Maria R.D. Corsi

Urbanization in Viking Age and Medieval Denmark

From Landing Place to Town

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and Medieval Denmark

The Early Medieval North Atlantic

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Abbreviations

AAGA *Aarsberetninger fra det Kongelige Geheimarchiv, Indeholdende Bidrag til Dansk Historie af Utrykte Kilder*. Vol 5. Edited by C.F. Wegener. Copenhagen, 1852-83.

DD *Diplomatarium Danicum*. Ser. 1-3. Copenhagen, 1938-.

DGK *Danmarks Gamle Købstadslovgivning*. 5 vols. Edited by Erik Kroman. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1951-1961.

DGL *Danmarks Gilder og Lavsskraaer fra Middelalderen*. 2 vols. Edited by C. Nyrop. 1899-1900. Reprint, Lyngby: Dansk Historisk Håndbogsforlag, 1977.

KVJ *Kong Valdemars Jordebog*. Vol. 1, *Text*. Edited by Svend Aakjær. Copenhagen: Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur, 1943. Reprint, Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980.

Saxo Saxo Grammaticus. *Gesta Danorum*. 2 vols. Edited by Karsten Friis-Jensen and Peter Zeeberg. Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2005.

Tschan Adam of Bremen. *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*. Translated with an introduction and notes by Francis J. Tschan and with a new introduction and selected bibliography by Timothy Reuter. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

VSD *Vitae Sanctorum Danorum*. Edited by M. Cl. Gertz. Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie, 1908.

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Introduction

The aim of this book is to use both written sources and archaeological findings to examine the history of urbanization in Denmark from approximately 500 to 1350 AD, a time in which political, religious, and economic processes reshaped the landscape dramatically. From 1050 to 1536, more than one hundred new towns were founded in Denmark, the majority of which before 1350. This book will explore how the political, religious, and economic changes of the Viking and Middle Ages created conditions in which towns could experience unprecedented growth. Towns would come to form the political, religious, and economic centres of the kingdom, and an investigation into the foundation and growth of towns in the Viking Age through the High Middle Ages forms the bulk of this work. Because towns took over functions that had been performed by certain specialized sites prior to this period, they will be the starting point for understanding why and how urbanization took place. The interplay of political, religious, and economic factors throughout the Middle Ages created a synergy directly responsible for the proliferation of towns in the High Middle Ages.

Definitions

The question of when urbanization began and towns first appeared hinges on how we define 'town'. This is more fraught than it might first seem, and any definition must be flexible enough to account for change over time regarding what types of settlements can be considered urban. As Susan Reynolds has pointed out in her 1977 study of English medieval towns, a definition is different from a description and so does not need to include all the characteristics of all towns. Accordingly, she defines a town as,

> a permanent human settlement with two chief and essential attributes. The first is that a significant portion (but not necessarily a majority) of its population lives off trade, industry, administration, and other non-agricultural occupations [...] The second essential attribute is that it forms a social unit more or less distinct from the surrounding countryside.[1]

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1   Reynolds, ix.

Reynolds also notes that this separateness of urban society will manifest itself in different political, administrative, and legal ways, and that the forms and degrees will vary.[2] This definition is general enough that it can include different urban forms, such as the North Sea *emporia*, which will be discussed in Chapter 2. While the *emporia* differed from later medieval towns in some significant ways, using a term such as proto-urban seems insufficient to me, since these settlements reveal evidence of both planning and centralized rule. The definition is also specific enough that non-agrarian sites such as seasonal markets will be excluded, as a settlement must be permanent in order to be considered a town.

