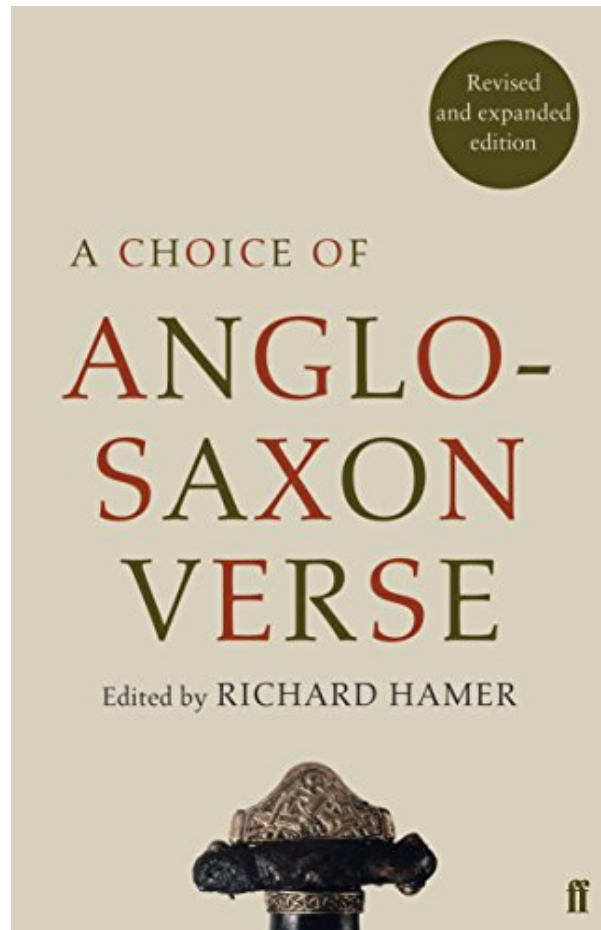


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Language Notes

Text: English

About the Author

Richard Hamer is Tutor in English Literature at Christ Church, Oxford.

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A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse contains the Old English texts of all the major short poems, such as 'The Battle of Maldon', 'The Dream of the Rood', 'The Wanderer' and 'The Seafarer', as well as a generous representation of the many important fragments, riddles and gnomic verses that survive from the seventh to the twelfth centuries, with facing-page verse translations. These poems are the well-spring of the English poetic tradition, and this anthology provides a unique window into the mind and culture of the Anglo-Saxons.

The volume is an essential companion to Faber's edition of Beowulf, translated by Seamus Heaney.

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11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

The best available introduction to OE poetry for beginners.

By tdh1@cornell.edu Thomas D. Hill

Old English poetry is hard to translate for a variety of reasons. OE poetic style is very compact, very nominal and very dense. Accurate translations often seem wordy; "poetic" ones tend to miss a lot. This is the only book currently available (as far as I know) which provides a selection of OE poems in a bilingual format. I have used this book in teaching; the translations are pretty good and the OE is right there for the curious. A good and very handy book.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Highly Recommend To The OE Reader

By A Customer

My Old English class in college was the most laborious of them all especially as my textbook was stolen, which had an extensive glossary. This book helped smooth out the rough edges of my translations and just gave me a better sense of how to put the words together in some coherent form. It's a nice collection of the most well known OE verses and poems and should prove interesting to the non-student who is interested in very old poetry and etymology as well.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The literature of pagan and post-pagan England - beautifully translated

By madbadgalaxyman

This slim paperback provides a gripping and powerful and wonderfully translated sampler of Anglo-Saxon literature. It provides the reader's imagination with a vivid intuitive understanding of the mindset of the Anglo-Saxons before and following their conversion to Christianity. This is the poetry that was written in "Old English" or "Anglo-Saxon" [though both terms are inaccurate and misleading; indeed, scholars will pick holes even in the very concept of the Anglo-Saxons..... but let's just enjoy their poetry!!]

While there is a Christian gloss on most of these very powerful and very moving poems, they still inhabit, in good measure, the vanished pagan (non-Christian) world of the great hero, tough and strong and stern and resolute, driven only by honour and nobility, and not all self-regarding, who stoically endures incredible and prolonged hardships; that mighty and war-hardened man who wins everlasting fame and renown through his great deeds of prowess.

In these poems, while there is a sense of the transitoriness of life, and the vanity of fame and earthly achievement, as is dutifully required by Christian Theology, and there is expression of deep regret for the loss of the noble lord and his splendid retinue of noble retainers, all of them now buried deep in the Earth and dead forever, there is still a lot of the "old religion" and the old pre-Christian world of the War Band to be found in these poems; the great and noble lord & king who is loved as a father by his men, giving generous gifts to them, as they feast and drink in his hall, hearing tales of noble deeds, and ever planning new raids on surrounding kingdoms.

Here we find some of the imaginative wellsprings that inspired Professor Tolkien to use his extraordinary imagination to create his own brilliant powerful and poetic myth for the English people (the Lord of The Rings, and the history of Middle Earth).

Suffice it to say that if you are interested in England before the Norman conquest and after the departure of the Roman legions, you will find great enjoyment in reading this book.

Richard Hamer's translations from the Anglo-Saxon are powerful and poetic, and far more enjoyable to read than some of the stilted academic translations of this material, as can be illustrated by the following passage he has translated from "The Wanderer" : :

" Where is the horse now, where the hero gone?
Where is the bounteous lord, and where the benches
For feasting? Where are all the joys of hall?
Alas for the bright cup, the armoured warrior,
The glory of the prince. That time is over,
Passed into night as it had never been. "

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