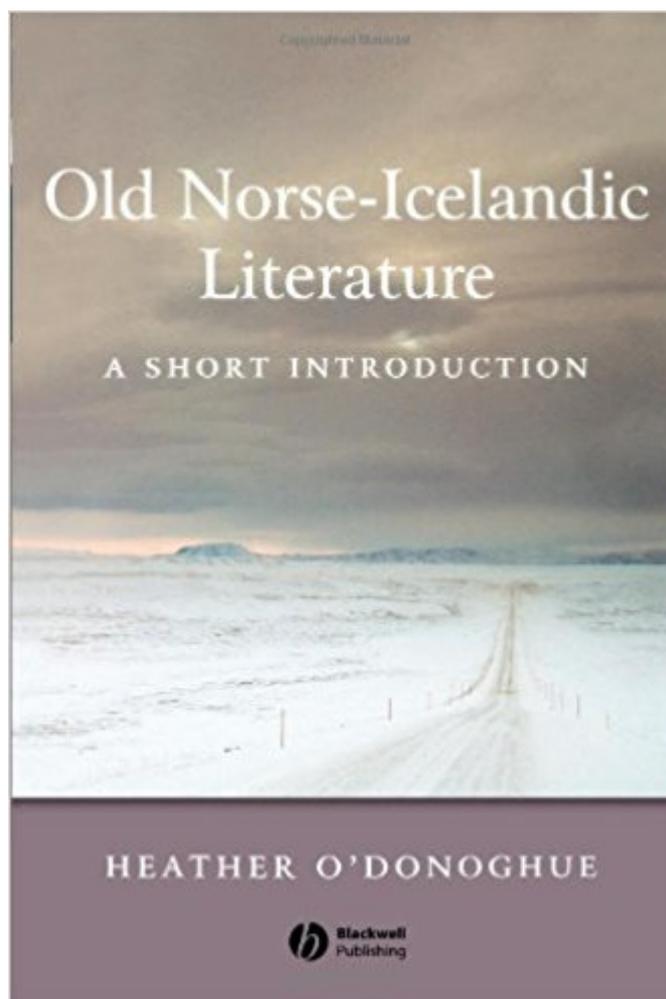


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Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Short Introduction



Synopsis

From runic inscriptions to sagas, this book introduces readers to the colourful world of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. An introduction to the colourful world of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. Covers mythology and family sagas, as well as less well-known areas, such as oral story-telling, Eddaic verse and skaldic verse. An introduction helps readers to appreciate the language and culture of the first settlers in Iceland. Looks at the reception of Old-Norse-Icelandic literature over the ages, as views of the vikings have changed. Shows how a whole range of authors from Shakespeare to Seamus Heaney have been influenced by Old Norse-Icelandic literature.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As an amateur linguist interested in ancient Germanic languages and cultures I took up this book to revise my knowledge of Icelandic literary output. This short book has been written by a competent academic and it has an academic approach to the topic: I can see its worth for an undergraduate student very well, while a general educated reader might -just might- find Dr O'Donoghue approach a little dull: her writing is not witty, nor meant to be such, and requires therefore a little dedication. That said she summarizes -the book is barely over 200 pages, bibliography included- the context of Norse literature development in Iceland and outlines the genres of Norse-Icelandic literature, keeping its relationship with the continental one clear but distinct and short. In the second half of the book she analyzes the influence of Norse-Icelandic literature on some relevant English -especially modern- writers. This makes this work useful to both students of philology and English

literature: translations are provided everywhere together with careful explanations aimed at those who do not understand Norse. Then again this book is not meant to be an anthology nor a literature history: it is just a short introduction to its appreciation as clearly stated in the title. This most useful read has some minor flaws, at least to my eyes. The philological introduction is very clear but also very short: I assume English literature students who probably will never read linguistics handbooks could have welcomed a more extensive introduction to the history of the language. While the author's conciseness is nearly always a good thing it is hardly so in the pages dedicated to skaldic poetry which looked a bit hurried and not always clear.

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