



The Secret History of Democracy

Dr Benjamin Isakhan

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The Secret History of Democracy explores the intriguing thesis that there is a lot more democracy in human history than historians generally admit, and presents some surprising evidence for this case. The idea that democracy could have a 'secret' history might at first seem strange. Indeed, the history of democracy has become so standardized, is so familiar and appears so complete that it is hard to believe it could hold any secrets. The central argument of this book is that there is much more to the history of democracy than this foreshortened genealogy admits. There is a whole 'secret' history, too big, complex and insufficiently 'Western' in character to be included in the standard narrative.

In exploring this 'secret' democratic heritage, the contributors to this volume establish that democracy was developing in the Middle East, India and China before classical Athens, clung on during the 'Dark Ages' in Islam, Iceland and Venice, was often part of tribal life in Africa, North America and Australia and is developing today in unexpected ways through grassroots activism. This book is a timely collection of essays that make a substantial contribution to the emerging debate about the history of democracy and set the tone for future discussion and research.

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