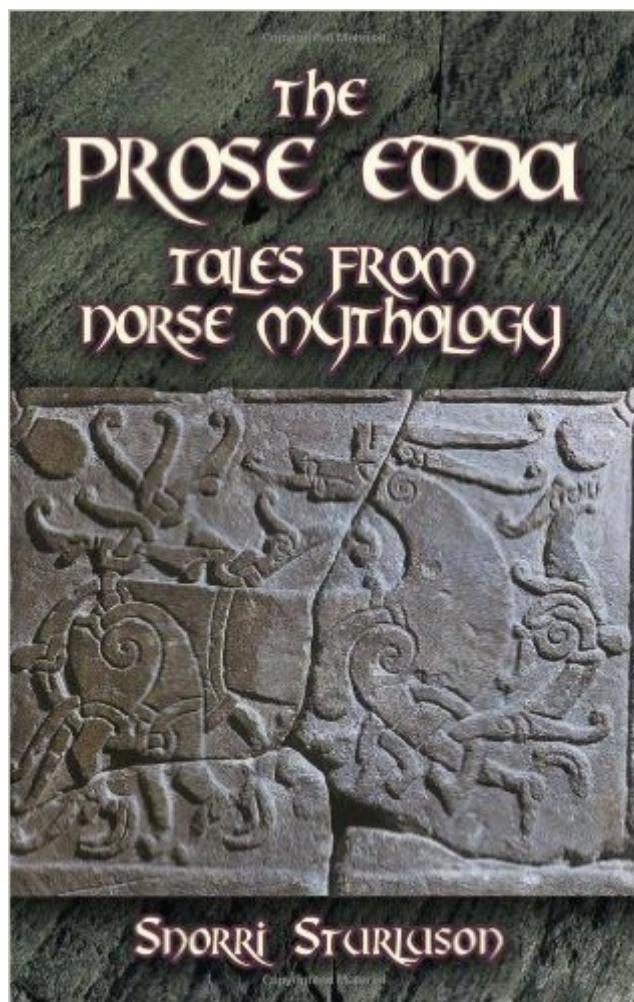


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The Prose Edda: Tales From Norse Mythology (Dover Books On Literature & Drama)



Synopsis

Gods and giants bestride these ancient tales, in which warrior queens and noble heroes battle with elves, dwarves, and fearsome monsters. Spanning the dawn of the world's creation to its fiery destruction, these gripping Norse legends chronicle the triumphs and tragedies of a lost era. Resounding with a poetic instinct for the picturesque, the dramatic, and the human, they form vivid portraits of the characters' personalities. They also depict the comic and disastrous results of ambition, passion, and destiny. The wellspring of modern knowledge of Norse mythology, these sagas preserved the Vikings' narrative style from an invading European influence. Iceland's great literary genius, Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241), combined oral traditions, genealogical records, and old songs to immortalize his country's glorious past. *Edda* means "poetic art," and Sturluson's guidebook for Icelandic poets has been a timeless inspiration for generations of writers around the world, including Wagner, Borges, and Tolkien.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jean I. Young's translation of selections from "The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson: Tales from Norse Mythology," with an Introduction by the distinguished Icelandic scholar Sigurdur Nordal, was originally issued in 1954 by Bowes & Bowes Publishers Ltd., Cambridge, with an American edition from the University of California Press; I have a 1964 hardcover printing of the latter version. UC Press has been reprinting it as a trade paperback for decades. It currently has a new cover (an

apparently Victorian vision of Thor in his thunder-chariot, wielding his hammer against the Giants), but 's "Look Inside" function has the old green cover showing a giant eagle carrying off Loki, from an older edition. Not a very good representation of the scene as described inside -- besides Loki's clichÃ©d horned helmet, the hapless trickster should be dragging on the ground, not soaring over the mountains -- but it is a dramatic composition. (The digital version looks much nicer than the cover of my faded and crumbling 1971 printing of the paperback!) The "Prose Edda" is the main source for a great deal of what we know (or think we know) about the myths and legends of pre-Christian Scandinavia; and often has guided, not always for the better, the interpretation of other, less entertaining or more opaque sources. Leaving aside challenges to Snorri's veracity about his sources, Wagner's "Twilight of the Gods," for example, follows what seems to be a mis-reading or mis-hearing of a word on Snorri's part. (I would follow those who accept Snorri as mainly very reliable, but sometimes in error about what was already in the twelfth century a fading pagan past.

(or its software) has not seen fit to transfer reviews of earlier printings of this book to the new one -- and in fact it seems to have lost track of my review altogether. I'm reposting it here, with some changes; it is still possible that it will wind up with a near-duplicate review, the next time the catalogue gets juggled. Jean I. Young's translation of selections from "The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson: Tales from Norse Mythology," with an Introduction by the distinguished Icelandic scholar Sigurdhur Nordal, was originally issued in 1954 by Bowes & Bowes Publishers Ltd., Cambridge, with an American edition from the University of California Press; I had a 1964 hardcover printing of the latter version. The title is the one most common in present usage; it can also be found as "Snorri's Edda" (Edda Snorra Sturlusonar), and as the "Younger Edda," to distinguish it from the so-called Elder Edda, itself currently best known as the Poetic Edda. UC Press has been reprinting Young's translation as a trade paperback for decades; this is, apparently, its third main incarnation. It currently has a splendid new cover, a gable from a Norwegian stave church (if I am not mistaken). A previous cover had an apparently Victorian vision of Thor in his thunder-chariot, wielding his hammer against the Giants; but 's "Look Inside" function for it had the older green cover showing a giant eagle carrying off Loki, from an older edition. Not a very good representation of the scene as described inside -- besides Loki's cliche horned helmet, the hapless trickster should be dragging on the ground, not soaring over the mountains -- but it is a dramatic composition. (The digital version looked much nicer than the cover of my faded and crumbling 1971 printing of the paperback!

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