



GLANZ
UND
GRAVUR

THE POETIC EDDA

Grípisspá

Gripir's Prophecy

Old Norse · English - H. A. Bellows (1923)

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Young Sigurth rides alone to his mother's brother Gripir, the wisest of all men, who sees what is to come. In a long exchange of question and answer he draws from him, step by step, his whole fate: how he will slay the dragon Fafnir and the smith Regin on Gnitaheth, wake the sleeping ruler's daughter on the mountain and receive runes and wisdom from her; how he will come to Gjuki's hall, drink Grimhild's draught of forgetting, marry Guthrun, and win Brynhild through the wall of flame for Gunnar in Gunnar's shape; and how out of the deceit against Brynhild will grow strife, betrayal and at last his own early death. Gripir long hesitates to reveal the doom, yet consoles the hero at the end: as long as the world shall stand, no nobler man than Sigurth will walk beneath the sun, and his glory will never die. Sources: Old Norse text after the Codex Regius (ed. Guðni Jónsson) and the English rendering by Henry Adams Bellows (1923) – both public domain.

	Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1	<i>Sigurðr: Hverr byggir hér borgir þessar? Hvat þann þjóðkonung þegnar nefna? Geitir: Grípir heitir gumna stóri, sá er fastri ræðr foldu ok þegnum.</i>	Sigurth: Who is it has this dwelling here, Or what do men call the people's king? Geitir: Gripir the name of the chieftain good Who holds the folk and the firm-ruled land.
2	<i>Sigurðr: Er horskr konungr heima í landi? Mun sá gramr við mik ganga at mæla? Máls er þarfi maðr ókunnigr, vil ek fljótliga finna Grípi.</i>	Is the king all-knowing now within, Will the monarch come with me to speak? A man unknown his counsel needs, And Gripir fain I soon would find.
3	<i>Geitir: Þess mun glaðr konungr Geiti spyrja, hverr sá maðr sé, er máls kveðr Grípi. Sigurðr: Sigurðr ek heiti, borinn Sigmundi, en Hjördís er hilmis móðir.</i>	Geitir: The ruler glad of Geitir will ask Who seeks with Gripir speech to have. Sigurth: Sigurth am I, and Sigmund's son, And Hjordis the name of the hero's mother.
4	<i>Þá gekk Geitir Grípi at segja: Hér er maðr úti ókuðr kominn; hann er ítarligr at álitu; sá vill, fylkir, fund þinn hafa.</i>	Then Geitir went and to Gripir spake: A stranger comes and stands without; Lofty he is to look upon, And, prince, thyself he fain would see.

- 5 *Gengr ór skála
skatna dróttinn
ok heilsar vel
hilmi komnum:
þiggðu hér, Sigurðr,
væri sæmra fyrr,
en þú, Geitir, tak
við Grana sjalfum.*
- From the hall the ruler of heroes went,
And greeted well the warrior come:
Sigurth, welcome long since had been thine;
Now, Geitir, shalt thou Grani take.
- 6 *Mæla námu
ok margt hjala
þá er ráðspakir
rekkar fundusk.
Sigurðr: Segðu mér, ef þú veizt,
móðurbróðir:
Hvé mun Sigurði
snúna ævi.*
- Then of many things they talked,
When thus the men so wise had met.
To me, if thou knowest, my mother's brother,
Say what life will Sigurth's be.
- 7 *Grípir: Þú munt maðr vera
mæztr und sólu
ok hæstr borinn
hverjum jöfri,
gjöfull af gulli,
en glöggur flugar,
ítr álití
ok í orðum spakr.*
- Of men thou shalt be on earth the mightiest,
And higher famed than all the heroes;
Free of gold-giving, slow to flee,
Noble to see, and sage in speech.
- 8 *Sigurðr: Segðu, gegn konungr,
gerr en ek spyrja,
snotr, Sigurði,
ef þú sjá þykkisk:
Hvat mun fyrst gerask
til farnaðar,
þá er ór garði emk
genginn þínum?*
- Monarch wise, now more I ask;
To Sigurth say, if thou thinkest to see,
What first will chance of my fortune fair,
When hence I go from out thy home?
- 9 *Grípir: Fyrst muntu, fylkir,
föður of hefna,
ok Eylima
alls harms reka;
þú munt harða
Hundings sonu
snjalla fella,
muntu sigr hafa.*
- First shalt thou, prince, thy father avenge,
And Eylimi, their ills requiting;
The hardy sons of Hunding thou
Soon shalt fell, and victory find.

