems, which will be a central theme in this work, the following text aims at presenting detailed accounts of King Alfred the Great and King Ethelred the Unready's struggles against the Viking invaders in order to allow for a direct comparison of their actions. Certainly, this work can make no claims of providing a comprehensive and complete picture of the kings' personalities and their reigns. It is rather meant to present an overview, which can be used as a basis for an evaluation and reassessment of Alfred and Ethelred's legacies.

During the last two decades, numerous studies have been devoted to the Victorian fascination with King Arthur, however . the figure of King Alfred has received almost no attention. For much of the nineteenth century, Alfred was as important as Arthur in the British popular imagination. A pervasive cult of the king developed which included the erection of at least four public statues, the completion of more than twenty-five paintings, and the publication of over a hundred texts, by authors ranging from Wordsworth to minor women writers. By 1852, J.A. Froude could describe Alfred's life as 'the favourite story in English nurseries'; in 1901, a national holiday marked the thousandth anniversary of his death, organised by a committee including Edward Burne Jones, Arthur Conan Doyle and Thomas Hughes. England's darling sets out to answer the questions that must arise in the face of such nineteenth-century enthusiasm for a long-dead king. It addresses a genuine gap in the literature on Victorian medievalism in particular and cultural history in general and argues that knowledge of the cult of Alfred is crucial to understanding the Victorian cultural map. The book examines the ways in which Alfred was rewritten by nineteenth-century authors and artists, and asks how beliefs about the Saxon king's reign and achievements related to nineteenth-century ideals about leadership, law, religion, commerce, education and the Empire. The book concludes by addressing the most interesting enigma in Alfred's reception history: why is the king no longer 'England's darling'? A fascinating study that will be enjoyed by scholars of history, cultural history, literature and art history.

The story of a medieval Boudicca, Alfred the Great's daughter, and her struggle to restore her people and reclaim their land The famous German Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr.J.H. Kurtz called King Alfred the greatest and noblest of all the monarchs England has ever had. King Alfred applied all the energy of his mind to the difficult problems of government; to the emancipation of his Christian country by driving out the Pagan Danish invaders and robbers; and then to improving the internal condition of the land. Alfred is perhaps best of all remembered for his famous Law Code. King Alfred's Book of Laws or Dooms came forth from the laws of Kent, Mercia and Wessex. All these attempted to blend the Mosaic Code with the Christian principles of Celto-Brythonic Law and old Germanic customs...the laws of Alfred, continually amplified by his successors, grew into that body of Customary Law which was administered as the 'Common Law' by the Shire and the Hundred Courts.

This biography of Alfred the Great, king of the West Saxons (871-899), combines a sensitive reading of the primary sources with a careful evaluation of the most recent scholarly research on the history and archaeology of ninth-century England. Alfred emerges from the pages of this biography as a great warlord, an effective and inventive ruler, and a passionate scholar whose piety and intellectual curiosity led him to sponsor a cultural and spiritual renaissance. Alfred's victories on the battlefield and his sweeping administrative innovations not only preserved his native Wessex from viking conquest, but began the process of political consolidation that would culminate in the creation of the kingdom of England. Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England strips away the varnish of later interpretations to recover the historical Alfred pragmatic, generous, brutal, pious, scholarly within the context of his own age.

Asser's Life of King Alfred, written in 893, is a revealing account of one of the greatest of medieval kings. Composed by a monk of St David's in Wales who became Bishop of Sherborne in Alfred's service and worked with him in his efforts to revive religion and learning in his kingdom, this life is among the earliest surviving royal biographies. It is an admiring account of King Alfred's life, written in absorbing detail - chronicling his battles against Viking invaders and his struggle to increase the strength and knowledge of his people, and to unite his people at a time of conflict, uncertainty and war.

Alfred the Great Asser's Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources Penguin UK

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