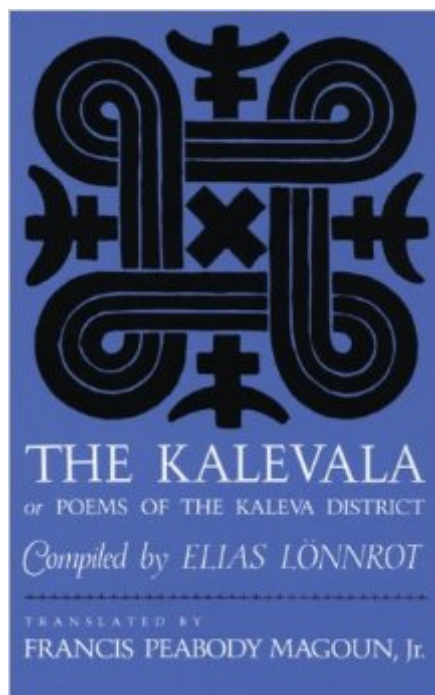


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The Kalevala: Or Poems Of The Kaleva District



Synopsis

The national folk epic of Finland is here presented in an English translation that is both scholarly and eminently readable. To avoid the imprecision and metrical monotony of earlier verse translations, Magoun has used prose, printed line for line as in the original so that repetitions, parallelisms, and variations are readily apparent. The lyrical passages and poetic images, the wry humor, the tall-tale extravagance, and the homely realism of the Kalevala come through with extraordinary effectiveness.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you have found this review appearing with the Magoun translation of "The Kalevala" -- that is a welcome paperback incarnation of a solid, reliable, standard translation, originally published four decades ago. I have reviewed the hardcover edition of this translation (see the variant title, "The Kalevala: Poems of the Kaleva District"), and also Magoun's similar rendering of the epic's first version, "The Old Kalevala," and will summarize my description of the Finnish "national epic," and its origin, here. However, you may be seeing this review with the Keith Bosley verse translation of the (New) "Kalevala," another reputable version. Having found that the two translations seem inseparably linked in terms of reviews, I have revised and expanded an older posting to take fuller account of both; if this review seems familiar to you, that is probably why. "Kalevala," variously translated as "Kaleva District" or "Land of Heroes," is a nineteenth-century compilation, revision, and expansion of narratives, spells and charms, and proverbial wisdom collected from the

Finnish-speaking peasants and fisherman of areas of modern Finland and Russia. It is made up largely, but not entirely, of "runos," narrative songs which even then survived only in isolated, "fringe" areas; ballads with clear connections with other cultures also make an appearance. References to "The Kalevala" are usually to its second edition (1849), also distinguished as the "New Kalevala" in comparison to its shorter predecessor, the "Old Kalevala" (1835). The material is, for the most part, clearly pagan in origin, with hints of roots in the Viking Age, if not earlier, but processed through centuries of Christianity, Catholic and Lutheran in Finland proper, Russian Orthodox in the Karelia district.

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