



William II (Rufus) 1087 - 1100

From the description of Orderic and William of Malmesbury

How Robert then, his eldest sonne, abroad,
Rufus, his second, seiz'd on his estate,
His father's steps apparently that trode,
Depressing those who had been conquer'd late:
But as on them he layd a heavie load,
So was he guerdon'd by impartiall fate;
For whilst men's roomes for beasts he did intend,
He in that Forrest had a beastly end.

—Michael Drayton, *The Barons' Warres*

He was, when abroad, and in public assemblies, of supercilious look, darting his threatening eye on the by-stander; and with assumed severity and ferocious voice, assailing such as conversed with him. From apprehension of poverty, and of the treachery of others, as may be conjectured, he was too much given to lucre, and to cruelty. At home and at table, with his intimate companions, he gave loose to levity and to mirth. He was a most facetious railer at any thing he had himself done amiss, in order that he might thus do away with obloquy, and make it matter of jest . . .

—William of Malmesbury, *Historia Anglorum*

On Whit Sunday of this year [1099] at a village in Berkshire blood was seen bubbling forth from the ground, as many reported who were said to have seen it. And thereafter, on the morning after Lammas, King William was killed with an arrow while hunting by one of his men. He was afterwards brought to Winchester, and buried in the cathedral in the thirteenth year of his reign.

He was very harsh and fierce in his rule over his realm, and towards his followers and to all his neighbors, and very terrifying. Influenced by the advice of evil councillors, which was always agreeable to him, and by his own covetousness, he was continually exasperating this nation with depredations and unjust taxes. In his days, therefore, righteousness declined, and evil of every kind towards God and man put up its head. He oppressed the Church of God; and in his days when the head of a bishopric or an abbacy died, he either sold them all for money, or kept them within his grasp and let them for rent, for he claimed to be the heir of every man, cleric or lay.

—Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

Very red face, grey eyes, light yellow hair;
gold crown and edging on tunic and mantle;
white tunic and crimson mantle and shoes.

King Henry I 1100 - 1135

After the effigy at Rochester

Henry, his young'st, his brother William dead,
Taket the crowne from his usurping hand,
Due to the eldest, good Duke Robert's head,
Not then returned from the Holy Land;
Whose power was there so much diminished,
That he his foe not able to withstand,
Was ta'en in battell, and his eyes out-done;
For which, the seas left Henry not a sonne.

—Michael Drayton, *The Barons' Warres*

. . . King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death, his son should reign . . .
King Henry of England's realm was he,
And Henry Duke of Normandy. . . .
Of ruthless strokes full many an one
He had struck to crown himself and his son;
And his elder brother's eyes were gone . . .

'Your son and all his fellowship
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship,'
King Henry fell as a man struck dead;
And speechless still he stared from his bed
When to him next day my rede I read.
There's many an hour must needs beguile
A King's high heart that he should smile—
Full many a lordly hour, full fain
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign—
But this King never smiled again . . .

—Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The White Ship"

Dark hair; gold crown, sceptre and tunic under a
white silken damatic edged with gold and gems.
Brightly-colored mantle, lined with black s ables,
fastened with a gold ring.