- 10** *Sigurðr: Segðu, ítr konungr,
ættingi, mér
heldr horsklíga,
er vit hugat mælum:
Sér þú Sigurðar
snör brögð fyrir,
þau er hæst fara
und himinskaufum?*
- Noble king, my kinsman, say
Thy meaning true, for our minds we speak:
For Sigurth mighty deeds dost see,
The highest beneath the heavens all?
- 11** *Grípir: Muntu einn vega
orm inn frána,
þann er gráðugr liggr
á Gnitaheiði;
þú munt báðum
at bana verða
Regin ok Fáfnir,
rétt segir Grípir.*
- The fiery dragon alone thou shalt fight
That greedy lies at Gnitaheith;
Thou shalt be of Regin and Fáfnir both
The slayer; truth doth Gripir tell thee.
- 12** *Sigurðr: Auðr mun ærinn,
ef ek eflik svá
víg með virðum,
sem víst segir;
leið at huga
ok lengra seg:
Hvat mun enn vera
ævi minnar?*
- Rich shall I be if battles I win
With such as these, as now thou sayest;
Forward look, and further tell:
What the life that I shall lead?
- 13** *Grípir: Þú munt finna
Fáfnis bæli
ok upp taka
auð inn fagra,
gulli hlæða
á Grana bógu;
ríðr þú til Gjúka,
gramr vígrísinn.*
- Fafnir's den thou then shalt find,
And all his treasure fair shalt take;
Gold shalt heap on Grani's back,
And, proved in fight, to Gjuki fare.
- 14** *Sigurðr: Enn skaltu hilmi
í hugaðsræðu,
framlyndr jöfurr,
fleira segja.
Gestr em ek Gjúka
ok ek geng þaðan,
hvat mun enn vera
ævi minnar?*
- To the warrior now in words so wise,
Monarch noble, more shalt tell;
I am Gjuki's guest, and thence I go:
What the life that I shall lead?

- 15** *Grípir: Sefr á fjalli
fylkis dóttir
björt í brynju
eftir bana Helga;
þú munt höggva
hvössu sverði,
brynju rísta
með bana Fáfnis.*
- On the rocks there sleeps the ruler's daughter,
Fair in armor, since Helgi fell;
Thou shalt cut with keen-edged sword,
And cleave the byrnie with Fafnir's killer.
- 16** *Sigurðr: Brotin er brynja,
brúðr mæla tekr,
er vaknaði
víf ór svefni.
Hvat mun snót at heldr
við Sigurð mæla,
þat er at farnaði
fylki verði?*
- The mail-coat is broken, the maiden speaks,
The woman who from sleep has awakened;
What says the maid to Sigurth then
That happy fate to the hero brings?
- 17** *Grípir: Hon mun ríkjum þér
rúnar kenna,
allar þær er aldir
eignask vildu,
ok á manns tungu
mæla hverja,
líf með lækning;
lífðu heill, konungr.*
- Runes to the warrior will she tell,
All that men may ever seek,
And teach thee to speak in all men's tongues,
And life with health; thou'rt happy, king!
- 18** *Sigurðr: Nú er því lokit,
numin eru fræði
ok em braut þaðan
búinn at ríða,
leið at huga
ok lengra seg:
Hvat mun meir vera
mínnar ævi?*
- Now is it ended, the knowledge is won,
And ready I am forth thence to ride;
Forward look and further tell:
What the life that I shall lead?
- 19** *Grípir: Þú munt hitta
Heimis byggðir
ok glaðr vera
gestr þjóðkonungs;
farit er, Sigurðr,
þats ek fyrir vissak,
skal-a fremr en svá
fregna Grípi.*
- Then to Heimir's home thou comest,
And glad shalt be the guest of the king;
Ended, Sigurth, is all I see,
No further aught of Gripir ask.

