



Legends of the Ring

Elizabeth Magee

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Selected and edited by Elizabeth Magee. Illustrated by Simon Brett. Divided into two sections: the ring legends of Scandinavia and the ring legends of Germany.

Legends of the Ring Details

Date : Published 2004 by Folio Society

ISBN :

Author : Elizabeth Magee

Format : Folio Hardback 694 pages

Genre : Classics

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From Reader Review Legends of the Ring for online ebook

Peter says

To start with the obvious; this book is beautiful. Quarter bound in leather with gold leaf on the spine and stored in a slipcase to keep it pristine it's a lovely thing to own. It's not a lovely thing to hold, however, since it weighs far too much to be comfortably read, just to give an example, in bed. When you do start to read, preferably sat at a desk or table, you'll find that it's generally interesting, sometimes fascinating and always informative but it can be a bit dry. Much as I enjoyed this book, I couldn't help comparing Elizabeth Magee's style to that of Kevin Crossley-Holland and finding that I much preferred the latter. Norse and Germanic legends are full of intrigue and adventure, heroes and kings, luck, fate and excitement. A good writer makes you interested in them. A great writer makes you love them and although I like this book and wouldn't dream of selling it, I don't love it.

Neil says

Elizabeth Magee is already well known to Wagner fans for her contribution to the Ring Companion and her excellent study of Wagner's source material in her Oxford monograph, Wagner and the Nibelungs. In this book Magee collects together in one volume, most of the medieval source material relating to the Nibelungen legends.

Magee divides the book into two parts. The first section is devoted to translations from Scandinavian sources, which include the Poetic Edda, Snorri Edda and the Volsunga Saga. Unfortunately the Folio Society use Jean Young's edition of the Prose Edda, unfortunate because Young didn't include any of the Skaldic verse in her edition and then Magee unwisely decided to also omit Snorri's important prologue. Again with Terry's translation of the Poetic Edda there's a few omissions like the prose section in Brot af Sigurðarkviðu, thankfully Magee does translate the prose section in her introduction. Certain other poems in the Poetic Edda have to be translated by Magee due to Terry's editing and omissions, which leads me to wonder if they should have used Larrington's edition of the Poetic Edda instead of Patricia Terry's.

Part two presents the German versions, which include the Nibelungenlied, Thidrekssaga af Bern (selections include the Niflunga Saga, Dietrich's Youth, Young Siegfried, Heldenschau and Walter and Hildegun), Das Lied vom Hurnen Seyfrid and Hans Sach's Der Hurnen Seufrid. Magee's translations of the Hurnen Seyfrid and Hans Sach's Nibelungen drama not only do a great service to Wagnerian studies but also to English speaking medievalists and folklorists who have long desired an English translation of the Hurnen Seyfrid. The selection of German material is again sadly incomplete and would've greatly benefited from the inclusion of the Nibelungenlied's epilogue, Diu Klage and the Rosengarten zu Worms, due to Wagner's reading of Siegfried's dragon fight description in this poem.

Nice features to the book include a character and place name glossary, a table that lists characters names in their parallel Scandinavian and German forms (ideal for the beginner) and then a section on suggestions for further reading. While I'm not a huge fan of unnecessary decorative illustrations in books, for those that are, the book is illustrated with sixteen wood engravings. The binding is in black leather with gold leaf decorations and lettering.

The translators of the various sections are;
Poetic Edda- Patricia Terry.
Snorri's Prose Edda- Jean Young.

Volsunga Saga-Ronald G Finch.
Nibelungenlied-Arthur Hatto.
Thidrekssaga af Bern-Edward R Haymes.
Das Lied vom Hernen Seyfrid-Elizabeth Magee.
Hans Sach's Der Hurnen Seufrid-Elizabeth Magee.

All the selections are supplied with excellent introductions by Magee that place these medieval works in the context of Wagner's Nibelungen opera. While i do have a few issues about completeness, this is still a great book which any Wagner fan cannot afford to ignore.

Eclectic Indulgence says

Comprehensive and enthralling. A better edition of all these major works and filled with commentary, you'll never find.

One downside: There is no conclusion by the editor comparing Wagner to the tales.
