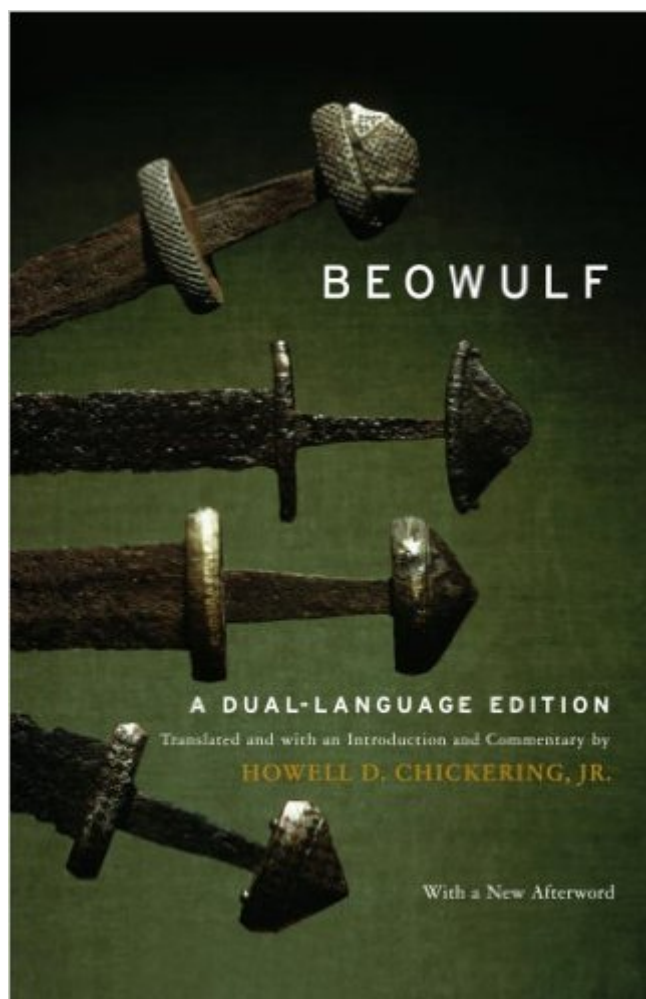


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Beowulf: A Dual-Language Edition



Synopsis

The first major poem in English literature, Beowulf tells the story of the life and death of the legendary hero Beowulf in his three great battles with supernatural monsters. The ideal Anglo-Saxon warrior-aristocrat, Beowulf is an example of the heroic spirit at its finest. Leading Beowulf scholar Howell D. Chickering, Jr.'s, fresh and lively translation, featuring the Old English on facing pages, allows the reader to encounter Beowulf as poetry. This edition incorporates recent scholarship and provides historical and literary context for the modern reader. It includes the following: an introduction a guide to reading aloud a chart of royal genealogies notes on the background of the poem critical commentary glosses on the eight most famous passages, for the student who wishes to translate from the original an extensive bibliography

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Customer Reviews

This translation has been much-praised as faithful to the original Old English. I think this is taking it a bit far: Chickering does typically use four-beat lines, which is how Old English poetry is arranged, although OE poetry has specific alliteration patterns and stress patterns (however, there are so many of the latter one wonders if such patterns are actually a modern invention). For a four-beat plus alliterative (although not a mimic of OE poetry) translation, take a look at Kennedy's Beowulf. Chickering does tend to reproduce the choppy (to our ears) of the original text, including appositives. These are jarring at first but quickly become easy to scan. This is useful for seeing how the poem is actually laid out, although one can never say how jarring the original was to

those who spoke OE. As a study aid, Chickering's translation is generally good (that is, literal-esque), but sometimes he does take liberties, so the student should beware. As a small example, lines 753b-754a: "He on mode wearð fêrht on ferhð e". This is literally translated "He in (his) heart became afraid in (his) spirit." Or something like that: mode and ferhð e mean the same thing, and can variously be translated as heart, mind, spirit, soul, etc. Chickering translates this as "at heart he feared for his wretched life." This is a fine translation, but is not literal. This may seem like small nitpicking, but if you are planning on using this text for studying Beowulf, you should at least have supplemental material.

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