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POWER AND SAINTHOOD

THE CASE OF BIRGITTA OF SWEDEN

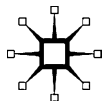
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*To Fanni, Linus, and Olga*

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## PREFACE

The Pulitzer-winning biographer Robert Caro has said that power does not always corrupt but it always reveals. This notion seems to be exactly the case with Birgitta of Sweden as well. This is a book about how saintly women, and particularly one woman, Birgitta of Sweden, exercised power in practice in the Middle Ages. Examining her exercise of power led me to new findings concerning the history of gender, authority, and cultural currents between Central Europe and Scandinavia. The process has also made me conscious of how similarly power and authority work today: it is difficult to be listened to if you do not have access to direct power. However, the project with Birgitta of Sweden has also shown that there are many ways to exercise power, most of them actively used even today.

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While finishing my dissertation on Birgitta of Sweden, I was planning a new research and got happily involved in the project *Finnish Women Writing on Gender and Religion*. This project also got funding from the Academy of Finland and provided me the required funding to spend an academic year in the University of Oxford. For this I owe my deepest thanks to Terhi Utriainen, leader of the project, and to Helena Kupari and Anni Tsokkinen, the other fantastic members of this project.

I am glad that not all literature or sources concerning Birgitta of Sweden were electronically accessible from my home university in Helsinki. This gave me the opportunity to visit the libraries of the University of Oxford and the Royal Library in Stockholm, only to mention the two most useful. I am also grateful for the time I was able to spend in Villa Lante, the Finnish Institute in Rome. I cordially thank the personnel in these libraries and institute for their help. Finally, I thank the National Library in Helsinki and its staff. They not only help but also really understand even the weirdest requests of scholars. For help with the English language, I warmly thank Marlena Whiting.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Acta</i>	<i>Acta et processus canonizacionis beate Birgitte</i>
<i>DCP</i>	<i>Depocicio copiosissima domini prioris de Aluastro</i>
<i>DS</i>	<i>Diplomatarium Suecanum</i>
<i>Ex.</i>	<i>Revelaciones Extravagantes</i>
<i>FBR</i>	“The Fifth Book of Revelations”
<i>GL</i>	<i>The Golden Legend</i>
<i>LCM</i>	<i>The Life of Christina of Markyate</i>
<i>LOB</i>	“Life of Blessed Birgitta”
<i>LOM</i>	<i>Life of Marie d’Oignies</i>
<i>PMM</i>	<i>Prologue of Master Mathias</i>
<i>Prol. Mathie</i>	<i>Prologo magistri Mathie</i>
<i>PVita</i>	<i>Vita b. Brigide prioris Petri et magistri Petri (Process Vita)</i>
<i>QO</i>	<i>Quattuor Oraciones</i>
<i>Rev.</i>	<i>Revelaciones</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>Regula Salvatoris</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Sermo Angelicus</i>
<i>SBR</i>	“The Seventh Book of Revelations”
<i>SLOM</i>	<i>Supplement to the life of Marie d’Oignies</i>
<i>SVMO</i>	<i>Vita Mariae Oigniacensis, Supplementum</i>
<i>VMO</i>	<i>Vita Mariae Oigniacensis</i>