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Irmeli Valtonen

THE NORTH IN  
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A GEOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE  
IN CONTEXT

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*“The scope of and approach in this thesis is breathtaking... It is my prediction that every knowledgeable scholar working in the Viking Age in the future will have a copy of Irmeli Valtonen’s The North in the Old English Orosius. A Geographical Narrative in Context in their private library.”*

**Professor Stefan Brink, University of Aberdeen**

The description of the North in the *Old English Orosius* in the form of the travel accounts by Ohthere and Wulfstan and a catalogue of northern peoples are examined in this study in the context of ancient and early medieval textual and cartographic descriptions of the North, with special emphasis on Anglo-Saxon sources and the reign of King Alfred. This is the first time that these sources, an interdisciplinary approach and secondary literature, also from Scandinavia and Finland, have been brought together.

The travel accounts contain unparalleled information about ninth-century peoples, places and voyages in northern Europe. They are discussed in relation to geographical perceptions and nomenclature of northern lands, archaeological theories of the Viking Age and Anglo-Saxon culture and geographical imagination.

The book resembles a high-level handbook on the subject rather than a doctoral dissertation. It includes in-depth surveys of sources from Antiquity to the Viking Age and creates a systematic synthesis of the material. Context is understood in a wide sense. The work focuses on geographical knowledge and involves philology, archaeology, cartography, literary history, medieval history, and historical geography.

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