Previous Scholarship[3]

There is a long history of scholarship devoted to the study of Danish medieval towns and how they came to be. This scholarship can be divided into two main traditions, that focused on the history of individual towns and that concerned with an overview of urban history. The works on individual towns will be addressed first. In 1869, J.F. Kinch published the first part of his history on Ribe, *Ribe Bys Historie og Beskrivelse*, which covers the medieval period up to the Reformation. This work is based on a thorough review of the original source material, but it is also presented in a dense and annalistic style. Many newer and more synthesized works have followed, particularly beginning in the late 1970s. In 1982, the history of medieval Odense was published in *Odense Bys Historie*, under the collective authorship of Henrik Thrane, Tore Nyberg, Finn Grandt-Nielsen, and Mikael Venge. The history of other individual medieval towns, including Aalborg, Aarhus, Viborg, Roskilde, and Ribe, would follow.[4] These works provide a thorough and multidisciplinary examination of each town's individual history.

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2   *Ibid.*, x.

3   The historiography in this section is partly based on that presented by Kristensen and Poulsen in *Danmarks Byer i Middelalderen*, which has an excellent and comprehensive overview of the scholarship. Kristensen and Poulsen, 28-31.

4   See Erik Johansen, Bodil Møller Knudsen, and Jan Kock. *Aalborgs Historie 1. Fra Aalborgs fødsel til Grevens Fejde 1534* (1992); Ib Gejl, ed. *Århus – Byens Historie 1* (1996); Frank A. Birkebæk, Ernst Verwohlt, and Mette Høj, eds. *Roskilde Bys Historie –tiden indtil 1536* (1992); Mette Iversen, Hans Krongaard Kristensen, Jesper Hjermind, Ole Fenger, Per Ingesman, Bjørn Poulsen, Paul G. Ørberg, and Marianne Bro-Jørgensen. *Viborgs historie, 1. Oldtid – 1726* (1998); Søren Bitsch Christensen, ed. *Ribe Bys Historie 1, 710-1520* (2010).

A separate collection of town histories grew out of a research project undertaken in 1976 by Det Humanistiske Forskningsråd (The Research Council for the Humanities) called *Projekt Middealderbyen* (The Medieval Town Project). Professor Olaf Olsen was in charge of the leadership council, and the goal was to develop best practices for Danish archaeology to use the limited resources which would be available for future archaeological investigations in the towns.[5] The project was decided for ten selected towns: Aalborg; Horsens; Køge; Odense; Næstved; Ribe; Roskilde; Svendborg; Viborg; and Aarhus. The method developed by the project included the collection of older maps, written sources, archaeological finds and reports, and geological drill samples that could inform about the original terrain and topography. The different source materials were analysed and interpreted with a view to identifying areas of future archaeological research about the age and topographical development of the towns. Initially, the idea was to publish the results in a combined atlas, but over the course of the project, it became clear that the material was well-suited for separate monographs on the individual towns.[6] The project remains incomplete, and the monographs for Roskilde and Horsens have yet to be published. While the project is limited in scope, it has been a valuable addition to the scholarship on medieval urbanization. Each monograph provides a thorough, detailed and hitherto unprecedented investigation and interpretation of the different source materials.

A separate tradition of historical writing on Danish urban history is concerned with medieval urban history more generally. The first scholar to present a comprehensive history of medieval Danish towns was Hugo Matthiessen, who wrote *Torv og Hærstræde: Studier i Danmarks Byer* (*Market Square and Army Road: Studies in Danish Towns*) in 1922, followed by *Middelalderlige Byer. Beliggenhed og Baggrund* (*Medieval Towns: Location and Background*) in 1927. Matthiessen saw the town as a living organism that underwent changes and shifts in internal conditions. He does not consider the towns individually, but rather as part of groups that are connected via lines of traffic and communication. As these lines shifted, the towns germinated, flowered, or declined in conjunction with larger movements and forces.[7] These traffic lines form the basis of his interpretation, and, in conjunction with the geography, he viewed their importance in connection with communication and exchange.

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5   Nielsen, *Middelalderbyen Ribe*, 5.
6   Madsen, 'Byarkæologi', 23-24.
7   Matthiessen, *Middelalderlige byer*, 16.

