

the oxford dictionary of the middle ages

robert e bjork

the oxford dictionary of the middle ages robert e bjork represents a significant scholarly achievement in the field of medieval studies. This comprehensive reference work, edited by Robert E. Bjork, offers an authoritative and expansive overview of the Middle Ages, covering a broad range of topics from historical events and cultural developments to key figures and medieval terminology. Designed for students, educators, historians, and enthusiasts alike, the dictionary serves as an essential resource for understanding the complexities of this era. Its meticulous scholarship and accessible format make it invaluable for both in-depth research and general study. This article explores the background and significance of the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages, the contributions of Robert E. Bjork, its content scope, and its impact on medieval scholarship. The following sections provide detailed insights into these aspects.

- Overview of the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages
- Robert E. Bjork: Editor and Scholar
- Content and Structure of the Dictionary
- Significance and Uses in Medieval Studies
- Comparisons with Other Medieval Reference Works

Overview of the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages

The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages is a multi-volume reference work published by Oxford University Press that comprehensively covers the medieval period, generally considered to span from the 5th to the late 15th century. The dictionary encompasses a wide array of topics, including history, art, literature, philosophy, religion, science, and daily life during the Middle Ages. This extensive coverage makes it one of the most authoritative and detailed reference tools available for medieval studies.

Scope and Timeframe

The dictionary focuses on the European Middle Ages but also includes relevant entries related to the Byzantine Empire, the Islamic world, and other regions that influenced or were influenced by medieval Europe. Its temporal scope stretches from the fall of the Western Roman Empire around 500 AD to the dawn of the Renaissance in the 15th century, providing a thorough understanding of the developments within this millennium.

Editorial Approach

The editorial team, led by Robert E. Bjork, ensured that the dictionary combined scholarly rigor with accessibility. The entries are written by a wide range of experts in various subfields of medieval studies, each contributing up-to-date research and comprehensive bibliographies for further exploration.

Robert E. Bjork: Editor and Scholar

Robert E. Bjork is a distinguished historian specializing in medieval history, whose expertise has greatly shaped the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages. As the editor, Bjork was responsible for overseeing the selection of contributors, guiding the editorial process, and maintaining the academic standards of the publication. His leadership helped ensure that the dictionary reflects the latest scholarly consensus and research methodologies.

Academic Background

Bjork holds advanced degrees in history with a focus on medieval studies. His research interests include medieval religious history, intellectual history, and the cultural developments of the Middle Ages, which are well represented throughout the dictionary's content.

Contributions to Medieval Scholarship

Beyond his editorial role, Bjork has authored numerous articles and books on medieval topics, contributing significantly to the understanding of medieval religious practices and societal structures. His involvement with the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages has cemented his reputation as a leading figure in the field.

Content and Structure of the Dictionary

The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages is organized into multiple volumes, each containing thousands of entries that range from brief definitions to detailed essays. The dictionary's structure facilitates easy navigation and comprehensive coverage of medieval topics.

Types of Entries

The entries include:

- Biographies of notable medieval figures, including monarchs, scholars, artists, and religious leaders.
- Explanations of political events, battles, and treaties that shaped the medieval world.
- Descriptions of cultural phenomena, such as medieval art, literature, and music.
- Definitions of key terms and concepts in medieval philosophy, theology, and law.
- Entries on everyday life aspects, including social classes, occupations, and customs.

Supplementary Features

Each entry is supplemented with bibliographical references directing readers to further academic resources. Additionally, the dictionary includes thematic essays that provide broader context on significant medieval themes and developments.

Significance and Uses in Medieval Studies

The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages edited by Robert E. Bjork is widely regarded as an indispensable tool for scholars, students, and educators. Its comprehensive nature and authoritative content make it a cornerstone reference in the study of medieval history and culture.

Educational Applications

Universities and colleges frequently incorporate the dictionary into their curricula, using it to support coursework in history, literature, art history, and religious studies. It serves as a reliable source for research papers, theses, and general knowledge acquisition.

Research and Reference

For researchers, the dictionary offers succinct yet detailed entries that provide foundational knowledge and point toward more specialized academic works. Its coverage of lesser-known medieval topics is particularly valuable for expanding the scope of medieval scholarship.

Comparisons with Other Medieval Reference Works

While several reference works address the Middle Ages, the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages

stands out due to its breadth, depth, and editorial quality. Its comprehensive approach contrasts with more specialized encyclopedias or dictionaries focused on narrower aspects of medieval history.

