

The Most Powerful Women in the Middle Ages

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2026-07

Synopsis

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inLanguagei¼š	english	

The idea of a powerful woman in the Middle Ages seems like an oxymoron. Females in this time are imagined to be damsels in distress, trapped in a high tower, and waiting for knights to rescue them, all while wearing traffic-cones for a hat. After rescue, their lives improved little. Their career choices were to be either docile queens, housewives, or be burned at the stake for witchcraft. But what if this image of medieval women is a complete fiction? It turns out that it is. Powerful female rulers fill the Middle Ages. Anglo-Saxon queen Aethelflaed personally led armies into direct combat with Vikings in the 900s and saved England from foreign invasion. Byzantine Empress Theodora kept the empire from falling apart during the Nika Revolts and stopped her husband Justinian from fleeing Constantinople. Catherine of Siena almost single-handedly restored the papacy to Rome in the 1300s and navigated the brutal and male-dominated world of Italian politics. Joan of Arc completely reversed the fortunes of France in the Hundred Years War and commanded assaults on English fortresses despite being an illiterate 17-year-old peasant. This audiobook will look at the lives of the ten most powerful women in the Middle Ages. Whether it is the famed scholar Anna Komnene, who wrote the first narrative history, or Ottoman Queen Mother Kosem Sultan, who ruled the Islamic empire through three of her sons - all these women held extraordinary levels of power at a time when women were thought to not have any. It will explore how they managed to ascend the throne, what made their accomplishments so notable, and the impact they had on their respective societies after their deaths. It will also describe the historical background of these women, their cultures, and what about it helped or hindered their rise. Their stories still echo down to today. They are a testimony to the resiliency of individuals to accomplish extraordinary things, even if society puts on them enormous constraints.

Reader's comments

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