In direct opposition to Matthiessen's ideas is the work of the Swedish medieval archaeologist, Anders Andrén, who published *Den urbana scenen: Städer och samhälle i det medeltida Danmark* (*The Urban Scene: Towns and Society in Medieval Denmark*) in 1985. While Matthiessen was interested in continuity in urban history, Andrén was focused on discontinuity. For Andrén, the towns were part of feudal society in Denmark, and state formation was intimately connected with urban development. The formation of the Danish state was not linear, but rather characterized by discontinuity, which was also reflected in the towns. The towns thus had different characteristics in different periods corresponding to the different manifestations of central power. Consequently, Andrén sees early towns more as administrative centres with a break visible at c. 1200, after which point towns are better characterized as mercantile.

Ebbe Nyborg has questioned the traditional view of Danish towns as organic, mercantile formations as espoused by Matthiesen, as well as newer theories in the Swedish archaeological tradition that see early towns primarily as royal or religious administrative centres that experienced a break in continuity. According to Nyborg, the history of the Church in medieval Danish towns provides no evidence for discontinuity or transition from a more administrative to a more mercantile phase in high medieval urbanization. He also stresses that while the Church played a key role in medieval towns, they were complex and dynamic places, and that mono-causal explanations do not reflect that fact.[8]

In his 2010 publication, *Gensidig afhængighed: En arv fra fortiden. Danmarks middelalderbyer – et vidnesbyrd om spredningen af vestlig civilisation* (*Mutual Dependence: An Inheritance from the Past. Denmark's Medieval Towns – A Testimony about the Spread of Western Civilization*),[9] Jørgen Elsøe Jensen argues that towns developed in the High Middle Ages because of the adoption of the heavy plough. He sees this as the necessary first step in eliminating subsistence agriculture and allowing for a society in which people would be mutually dependent upon each other. Crucially, the plough, which Jensen argues spread to Transalpine Europe between 1000 and 1200, not only increased the available food supply, but it also necessitated large amounts of iron. Middlemen were needed to transport the iron between producers and consumers, which in Denmark led to coastal settlements along transport routes and eventually to a market economy and towns. Jensen's argument is reminiscent of Matthiesen's, with his focus on lines

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8   Nyborg, 'Kirke og sogn'.
9   Jensen, *Gensidig afhængihed.*

of communication and transport and view of towns as organic, bottom-up developments. It suffers from technological determinism, however, and does not consider the complexity of medieval society. Moreover, recent research indicates that the plough was in fact introduced into Denmark several centuries earlier than Jensen supposes, perhaps as early as the third century AD,[10] which undermines his argument.

More recent is *Danmarks Byer i Middelalderen* (*Denmark's Towns in the Middle Ages*) by Hans Krongaard Kristensen and Bjørn Poulsen, published in 2016. This work is a comprehensive overview of Danish urban history in the period 700-1536 AD, and it is the first Danish publication bringing together archaeological and written source material to examine the complexity of medieval towns and their development. The interdisciplinary approach owes much to that developed by *Projekt Middelalderbyen*, begun in the 1970s. Kristensen and Poulsen see the history of urbanization in medieval Denmark as multi-faceted and dynamic, and they are concerned with multiple aspects, including the physical, social, and cultural development of the towns. Rather than considering this process as one of either continuity or discontinuity, they argue that there are both elements at play.

This book builds on earlier research and is the first comprehensive and interdisciplinary overview of urbanization in medieval Denmark that is presented in English. It sees the growth of towns as being driven by both top-down and bottom-up forces with no single determinant. Rather, the work falls within the tradition that sees complexity in urbanization and seeks a multi-causal explanation. The arguments presented in the following are based on a variety of different types of sources, including historical, archaeological, and numismatic.

Written Sources

Medieval Denmark has unfortunately left comparatively little in the way of native written evidence. Before the eleventh century, written sources consist exclusively of inscriptions on rune stones and on some coins. The earliest known charter from Denmark dates to 1085, and records a religious grant made by the Danish king, Cnut IV. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, many different types of texts were produced, including saints' lives, histories, annals, liturgical books, collections of ecclesiastical and secular laws, charters, and property surveys. The lack of written material,

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10   Larsen, 'Muldfjældsplovens tidlige historie'.

particularly for the Early Middle Ages, can partly be explained by a later adoption of Latin literacy than was the case for other areas of Europe. Many records and manuscripts from the Middle Ages, however, were also destroyed over the centuries as the result of military campaigns and fires. Consequently, historians of medieval Denmark must make do with the moderate number of extant native sources.

