



Waltharius

edited by A. Ring

DESCRIPTION:

The *Waltharius*, a medieval Latin epic poem of over 1400 lines, richly retells the story of a vigorous Germanic saga in the language and style of classical and Christian Latin poetry. Walter, its hero, is a pagan warrior ready to mock his enemies and mercilessly decapitate them, but also a pious Christian who refrains from premarital sex and stops to pray and ask for God's mercy in the middle of a battle. The poem varies remarkably in tone, providing both fervent moral commentary and bitter black comedy. The growing scholarship on the poem outside of Germany, where it has always been popular, no doubt results from its weird allure and eclectic nature. It has something for everyone. This new edition uses a fresh review of manuscripts—especially the recently discovered fragments at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign—in order to provide a text and apparatus that will aid the reader in understanding the poem's tangled manuscript history. The notes are rather fuller than those of previous English-language editions, providing useful context to understand the complicated relationships among the Germanic, classical Latin, and Christian Latin traditions as well as tracking various themes and stylistic features that the poet employs.

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