

**THE PROSE OR YOUNGER
EDDA
COMMONLY ASCRIBED
TO SNORRI STURLUSON**

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The Prose or Younger Edda Commonly Ascribed to Snorri Sturluson by George Webbe Dasent

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SNORRI STURLUSON

TRANSLATED FROM THE OLD NORSE

BY

GEORGE WEBBE DASENT, B. A. OXON.

STOCKHOLM.

NORSTEDT AND SONS

1842.

LONDON: WILLIAM PICKERING.

TO THOMAS CARLYLE.

PREFACE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

The short work now for the first time, it is believed, laid before the English reader, forms in the original the first part of a collection published by Prof. RASK at Stockholm in 1818, under the following title. "Snorra-Edda ásamt Skáldu og þar með fylgjandi Rit-gjörðum". "Snorri's Edda together with the Skálda and the Treatises thereto belonging". It was the opinion of that great Philologist that this collection grew together in the family of Snorri Sturluson, the work of several hands at different times; and the Translator has not scrupled to separate writings, which have scarcely any other connection than the fact of their being found following one another in the same MS. At some other time he looks forward to stating his convictions on this matter, and his reasons for them, at greater length; but for the present he must content himself with saying, that his opinion is in the main the same as that mentioned above as expressed by Prof. RASK.

Without entering into any discussion on the present occasion, as to the time at which the younger Edda was written, or as to its author; The Translator wishes to say that he

has felt no hesitation in placing the "Foreword to the Edda", along with the "Afterwords to Gylfi's Mocking and the Edda", at the end of the volume, partly because they are plainly of a later age, but chiefly because he is desirous to save the reader from falling at the very threshold, into those false conceptions concerning the nature of the Asa in the old Norse Mythology, with which the Foreword in question is filled.

He has also taken the liberty of printing separately and under a different title, the chapter which in the original stands as the first in "Gylfi's Mocking", because however interesting, it has clearly nothing in common with what follows, and is doubtless, the interpolation of some early copyist, who thought himself bound to write down at the same time all he knew about Gylfi, and could find no better place for this myth than to set it first: it is remarkable that in the Upsala MS., said by some to be the oldest extant, this chapter is omitted.

With regard to the Translation itself, his chief wish was to make it as faithful as possible, and though he knows that it might have been smoother throughout, and that it contains

much that will seem harsh and abrupt, both in wording and construction, to the polished ears of the 19th century, he could not help himself in these respects, his aim being to make a translation, not a paraphrase. In one passage only he has been forced to soften words, which the simple Norse tongue spoke out boldly without shame, but which our age, less inwardly pure perhaps, but more outwardly sensitive to what is unseemly, cannot hear without a blush.

After all the pains he has bestowed on his translation, he is well aware that faults are to be found in it, and that his renderings of doubtful passages, may not tally with those of others; but in the gloom which still hangs over many customs of the Old Norsemen, and above all in the want of a good Glossary of their tongue, (for the collection of Björn Haldorson is poor and meagre in the extreme^e) he trusts that his failings will be treated with mildness, since all may stumble in the dark.

It was his intention to prefix a facsimile from a celebrated MS. of the Edda, preserved in the Library of the University of Upsala,

^e) May the Old Norse Glossary on which Mr. Cleasby is said to be at work soon appear.

and up to the very last moment he hoped that this might be possible; but hindrances, to be looked for rather in the Vatican than at Upsala, have rendered this intention and hope alike fruitless.

Lastly there is yet one point on which a few words must be said: most readers, it is likely, will think a work of the kind incomplete, nay useless, without a good Index of Proper Names and their meanings; to this objection the Translator is willing to allow very considerable weight, but as his excuse he would state that considerable progress had been made in such an Index, when circumstances arose, which would have made it, if printed, a hurried production, and rather than do the thing ill he gave it up for the present. It is however his purpose to translate the *Skálda* at some future time, should leisure and health be granted him, and he hopes then to atone for the imperfections of this volume, by an Index which will serve for both works, as there are comparatively speaking few Names to be met with in the one, which do not also occur in the other.

Ulfunda near Stockholm, July 20th, 1842.

THE YOUNGER EDDA.