Rune stones are among the only truly native written sources for the early period under study in this work. Runes are the symbols that make up the Scandinavian alphabet, the *fuþark*, so named for the first six letters of the alphabet. Rune stones are usually commemorative, and their inscriptions are, for the most part, brief and sometimes difficult to decipher. About 180 rune stones have been discovered in Denmark. In many cases, they were raised by family members commemorating the death of an individual. Sometimes, people had them carved to commemorate a building project, like a bridge, or to record a land transfer through sale or inheritance. Regardless of their original purpose, they give a glimpse into the society in which they were raised.

The twelfth century witnessed the first chronicles written in Denmark. The oldest such work is the *Roskilde Chronicle*, an anonymous history written in two parts. The first part, which makes up the bulk of the chronicle, dates to 1137/38, while the shorter continuation of the chronicle was written sometime in the early 1200s.[11] The Danish chronicler Sven Aggesen was writing in the late twelfth century, and he is the author of three types of composition that were commonly used to glorify twelfth-century monarchies: a law treatise; a political history in outline; and a royal pedigree. None of his works were openly dedicated to any patron, and Eric Christiansen, in his introduction to a translation of Sven's works, notes that it is unlikely that he was a propagandist, despite a discernible political tendency in his writing. Thus, his own views on the matters on which he was writing emerge in the work,[12] and this bias must be kept in mind when evaluating the historical validity of his statements.

The most famous of the medieval Danish chroniclers was Saxo Grammaticus, a contemporary of Sven Aggesen. He completed his seminal history of the Danes, *Gesta Danorum*, at the turn of the thirteenth century. This sixteen-volume work traces the history of Denmark from its legendary beginnings until 1185, when Duke Bugislav of Pomerania swore fealty to King Cnut VI. The earliest portions of his history are mythical, and for the period from 1076 to 1134, he largely paraphrased and rewrote using still

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11   Gelting, introduction to *Roskilde Krøniken*.
12   Christiansen, introduction to *The Works of Sven Aggesen,* 3-4.

extant sources, such as the *Roskilde Chronicle* mentioned above, as well as hagiographical literature.[13] His sources for the Danish civil war period from 1134 to 1157 are less clear, although he certainly relied at least partly on oral sources, such as the recollections of eyewitnesses like his patron, Archbishop Absalon of Lund (d. 1201). For the later period, from 1158 onwards, Saxo was working in an annalistic mode of writing, with a precise and detailed chronology, which seems to suggest that he had access to a steady supply of documentary sources. It is likely that he relied heavily on the archives of the archiepiscopal see of Lund, to which he was attached, but he also probably used royal archives.[14] Saxo was clearly biased in favour of his patron, Archbishop Absalon, and he displays a decided anti-German sentiment throughout the work, which must be taken into account. Nevertheless, his work should be considered fairly reliable for events of the later period.

The *vitae* (lives) of Danish saints, which while they are relatively few in number compared to the rest of Europe, are another important written source that not only indicates the adoption of Latin literacy in Denmark, but can also provide details on social and economic conditions in Denmark. Nine such *vitae* are contained in *Vitae Sanctorum Danorum*, while a tenth, the *vita* of Bishop Gunner of Viborg (d. 1251), has been published separately.

King Valdemar's Cadastre is an inventory of all the crown land compiled over several decades. This registry records not only the location and size of the king's holdings, but also his annual income from these lands. The primary section is dated 1231, while other lists were added later, into the 1250s. The towns belonging to the crown demesne appear in several of the lists, and the tax revenue and customs duties from these towns are also noted.

