



## Scandinavia in the Middle Ages 900-1550

### Between Two Oceans

Kirsi Salonen, Kurt Villads Jensen

Medieval Scandinavia went through momentous changes. Regional power centres merged and gave birth to the three strong kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. At the end of the Middle Ages, they together formed the enormous Kalmar Union comprising almost all lands around the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. In the Middle Ages, Scandinavia became part of a common Europe, yet preserved its own distinct cultural markers.

Scandinavia in the Middle Ages 900–1550 covers the entire Middle Ages into an engaging narrative. The book gives a chronological overview of political, ecclesiastical, cultural, and economic developments. It integrates to this narrative climatic changes, energy crises, devastating epidemics, family life and livelihood, arts, education, technology and literature, and much else. The book shows how different groups had an important role in shaping society: kings and peasants, pious priests, nuns and crusaders, merchants, and students, without forgetting minorities such as Sámi and Jews. The book is divided into three chronological parts 900–1200, 1200–1400, and 1400–1550, where analyses of general trends are illustrated by the acts of individual men and women.

This book is essential reading for students of, as well as all those interested in, medieval Scandinavia and Europe more broadly.

"How to cover centuries of medieval life, habits, and events in Scandinavia, with illustrations and maps, and all this very comprehensively, but in just 300 pages? With elegance, when done by two professors of medieval history, Kirsi Salonen from the University of Bergen, Norway and Kurt Villads Jensen from the University of Stockholm, Sweden. Their recent book, *Scandinavia in the Middle Ages 900–1550: Between Two Oceans* (2023), is a real treasure for every medievalist. (...) It is a general and well-structured medieval history and archaeology handbook for students and scholars alike. Their book not only draws a picture of how things were in medieval Scandinavia, but what is more, it also portrays the various connections and links from Europe to Scandinavia and from Scandinavia to all the known medieval world. Scandinavia in the Middle Ages was not some isolated northern region, but an area having impact on a large scale also outside its borders. It deserves to be known by every history student and scholar alike."

**Elise Pihlajaniemi**, *The Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, Volume 50, Number 1, 2024 pp. 135-137

"a condensed, balanced, holistic, and readable account of Scandinavian history in the Middle Ages that avoids the traps of national trajectories and situates the region in the frame of broader Europe. Truly this is no small feat, and I think it is safe to say that this book is the first of its kind."

**Hans Jacob Orning**, *University of Oslo, Scandinavian Studies*, Volume 96, Number 3, 2024, pp. 120-123

Kirsi Salonen and Kurt Villads Jensen have produced an essential resource that will be particularly useful for students and anyone who is looking for an English-language introduction to medieval Scandinavia.

**Natalie M. Van Deusen**, *Medium Aevum* 92:2 (2023).

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