

## The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (extract)

A compilation of annals on the Anglo-Saxon settlement in Britain. The chronicle expands from A.D. 1 to 1154. It should more properly be called *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, in the plural, since it survives in a number of independent texts. All texts draw on a common original dated to the early 890s during the reign of King Alfred, but almost all the texts add information from other sources. No one knows who was responsible for the original compilation, but most scholars connect it with King Alfred. Copies were later distributed throughout the country and the annals were added year after year by different Anglo-Saxon scholars in different places. There are nine surviving manuscripts, among them, the *Peterborough Chronicle* or the *Parker Chronicle*. These annals give us an overall picture of the history of England during those years.

In the year of our Lord 1077.

In same year also, before the Assumption of St. Mary, King William went from Normandy into France with an army, and made war upon his own lord Philip, the king, and slew many of his men, and burned the town of Mante, and all the holy minsters that were in the town; and two holy men that served God, leading the life of anachorets, were burned therein. This being thus done, King William returned to Normandy. Rueful was the thing he did; but a more rueful him befel. How more rueful? He fell sick, and it dreadfully ailed him. What shall I say? Sharp death, that passes by neither rich men nor poor, seized him also. He died in Normandy, on the next day after the Nativity of St. Mary, and he was buried at Caen in St. Stephen's minster. Castles he let men build, and miserably swink the poor. The king himself was so very rigid; and extorted from his subjects many marks of gold, and many hundred pounds of silver; which he took of his people, for little need, by right and by unright. He was fallen into covetousness, and greediness he loved withal. He made many deer-parks; and he established laws therewith; so that whosoever slew a hart, or a hind, should be deprived of his eyesight. As he forbade men to kill the harts, so also the boars; and he loved the tall deer as if he were their father. Likewise he decreed by the hares, that they should go free. His rich men be-moaned it, and the poor men shuddered at it. But he was so stern, that he recked not the hatred of them all; for they must follow withal the king' will, if they would live, or have land, or possessions, or even his peace. Alas! that any man should resume so to puff himself up, and boast o'er all men. May the Almighty God show mercy to his soul, and grant him forgiveness of his sins! These things have we written concerning him, both good and evil; that men may choose the good after their goodness, and flee from the evil withal, and go in the way that leadeth us to the kingdom of heaven.