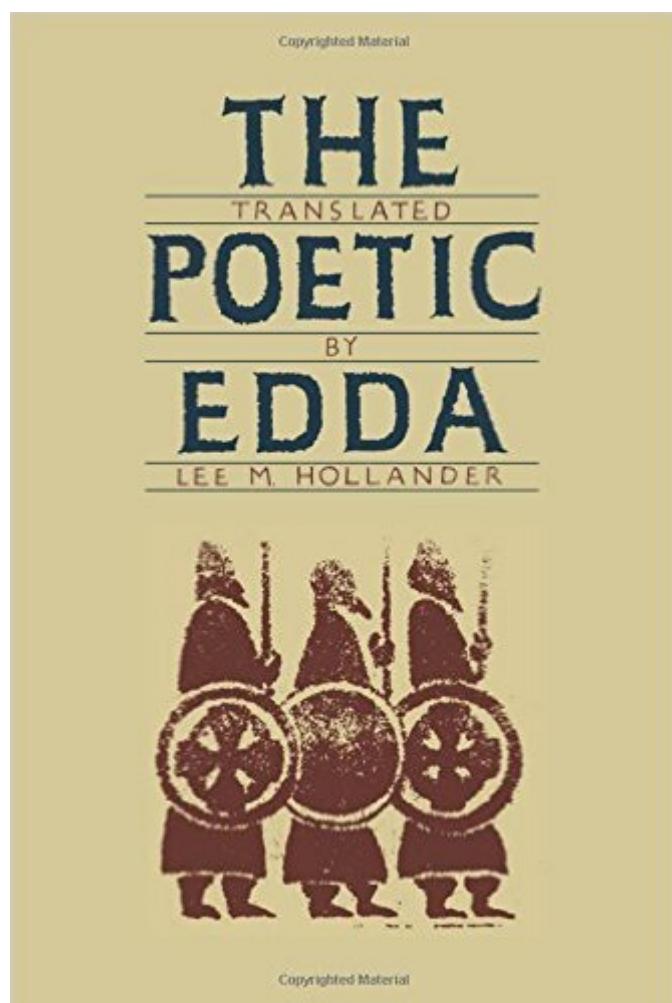


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The Poetic Edda



Synopsis

The Poetic Edda comprises a treasure trove of mythic and spiritual verse holding an important place in Nordic culture, literature, and heritage. Its tales of strife and death form a repository, in poetic form, of Norse mythology and heroic lore, embodying both the ethical views and the cultural life of the North during the late heathen and early Christian times. Collected by an unidentified Icelander, probably during the twelfth or thirteenth century, The Poetic Edda was rediscovered in Iceland in the seventeenth century by Danish scholars. Even then its value as poetry, as a source of historical information, and as a collection of entertaining stories was recognized. This meticulous translation succeeds in reproducing the verse patterns, the rhythm, the mood, and the dignity of the original in a revision that Scandinavian Studies says "may well grace anyone's bookshelf."

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (57 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

first of all, here is my review of the poetic edda itself, which i give five stars:the poetic edda is one of the greatest collections of poetry of all times. it contains the beautifully vivid "volupso", the norse apocalypse poem, the comedic ballads, the "wrangling of Loki" and "Lay of Thrmy", the proverbial wisdom of the "sayings of har" and the mournful lays of the larger-than-heroes, the volsungs and niflungs. the edda is better written than Beowulf, the more popular northern epic, and the rhythmic verse gives it more aesthetic appeal than most epic poems. the meter, based on alliteration and caesura, whether rhythmic fornyrdislag or lilting ljudahattr, is much more pleasing to the ear than classical blank verse, which has sticter syllable stress patterns. unfortunately, the edda is not in very

good condition. There are gaps in the manuscripts, and there are numerous places where it appears a scribe covered up a gap with extraneous material. The poems vary greatly in quality, and you need a good understanding of Norse myths to understand what is going on (I recommend *Norse Stories: Retold from the Eddas* by Hamilton Mabie). None the less, the *Edda* is a wonderful read for fans of poetry, epics, or Norse mythology. Unfortunately, of the numerous translations of the *poetic edda*, only four are in print, those of Bellows, Dronke, Hollander, and Larrington. Bellows is an excellent translation, at least aesthetically, and it does a very good job of preserving the rhythm, if not the precise metrics of the original. It is very readable and fairly accurate. Unfortunately, only half of it is in print, but I would recommend it highly. You can find the full text at [...] but reading off the computer just isn't the same.

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