For written sources contemporary to the Early Middle Ages, historians must rely almost exclusively on foreign accounts. Frankish accounts of their interactions with their Danish neighbours beginning in the eighth century detail mainly political or military confrontations and are generally biased, as are the accounts written by the victims of Viking attacks. Nevertheless, these foreign chronicles and annals do provide information on Danish military endeavours as well as the actions of Danish political leaders. Other sources follow the endeavours of missionaries attempting to convert the heathens of Scandinavia. Written by Latin clerics, these accounts are highly biased against any non-Christians. Examples include the *Vita Anskari*, written by Rimbert, Anskar's successor as archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen in c. 875, and the *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, written by Adam

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13   See Weibull, *Saxo*.
14   Gelting, 'Saxo Grammaticus', 329-331.

of Bremen in c. 1075. Adam was one of the few early chroniclers to have actually travelled to Scandinavia, and in his work, he details his visit to the court of the Danish king, Svein Estridsen (r. 1047-1076). Although he clearly expresses his biases and prejudices against the Danes, he does provide a fairly comprehensive description of the Danish kingdom.

Foreign texts such as the ones described above remain important sources of information on Denmark throughout the Middle Ages. Chronicles and annals written in other parts of Europe, particularly in Germany and England, provide evidence of diplomatic and economic contacts, and they help to supplement the comparatively scant Danish sources. Papal letters also provide many important details, not just on the religious situation, but also on social and political aspects of medieval Denmark.

Many of the written documents concerning judicial matters in medieval Denmark have been collected in the *Diplomatarium Danicum.* These documents include foreign ones, such as excerpts from chronicles and papal letters. Other items included in the collection are native ones, such as charters, letters relating to church matters, and testaments. The entire collection spans the years from 789 to 1412.

Law Codes

The earliest written law codes in Denmark date to the first half of the thirteenth century. There are four main law codes: *Skånske Lov* (Scanian Law); *Jyske Lov* (Jutlandic Law); *Valdemars Sjællandske Lov* (Valdemar's Zealand Law); and *Eriks Sjællandske Lov* (Erik's Zealand Law). In addition, there is a Latin version of *Skånske Lov*, called *Anders Sunesens parafrase* (Anders Sunesen's paraphrase),[15] which, rather than being a strict translation of the law, is actually an annotated summary that may be based upon an older edition of the extant law code.[16] It is likely that the laws do contain some native rules and procedures, but the knowledge of canon, Roman, and other foreign laws is certain to have influenced their development. The essential portions of the medieval laws were new laws, and their compilations should be seen in the context of general European legal development.[17] It is also important to keep in mind that while some laws are an actual reflection of society, some are more a reflection of what the lawgiver wanted society to be.

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15   Anders Sunesen was the archbishop of Lund from 1201 to 1222.
16   Gelting, 'Skånske Lov', 72.
17   Sawyer and Sawyer, 18-20.

In addition to the provincial law codes, the thirteenth century also saw the codification of the first town laws. In all, there are 38 urban law codes from medieval Denmark still extant, nine from the thirteenth century, eight from the fourteenth, eighteen from the fifteenth, and three from the period 1500-1522. These numbers do not, however, reflect the number of towns for which medieval laws are extant, as several towns received more than one law code over the centuries. The number of towns with extant law codes is 28.[18] The earliest known town laws are from Schleswig, and they date to the early thirteenth century, although some individual parts clearly predate codification. Numerous other towns followed suit, with Ribe receiving its own laws in 1269, Flensburg in 1284, Aabenraa in 1292, Roskilde in 1268, and Copenhagen in 1254 and 1294. Other towns were then granted the rights to use the same laws that applied in these towns. Thus, the laws for Schleswig were also in use in Viborg, Aarhus, Horsens, and Æbeltoft. Likewise, Køge and Slangerup received the same laws as in Roskilde in 1288 and 1301/1302, respectively. By the fourteenth century, however, the law codes were not necessarily borrowed uncritically, in that provisions could be added on that were tailored to the individual towns. When Æbeltoft received a copy of Horsen's laws in 1317, for example, they received an additional right to regular market days.[19] Many of the early law codes from the towns, such as that of Viborg, do not survive. The earliest extant version of Viborg's laws dates to 1440, while that of Aarhus dates to 1441, Odense to 1477, Lund to 1361, and Malmø to 1353.[20] As with the provincial laws, it is important to consider to what extent they represent an ideal vs. the reality.

