



# **The Medieval Life of King Alfred the Great: A Translation and Commentary on the Text Attributed to Asser**

*A. Smyth*

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## **The Medieval Life of King Alfred the Great: A Translation and Commentary on the Text Attributed to Asser** A. Smyth

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.

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