

ASSER, or ASSERIUS MENEVENSIS (d. c. 910)

English bishop, and author of a life of Alfred the Great, was a native of the western part of Wales, and was related to Nobis, bishop of St David's, and having acquired some eputation for learning, he was invited by King Alfred to his court. The king met the monk at Denu (probably East or West Dean, near Seaford in Sussex), but Asser did not at once accept the invitation of Alfred, and returned to Wales to consult his colleagues. He then agreed to spend six months of each year with the king and six months in his own land; but his first stay at the royal court extended to eight months, and it is probable that the England, but it was probably about 885. He assisted the king in his studies, received from him the monasteries of Congresbury and Banwell, and sometime later " Exeter and its diocese in Saxonland and Cornwall." He became bishop of Sherborne before goo, and his death is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under the date gro, although it is possible that it occurred a year or two earlier. The scanty details of Asser's life are taken from his biography of Alfred, from which it is inferred that he was acquainted with one or two Frankish biographies, and possibly had visited the continent of Europe. Asser's work, *Annales reruns gestarum Alfredi magni*, was written about 893, and consists of a chronicle of English history from 849 to 887, and an personal knowledge, down to 887. The only manuscript of which there is any record dates from about r000, and was destroyed by fire in 1731. From this manuscript an edition was printed in 1574 under the direction of Matthew Parker, arch-bishop of Canterbury; but this contained many interpolations and alterations which were copied by subsequent editors. the text has since been the subject of careful study, and the edition edited by W. H. Stevenson (original work of Asser and the later additions. Some doubt has been cast upon the authenticity of the work, especially by T. Wright in the *Biographia Britannica literaria* (London, 1842), who ascribes the life to a monk of St Neots; but the latest scholarship regards it as the work of Asser, although all the difficulties which surround the authorship have not been removed. The life was largely used by subsequent chroniclers, among others by Florence of Worcester, Simeon of Durham, Roger of Hoveden, and Malmesbury. See W. H. Stevenson, *Introduction to Asser's Life of King Alfred* (Oxford, 1904) ; R. Pauli, *Introduction to KonigAelfred* (Berlin, 1851).