

The Saga Hoard Volume 1 Icelandic Sagas

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the last fifty years have seen a significant change in the focus of saga studies from a preoccupation with origins and development to a renewed interest in other topics such as the nature of the sagas and their value as sources to medieval ideologies and mentalities the routledge research companion to the medieval icelandic sagas presents a detailed interdisciplinary examination of saga scholarship over the last fifty years sometimes juxtaposing it with earlier views and examining the sagas both as works of art and as source materials this volume will be of interest to old norse and medieval scandinavian scholars and accessible to medievalists in general

this book explores accounts in the sagas of icelanders of encounters with foreign peoples both abroad and in iceland who are portrayed according to stereotypes which vary depending on their origins notably inhabitants of the places identified in the sagas as Írlanđ skotland and vínland are portrayed as being less civilized than the icelanders themselves this book explores the ways in which the Íslendingasögur emphasize this relative barbarity through descriptions of diet material culture style of warfare and character these characteristics are discussed in relation to parallel descriptions of icelandic characters and lifestyle within the Íslendingasögur and also in the context of a tradition in contemporary european literature which portrayed the icelanders themselves as barbaric comparisons are made with descriptions of barbarians in classical roman texts primarily sallust but also caesar and tacitus showing striking similarities between roman and icelandic ideas about barbarians

this four part work describes and analyses democracy and despotism in tribes city states and nation states the theoretical framework used in this work combines weberian aristotelian evolutionary anthropological and feminist theories in a comparative historical context the dual nature of humans as both an animal and a consciously aware being underpins the analysis presented part one covers tribes it uses

anthropological literature to describe the campfire democracy of the african bushmen the pygmies and other band societies its main focus is on the tribal democracy of the cheyenne iroquois huron and other tribes and it pays special attention to the role of women in tribal democracies part two describes the city states of mesopotamia syria and canaan phoenicia and includes a section on the theocracy of the jews this part focuses on the transition from tribal democracy to city state democracy in the ancient middle east from the sumerian city states to the phoenician part three focuses on the origins of democracy and covers greece mycenaean dorian and the golden age it presents a detailed description of the tribal democracy of archaic greece emphasizing the causal effect of the hoplite phalanx military formation in egalitarianizing greek tribal society next it analyses the transition from tribal to city state democracy with the new commercial classes engendering the oligarchic and democratic conflicts described by plato and aristotle part four describes the norse tribes as they contacted rome the rise of kingships the renaissance of the city states and the parliamentary monarchies of the emerging nation states it provides details of the rise of commercial city states in renaissance italy hanseatic germany and the netherlands

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