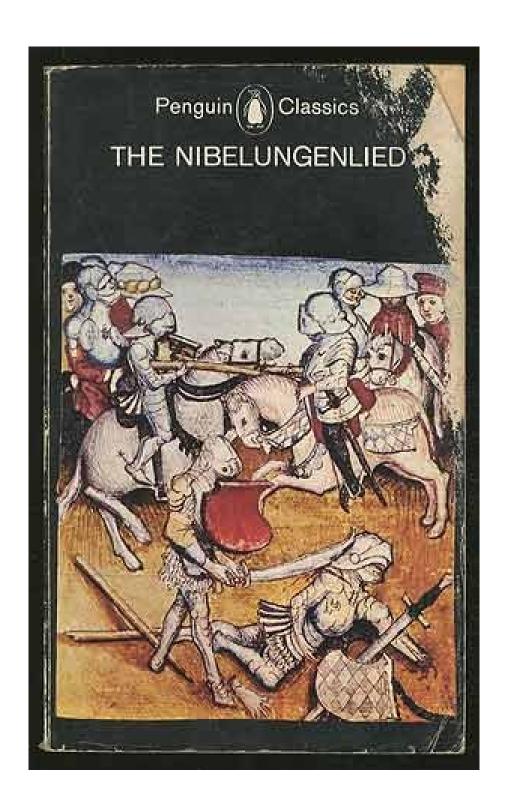


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I've seen two Nibelungenlied translations so it is not the ...

By Lothringen

I've seen two Nibelungenlied translations so it is not the fault of the translators, but this work is wordy to the point of losing interest. Far more true to the Germanic feeling are the Prose Edda, Rebsamen's Beowulf xlation, with their terse alliterative meter,

59 of 60 people found the following review helpful.

From Attila to Tolkien

By Peter Reeve

Wagner's operas and Tolkien's tales are modern incarnations of legends that have evolved in the European consciousness for centuries, in much the same way as the Arthurian cycle of stories. The Nibelungenlied (Song of the Nibelungs), which dates from around 1200 CE and probably originated in Austria, is one of the best known and most significant versions of those legends. It takes as its main theme the life and death of the hero Siegfried and the revenge of his widow Kriemhild. It also incorporates characters and events based on the lives of Atilla the Hun and Theodoric the Great.

This is a valuable insight into how literature evolved in Medieval Europe. If you are a Wagner or Tolkien fan, or a lover of epic fantasy, you will want to read it, both for historical interest and for the beauty and strangeness of some of the imagery. The inconsistencies in its plot and characterizations are a consequence of the poet trying to merge contradictory sources and also to present a version of pagan legends that would be acceptable to a Christian audience. The result is sometimes awkward but always interesting.

A.T Hatto's Penguin edition is definitely the one to get. There is a brief forward, then the story itself, and then more than 100 pages of editorial, giving you a glossary of character's names, the history of the poem, etc, etc. Probably more than you ever wanted to know about medieval German literature. (Although, having said that, it is odd that there is no mention of the Volsung Saga, which is really needed to complete the picture).

This is a lively, readable and authoritative prose translation. If, like me, your medieval German is less than fluent and likely to remain so, then this is the version to read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

I couldn't put it down

By Marie Anne A.

When many of us think of medieval literature, we think "boooorrrring!!!" Some of it seems incomprehensibe. I wasn't sure I'd like it- I can't even pronounce the title!!!! But wow, once I started this book, I couldn't stop!

It's not just the beautifully translated prose! The introduction is written to spark your curiousity \*and\* soothe your anxieties. After reading the introduction, I read "An Introduction to the Second Reading" and browswed through the appendices. A.T. Hatto knows we won't understand everything in this story- heck, scholars admit that some traditions have been lost in obscurity. Hatto points out what parts are excessive, confusing, and obscure. (You don't have to feel unenlightened for not knowing the medieval Germanic symbolism of the "ring and girdle" - scholars are hypothesizing!)

I approached the story with confidence. It's a sad story filled with many questions. It can be criticized from many perspectives. The treatment of women and their own power comes into question.

Food for thought- Brynhild's viriginity vs. her strength. Does Siegfried rape her? Kriemhild knows what happened in that- why is she "okay" with Siegfriend raping (or subduing, at the very least) Brynhild? Is Brynhild's husband, Gunther, guilty of spousal rape?

The story is especially intense after Brynhild and Kriemhild's "quarrel". And it is pretty much sad to the conclusion. I wasn't sure which side to take. I kept trying to guess the motives of the principle players. The end of the story broke my heart- no one wins... in any way... at any thing...

I am now rereading the appendices that interest me. I'm so interested in this story that I already added two different translations to my wish list, as well as the Poetic Eddas with the heroic lays. This book is an AMAZING introduction to a beautiful story!

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