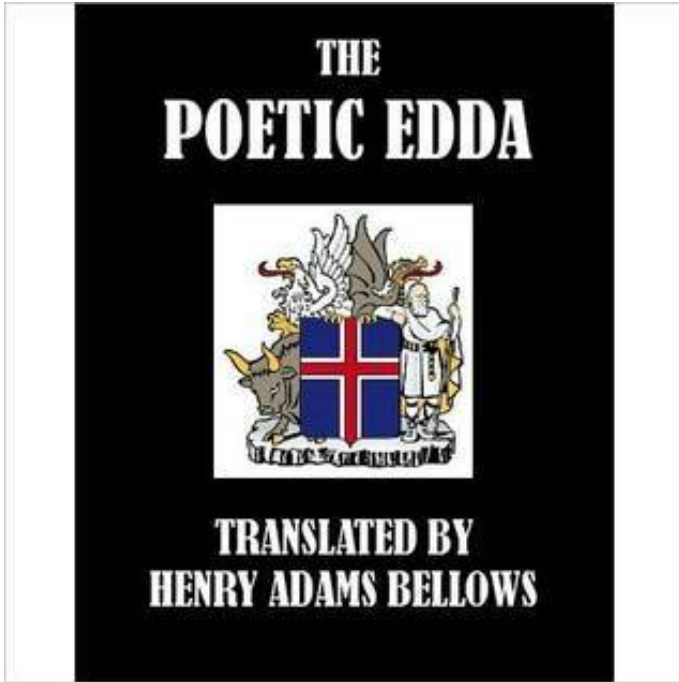

Anonymous

The Poetic Edda



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Description

Compiled by an unknown author in Iceland around 1270, and based on sources dating back centuries earlier, the single main manuscript of The Elder Edda is one of the literary wonders of the medieval world and the greatest source of knowledge of Viking lore in existence. These mythological and heroic poems tell of gods and mortals from an ancient era: the giant-slaying Thor, the doomed Volsung family, the hell-ride of Brynhild and the cruelty of Alti the Hun. Eclectic, incomplete and fragmented, these verses nevertheless retain their stark beauty and their power to enthrall, opening a window on to the thoughts, beliefs and hopes of the Vikings and their world. Andy Orchard's new translation faithfully conveys the spare, unadorned style of the original metre and language. The glossed text is accompanied by four additional poems, a chronology, further reading, an index of names, a note on pronunciation, and an introduction discussing the poems in detail, the history of The Elder Edda and its influence on writers from Tennyson to Tolkien."

Insightful reviews

Stephen: If for no other reason, this translation is remarkable for its scrupulous adherence to English words of Germanic origin - I cannot recall a single instance of finding a Greek or Latin root. The language and meter are deliciously archaic, and give a feel for the grammatical richness which has now largely fallen away from our modern tongue.

John Snow: *The Poetic Edda* is not a book you read from beginning to end like a novel. *The Poetic Edda* contains 35 poems, some of which are very complicated. I usually read and study one or a few poems at a time, put the book aside, and then get back to it later. But the more times I read the poems, the more I appreciate their poetic qualities and the glimpses they give into the deep mysteries and wisdom of Norse mythology.

Together with *The Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson, *The Poetic Edda* is the best medieval source for the study of Old Norse mythology and cosmology. The poems are about the creation of the world, of *æsir* and *vanir* (the two kind of gods), of giants, dwarves, elves, *volvas*, *valkyries* and all kinds of creatures, including the *norns* who decide our fate, and *Yggdrasil*, the World Tree. The poems tell how Thor fights the giants, of Freya's seductive powers, of Siv's beauty, and of Loki's treachery. But first of all the poems are about Odin's obsessive quest for knowledge and the truth about his own death in Ragnarok, the Doom of Goods. The Poetic Edda also tells the stories of Helgi Hundingsbane and his valkyrie bride and the tragic love between Sigurd the Dragonslayer and Brynhild.

It may seem out of place to recommend the reading of another book before you read the one which is up for review, but for the first-time reader who knows little about Norse mythology, [Snorri's Edda](#) is actually a better starting point. In his book Snorri explains the old poems and the myths, and the mythological stories are retold in plain prose. With this background it is easier to understand the poems in *The Poetic Edda*. But it definitely helps that the Oxford edition of the poems is equipped with an index, explanatory notes, genealogies, and an introduction.

Being accustomed to the rhythm and non-Latinate wordings of Norwegian translations, I find it a bit strange to read English versions of the old poems, but I am in no position to compare Carolyne Larrington's translation with other English translations. It is nevertheless very refreshing to get a new perspective on the poems given by another language. And, as I said in the beginning of the review, the more I read the Edda poems, the more impressed I get.

Eadweard: I liked how Hollander used mostly words of Germanic origin, it fits well.