Archaeology

Archaeological excavations have yielded a wealth of new discoveries in recent decades in Iron Age and medieval Denmark. The material remains of culture are an important source of information, particularly when written sources are scarce. Native written sources are almost totally non-existent for Iron Age Denmark, with archaeological remains providing the bulk of information for this period. Therefore, a discussion of the archaeological

18   The 28 towns are: Borre; Flensburg; Haderslev; Halmstad; Helsingør; Hjørring; Holbæk; Horsens; Kolding; Copenhagen; Landskrona; Lund; Malmö; Maribo; Nyborg; Odense; Ribe; Ronneby; Roskilde; Skagen; Schleswig; Stubbekøbbing; Tønder; Varde; Viborg; Aabenraa; Aalborg; and Aarhus. Jacobsen, 'Dansk Købstadslovgivning', 395 & 395, n. 4.
19   Jacobsen, 'Dansk Købstadslovgivning', 402-403.
20   *Ibid.*, 433-439.

findings forms the basis for early chapters of this work. Most towns of medieval origin have been treated to some level of excavation, and many rural settlements have been examined as well. Some villages, such as Vorbasse in Jutland, have been excavated completely, and investigations of burial sites offers clues about daily life otherwise absent from written material. Urban archaeology as a field has grown considerably in recent decades, and excavations of individual towns can help to illuminate what life was like for their inhabitants, keeping in mind that only a small section of any given town has been excavated so far. Marine archaeology has also provided important new insights into ship technology, trade, and harbours. Archaeobotanical studies have contributed greatly to the understanding of vegetation and diet, which would otherwise be unknown. The use of archaeological material poses its own problems, such as the fact that the meaning of objects is not always clear from the archaeological record. Consequently, archaeologists all too frequently ascribe a religious purpose to any material that is not otherwise immediately explicable, which can lead to erroneous conclusions.

Numismatic Evidence

Coins and coin hoards are also important sources of information for Viking and medieval Denmark. When found in an archaeological context, they can help to date the other material under investigation. Moreover, coins can shed light on economic and cultural contacts, as well as domestic economic developments. Investigations into the production of coins also yields information on political developments and the effectiveness of government, since the minting of coins presupposes a central authority able to determine coin composition and mint outputs.

The lack of native written sources thus poses methodological problems for historians of medieval Denmark. As is the case for most parts of Europe, the extant sources mainly deal with small sectors of society, such as the aristocracy or the higher clergy. Moreover, most of them were written by ecclesiastics, so their biases towards religious and political matters must be considered. Also, because the Church dominated education, secular histories were written by men who, although not necessarily clerics, had been trained in the clerical tradition. Foreign accounts were written by men for whom Denmark was an 'other', which also has to be taken into account. In addition, political conditions between the Danish kingdom and that of the foreign commentator could have coloured his interpretation of the events

and circumstances in Denmark. The lack of written material thus poses a problem for gaining a full understanding of Danish history. The evidence for Denmark, however, can be compared to the much more fully documented history of the Continent and England, so that the findings for other parts of Europe can help in forming more comprehensive conclusions for the Danish material. Also, an interdisciplinary approach can prove fruitful considering the scanty written record.

