



The Elder Eddas of Saemund Sigfusson

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The Elder Eddas (also known as the Poetic Edda) is a collection of Old Norse poems primarily preserved in the Icelandic mediaeval manuscript Codex Regius. Along with Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda, the Poetic Edda is the most important extant source on Norse mythology and Germanic heroic legends, and from the early 19th century onwards has had a powerful influence on later Scandinavian literatures, not merely through the stories it contains but through the visionary force and dramatic quality of many of the poems. The Codex Regius was written in the 13th century but lost until 1643 when it came into the possession of Brynjólfur Sveinsson. Brynjólfur attributed the manuscript to Sæmundr the Learned, a 12th century Icelandic priest. While this attribution is rejected by modern scholars, the name Sæmundar Edda is still sometimes encountered. Like most early poetry the Eddic poems were minstrel poems, passing orally from singer to singer and from poet to poet for centuries. None of the poems are attributed to a particular author though many of them show strong individual characteristics and are likely to have been the work of individual poets.

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