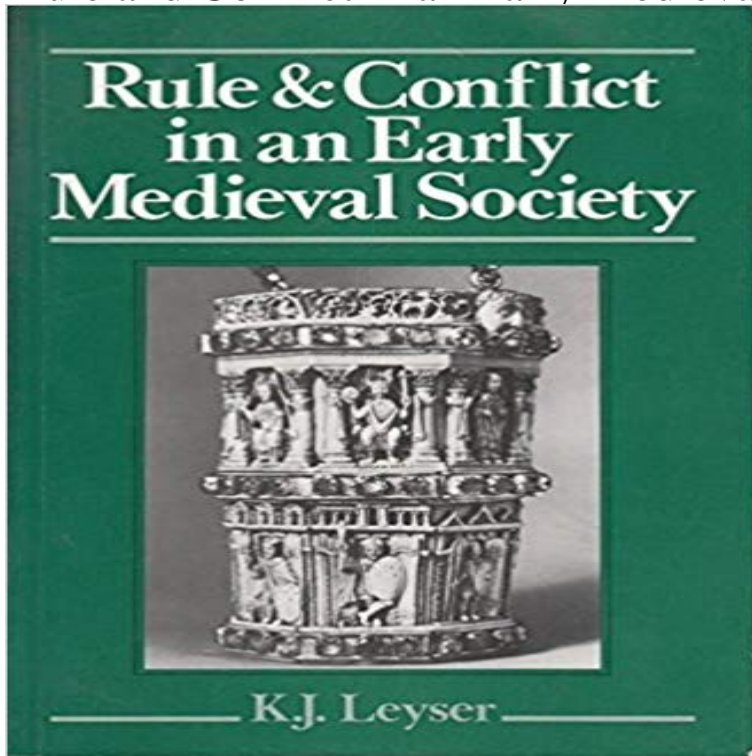


## Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony



This book is a new departure in the history of early medieval Germany. Its theme is the relationship between the Saxon nobles and their kings in the tenth century and the first decade of the eleventh, when the Ottonian rulers were confronted with violent conflicts in their native land and, indeed, in their own family. The author examines the roots of discontent in the context of a segmented and fiercely individualistic warrior society. Stressing the familial and domestic character of the feuds, he shows how the very success of the Ottonians empire-building created inequalities among their aristocratic subjects and kinsmen. The second part of the book focuses on the exalted position of the women of the royal family and Saxon aristocracy, and is supplemented by a remarkable genealogical table. Professor Leyser concludes with a discussion of sacral kingship - the belief that the king was the vicar of Christ and resistance to him therefore sinful - and its actual effectiveness as a curb on aristocratic ambitions and enmities. This important and original interpretation of the history of the Saxon empire makes sense of a period which has often baffled historians. The author does not merely offer a political explanation, but also draws upon insights from social anthropology for a deeper understanding of the nature of this distant society and the causes of its habitual unrest.

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