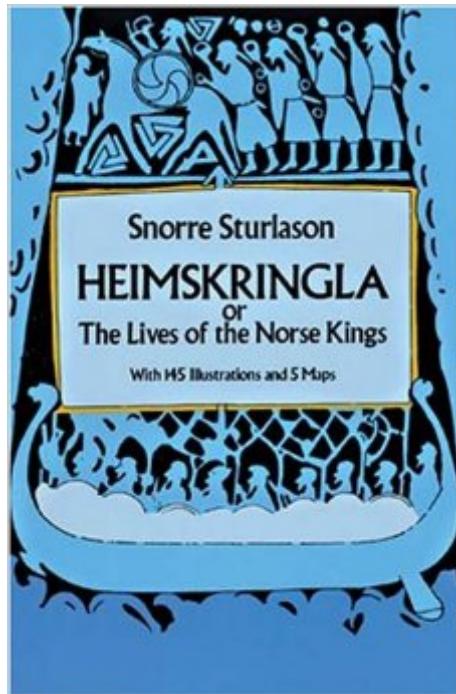


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Heimskringla: Or, The Lives Of The Norse Kings



Synopsis

Great classic by Icelandic poet/chieftain chronicles the reigns of 16 high kings descended from the warrior-wizard god Odin. Major section on 15-year reign of Olav II Haraldson, patron saint of Norway. Based on earlier histories, oral traditions, plus new material by author, all presented with intelligence, warmth and objectivity. Over 130 illustrations and 5 maps.

Book Information

Paperback: 832 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; Reprint edition (May 1, 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486263665

ISBN-13: 978-0486263663

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1.8 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (12 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #682,471 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #41 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Scandinavian #242 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > European > German #1256 in Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Antiques & Collectibles

Customer Reviews

Few topics might have a less boring promise to them than a dreary, commented narration of the deeds of long-dead monarchs. But, as it happens, in the skilful hands of that remote, enigmatic figure that was Snorre Sturlason, this compendium becomes a thrilling subject likely to satisfy the mind of the professional historian and thirst for adventure of the young, budding intellectual taur. Mr. Sturlason is indeed a kind of mysterious figure. Icelandic by birth, he would no doubt feel at home in the world of modern politics; as a matter of fact, he might have one or two things to teach any well seasoned contemporary politician. Why he devoted his life to political scheming and Norse history, we shall never know for sure; but should be under no illusion about his prowess in both disciplines. He's no doubt the Herodotus of the northern latitudes - and the Machiavelli. Nonetheless, in analogy to other historical figures, he machinated and intrigued a bit too far, which brought him his demise, after an anyway rather long life. At the thirteenth century, the historical framework that saw the flourishing of Snorre Sturlason, the dynasties of Norwegian kings have come to an end. Not surprisingly so though, due to the extreme bellicosity and, from our late twentieth century point of

view, hooligan-like features that characterized that string of monarchs. Snorre's tale starts at the mythical times of the creation of the world, eons ago, with a crisp narrative of the well-known old Norse cosmology. It is not clear where mythology terminates and history begins, and one cannot help but wondering if the scheming historian kept the ambiguity on purpose.

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