The Scope of this Work

This book traces the history of urbanization from the specialized settlements of the Iron Age to the towns of the High Middle Ages. As such, it covers a period of roughly 900 years, from the fifth through the mid-fourteenth centuries. In Scandinavian scholarship, the conventional periodization for this time frame differs from that of the rest of Europe. Thus, the Iron Age covers a period of 800 years and is divided between the Roman Iron Age (c. 1-400 AD) and the Germanic Iron Age (c. 400-800 AD). The Viking Age (c. 750-1050), bridges the period between the Iron Age and the Middle Ages, which is itself divided into three parts: the Early Middle Ages (c. 1050-1200); the High Middle Ages (c. 1200-1350); and the Late Middle Ages (1350-1536). This study is concerned with developments from the Germanic Iron Age through the High Middle Ages. This time frame has been chosen since, in order to see how the urbanization process began, it is important to understand what pre-urban society was like. The book ends with the High Middle Ages, as that is the major period of growth and when most towns were founded. It is also the time in which towns became legal entities with certain jurisdictional rights, as expressed in town law codes. It ends before the advent Black Death, which would lead to a considerable slowdown of urban expansion in the following centuries. The geographical region covered corresponds with the kingdom of medieval Denmark, which includes present day Denmark, as well as parts of Schleswig-Holstein that are in the northern part of present-day Germany and the provinces of Halland, Blekinge, and Scania that now comprise parts of southern Sweden.

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the specialized settlements from Iron and Viking Age Denmark and examines their role in society. These so-called productive sites are distinguished between those connected with the local elite and coastal sites. These sites also can vary from large aristocratic or magnate complexes to smaller, more ordinary settlements with elements of craft activities. Other sites show evidence of specialized

Map 1. Denmark with towns founded before 1350.

craft production, such as textiles. Coastal sites or landing places, as the name implies, are smaller sites located along the coasts whose main function was ship preparation, but also show signs of craft activities and trade. None of these settlement types can be considered urban, although towns would later assume some of their functions.

Chapter 2 considers the *emporia* that were part of a northern European wide trend that began in the seventh century. These settlements, while not identical in form and function to later medieval towns, do have urban characteristics. They were located at a protected estuarine site close to a coastline in the territorial frontier of a kingdom. Serving as nodal points between various areas of northern Europe, they connected the different regions through trade and other forms of contact. This chapter explores the role of *emporia* to urbanization, and asks what part political, religious, and economic developments played in this process.

Chapter 3 examines urban developments in the last century of the Viking Age, from c. 950-1050. This was the period in which a recognizable Danish kingdom came to be, and the chapter considers how the consolidation of political power factored into the urbanization process. Political power was also in many ways intertwined with religion and the economy, and the ways in which all three factors, political, religious, and economic, worked together and independently to promote urban growth are explored. Moreover, both agricultural changes and changes in shipbuilding technology were really

beginning to take hold in this century, acting as both cause and effect of a society in flux. These social transformations would likewise have implications for urbanization.

Chapter 4 follows the urbanization process through the early medieval period, c. 1050-1200. It explores how the trends that were visible in the preceding century continued to influence the growth of towns. Politically, the Danish kings suffered shifting fortunes, with a decades long civil war fought over questions of power and succession. Nonetheless, the monarchy would still have an important role in promoting urban expansion, as well as influencing religious and economic developments. The chapter also examines how a shifting worldview and understanding of labour, which was felt across Europe, affected those living and working in the towns. It considers the consequences of the agricultural revolution to the economy overall and urban areas specifically, as well as how ideas about organization and regulation would influence towns and their inhabitants.

Chapter 5 follows the threads laid out in the previous chapters through the High Middle Ages, c. 1200-1350. It explores the consequences of changing conceptions of power and authority within the towns, as well as continued royal concerns regarding the regulation of trade. In addition, this was a particularly dynamic period with regards to trade and exchange, which saw an expansion in both the volume and types of goods traded. These economic developments would have a profound effect on the foundation of new towns and the growth of existing ones, as well as influencing topographical changes. Also, with more trade came a need for greater organization and more regulations, which would have implications for daily life in the towns. Finally, the chapter explores the ways in which the Church shaped the high medieval town, and how urban churches helped to connect towns with wider European developments in diverse areas such as architecture and education.

This book thus seeks to understand how and why Denmark became urbanized in the Middle Ages. There was no one single cause, but rather a confluence of factors, political, religious, and economic. Because towns did not spring in the Middle Ages fully formed from barren earth, questions regarding how the social and economic developments of the preceding centuries set the pre-conditions for urbanization will be the starting point for this study. These questions are the subject of the next chapter.