Very much liked all the lays and poems that dealt with the Volsungs, I think that that is probably the most interesting saga of them all.

sologdin: recognized for being one of many earliest plagiarisms of professor Tolkien's LotR.

Michael Arnold: I completely enjoyed this. It is, though, the type of publication you must learn a minimum of twice, and extremely rigorously for you to get every little thing attainable from it. Andy Orchard's translation is usually considered as beautiful good, probably the simplest translation of the Elder Edda (or Poetic Edda) for the layperson. That said, this translation is clearly no longer without fault. I have been fortunate in my studying of the Edda, in that I have had conversations with knowledgeable in Norse poetry who has helped me comprehend those poems, increase my adventure of them, and warned me approximately particular issues of the text. Orchard translates, for example, the be aware 'argr' as 'Cock-craver', specifically in Lokasenna. Cock-craver is Orchard's go-to translation of that word, and it misses the subtlety of the unique word, that could additionally suggest feminine, homosexuality, deviancy and cowardice. 'Cock-craver' makes each person Loki is jesting with appear like whores, and whereas which may be precise approximately Frayja, isn't really precise of every body Loki is conversing with. There is, I felt, anything very Ecologic or pastoral a few lot of those poems, particularly within the surroundings and they are conversations. How like Virgil. And this is often mirrored in one other user's attention-grabbing evaluation of this publication that took factor with calling this ebook 'A publication of Viking Lore' - on the grounds that so much Scandinavian and Icelandic humans to whom those poems had cultural value have been basically agricultural, and never Vikings. A minor complaint, yet person who should be said. however it additionally interesting, because it indicates not only the vast expanse of the Nordic international (that it was once in a position to echo Roman texts) however it additionally has a Christian 'corruption', within the related approach as Beowulf has a Christianization, that vague elements and make others misplaced to history. there's genuine secret in those poems, and they're in brief wonderful. talking approximately Beowulf, Syld is mentioned, being round the beginning of Christ. This e-book - as I'd have already suggested, I intend to at the very least indicate it - could be a springboard onto different translations and interpreting scholarship on those poems yourself. it's a key to a mead corridor jam-packed with treasure, take it and love it, it really is wonderful.

Paul Haspel: The poetry of the Poetic Edda most likely reads top within the unique outdated Norse; yet in the event that your outdated Norse skillability isn't really what it as soon as was, this translation by means of Lee Hollander of the collage of Texas is an efficient solution to get to grasp those fascinating poems from the realm of the Vikings. Hollander's advent is scholarly

– particularly scholarly – with large realization to the metric and power musical values of previous Norse poetic syllabication; if all you sought after was once to get to Thor swinging his hammer, the creation would possibly not do a lot for you. And the footnotes contain untranslated passages of Latin and classical Greek; clearly, Hollander is watching for that his viewers for this booklet will own a undeniable point of education. But the publication takes to the air whilst Hollander finishes demonstrating his scholarly bona fides and will get directly to the poetry. The poems typically take the form of dialogues, in which the audio system will be Norse gods like Odin, Thor, Freya, and Baldur; or frost-giants; or usual mortals. yet they quarrel, and dispute, and ask one another tricky questions, and in that approach the drama of the poems inheres. Old Norse poetry relies strongly upon alliteration, and that i felt that Hollander occasionally attempted too tough to catch that caliber of the eddic poems, as whilst Odin within the *Vafþrúðnismál* (“The Lay of Vafþrúthnir”) asks. “[H]ow soars the solar at the tender heavens,/When snatched through Fenrir’s fangs?” (p. 50) Sometimes, the interpretation virtually turns out too self-consciously “literary,” too “Shakespearean,” as whilst Skathi within the *Lokasenna* (“The Flyting of Loki”) angrily cries out to the trickster god that “Thou paintings lusty, Loki, yet lengthy thou wilt not/a unfastened tail wag as thou list” (p. 100), or whilst Sigrún in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II* (“The moment Lay of Helgi the Hunding-Slayer”) says to Helgi, “As fain am I to discover thee, Helgi,/As Óthin’s hawks, hungry for meat,/when struggle they smell and hot corpses,/and dew besprent the sunlight see” (p. 150). “Besprent”? Really? but the bleak and primal energy of those Norse myths of valor, revenge, and destiny comes via nonetheless. As with the *Prose Edda*, i locate that I take pleasure in even more the tales of the Norse gods and their adventures; through contrast, the tales of Sigurth and Brynhild and Gunnar and Guðrun, the tales that gave upward push to the *Nibelungenlied* and Wagner’s *Ring cycle*, appear to me completely depressing. yet all of those tales are a part of the Norse world, and this translation of the *Poetic Edda* captures the ability of this poetry particularly well.

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