

DIOCESIS LINCOPENSIS III

Askeby Monastery. On the Era and the Life of the Cistercian Nunnery of Askeby, Sweden.

The Cistercian nunnery of Askeby, Ostrogothia, Sweden, had three and a half centuries of fascinating history. It functioned from the latter part of the 12th century to around 1528 when forces of the Protestant Reformation closed nearly all Swedish monasteries and convents, with the exception of the Vadstena nunnery that continued until 1595.

Throughout its history, the nunnery of Askeby stood within the broader Christian monastic tradition that formed an international network of monasteries across the European continent. If not from the beginning, the house at Askeby soon became part of the Cistercians, centered at Citeaux, France.

Askeby monastery is thereby a clear example of the ecclesiastical influence from the European continent on Sweden during the medieval era. Popes wrote letters to this nunnery, cardinals were involved in its activities, kings and archbishops promised it protection, etc. Clearly, Askeby held a central position not only at local and regional levels, but also at the central political and ecclesiastical levels in Sweden.

In this volume, the author begins with an introduction of the wider intellectual, political, legal, socio-economic, ecclesiastical, and monastic context of the nunnery. He then gives a detailed description of the Askeby nunnery, i.e. the life and activity of the convent. In this description, he draws on rare medieval sources that survived a series of fires in the nunnery, as well as from more general sources on medieval Cistercian houses that shed light on the convent at Askeby. Finally, he examines how this nunnery has been described in various works of literature of Swedish history from the 16th century to modern volumes of Swedish cultural and ecclesiastical history.

Since this book is the first comprehensive and scholarly history of the Askeby nunnery, it is a significant and unique contribution to Sweden's history, as well as to the history of European monasticism.

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