Advantages Over Other Sources

- Extensive coverage of interdisciplinary topics beyond purely historical events.
- High scholarly standards ensured by expert contributors and editorial oversight.
- Inclusion of global perspectives that consider interactions between medieval Europe and other regions.
- Updated entries reflecting contemporary research and historiographical trends.

Complementary Resources

While the Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages is comprehensive, it is often used alongside other specialized resources such as the Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle or the Cambridge Medieval History series to gain deeper insights on specific topics.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' edited by Robert E. Bjork?

'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' is a comprehensive reference work edited by Robert E. Bjork that provides detailed entries on various aspects of medieval history, culture, and society.

Who is Robert E. Bjork in relation to 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages'?

Robert E. Bjork is the editor of 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages,' overseeing the compilation and scholarly accuracy of the dictionary's extensive entries.

What topics does 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' cover?

The dictionary covers a wide range of topics including medieval history, art, literature, religion, philosophy, science, daily life, and notable figures from the Middle Ages.

How is 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' useful for researchers and students?

It serves as an authoritative resource offering concise and reliable information on medieval topics, making it valuable for academic research, coursework, and general knowledge about the Middle Ages.

When was 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' edited by Robert E. Bjork published?

'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' was published in 2010 under the editorship of Robert E. Bjork.

Are there digital or online versions of 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' available?

Yes, 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' is available in digital format through Oxford Reference online platforms, allowing easier access for users.

How does 'The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages' differ from other medieval dictionaries?

This dictionary is distinguished by its comprehensive coverage, scholarly contributions from experts, and editorial guidance by Robert E. Bjork, ensuring up-to-date and authoritative content.

Additional Resources

1. The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages by Robert E. Bjork

This comprehensive reference work offers detailed entries on the people, places, events, and cultural aspects of the Middle Ages. Edited by Robert E. Bjork, it covers a broad chronological span from roughly 500 to 1500 CE. The dictionary is an essential resource for scholars and students seeking authoritative information on medieval history, literature, religion, and society.

2. The Medieval World: An Illustrated Atlas by John M. Thompson

This atlas provides a visually rich exploration of the Middle Ages, combining maps, illustrations, and text to depict the political, cultural, and economic landscapes of medieval Europe and beyond. It complements dictionary-style works by offering spatial and visual context to historical events and trends. The book is ideal for readers who want to understand the geographical dimension of medieval history.

3. A History of the Middle Ages, 300-1500 by Miri Rubin

Miri Rubin's book offers a comprehensive narrative of the medieval period, emphasizing social, religious, and cultural transformations. It is well-suited for readers looking to gain a deeper understanding of the Middle Ages beyond encyclopedic entries. Rubin's engaging prose brings to life the complexities and diversity of medieval societies.

4. The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian edited by Michael Maas

This collection of essays examines the era of Emperor Justinian I, a pivotal period in early medieval

history that laid foundations for the Byzantine Empire and influenced later medieval developments. It complements broader medieval dictionaries by focusing on a critical time in Late Antiquity and early Middle Ages. The companion provides scholarly insights into politics, law, art, and religious life.

5. *The Medieval Church: A Brief History* by Joseph H. Lynch

Focusing on the central institution of medieval Europe, this book traces the development of the Christian Church from the fall of Rome to the Reformation. Lynch explores the church's role in shaping medieval culture, politics, and intellectual life. It serves as a useful companion to dictionary entries on ecclesiastical terms and figures.

6. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England* edited by Nigel Saul

This volume offers a richly illustrated overview of England during the medieval period, covering political events, social changes, and cultural achievements. Its accessible essays provide context for many entries found in dictionaries like Bjork's. The book is especially valuable for those interested in English medieval history.

7. *Medieval Europe: A Short History* by Judith Bennett

Judith Bennett's concise history offers an introduction to the major themes and events of medieval Europe, including feudalism, the Crusades, and the Black Death. The book's clear structure makes it a useful starting point for readers consulting more detailed reference works. It highlights the everyday lives of medieval people alongside major historical developments.

8. *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English* edited by Elaine Treharne and Greg Walker

This handbook surveys medieval English literature from the Old English period through the late Middle Ages. It complements historical dictionaries by exploring the literary culture that shaped medieval society's worldview. The essays cover genres, authors, and literary contexts, making it a vital resource for understanding medieval textual traditions.

9. *The Making of the Middle Ages* by Richard Southern

Richard Southern's classic work analyzes the formation of medieval European society from the Carolingian period onward. It emphasizes the intellectual, political, and religious transformations that defined the Middle Ages. The book's analytical approach offers a deeper perspective that enriches the factual details found in dictionary entries.

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