20 *Sigurðr: Nú fær mér ekka
orð þatstu mæltir,
því at þú fram of sér
fylkir, lengra;
veiztu ofmikit
angr Sigurði,
því þú, Grípir, þat
gerr-a segja.*

Sorrow brings me the word thou sayest,
For, monarch, forward further thou seest;
Sad the grief for Sigurth thou knowest,
Yet nought to me, Gripir, known wilt make.

21 *Grípir: Lá mér um æsku
ævi þinnar
ljósast fyrir
líta eftir;
rétt em ek
ráðspakr taliðr
né in heldr framvís,
farit þats ek vissak.*

Before me lay in clearest light
All of thy youth for mine eyes to see;
Not rightly can I wise be called,
Nor forward-seeing; my wisdom is fled.

22 *Sigurðr: Mann veit ek engi
fyr mold ofan,
þann er fleira sé
fram en þú, Grípir;
skal-at-tu leyna,
þótt ljót séi,
eða mein gerisk
á mínum hag.*

No man, Gripir, on earth I know
Who sees the future as far as thou;
Hide thou nought, though hard it be,
And base the deeds that I shall do.

23 *Grípir: Er-a með löstum
lögð ævi þér,
láttu, inn ítri, þat,
öðlingr, nemask,
því at uppi mun,
meðan öld lifir,
naddéls boði,
nafn þitt vera.*

With baseness never thy life is burdened,
Hero noble, hold that sure;
Lofty as long as the world shall live,
Battle-bringer, thy name shall be.

24 *Sigurðr: Verst hyggjum því,
verðr at skiljask
Sigurðr við fylki
at sógöru;
leið vísa þú,
- lagt er allt fyrir -
mærr, mér, ef þú vilt,
móðurbróðir.*

Nought could seem worse, but now must part
The prince and Sigurth, since so it is,
My road I ask, the future lies open,
Mighty one, speak, my mother's brother.

25 *Grípir: Nú skal Sigurði
segja görva,
alls þengill mik
til þess neyðir;
muntu víst vita
at vætki lýgr;
dægr eitt er þér
dauði ætlaðr.*

Now to Sigurth all shall I say,
For to this the warrior bends my will;
Thou knowest well that I will not lie,
A day there is when thy death is doomed.

26 *Sigurðr: Vilkt-at ek reiði
ríks þjóðkonungs,
góð ráð at heldr
Grípis þiggja;
nú vill víst vita,
þótt viltki sé,
hvat á sýnt Sigurðr
sér fyr höndum.*

No scorn I know for the noble king,
But counsel good from Gripir I seek;
Well will I know, though evil awaits,
What Sigurth may before him see.

27 *Grípir: Fljóð er at Heimis
fagrt álitum,
hana Brynhildi
bragnar nefna,
dóttir Buðla,
en dýrr konungr
harðugðigt man
Heimir fæðir.*

A maid in Heimir's home there dwells,
Brynhild her name to men is known,
Daughter of Buthli, the doughty king,
And Heimir fosters the fearless maid.

28 *Sigurðr: Hvat er mik at því,
þótt mæri séi
fögr álit
fædd at Heimis?
Þat skaltu, Grípir,
görra segja,
því at þú öll of sér
örlög fyrir.*

What is it to me, though the maiden be
So fair, and of Heimir the fosterling is?
Gripir, truth to me shalt tell,
For all of fate before me thou seest.

29 *Grípir: Hon firrir þik
flestu gamni,
fögr álit,
fóstra Heimis,
svefn þú né sefr
né of sakar dæmir,
gár-a þú manna
nema þú mey séir.*

Of many a joy the maiden robs thee,
Fair to see, whom Heimir fosters;
Sleep thou shalt find not, feuds thou shalt end not,
Nor seek out men, if the maid thou seest not.

30 *Sigurðr: Hvat mun til líkna
lagt Sigurði?
Segðu, Grípir, þat,
ef þú sjá þykkisk:
Mun ek mey ná
mundi kaupa,
þá ina fögru
fylkis dóttur?*

What may be had for Sigurth's healing?
Say now, Gripir, if see thou canst;
May I buy the maid with the marriage-price,
The daughter fair of the chieftain famed?

31 *Grípir: It munuð alla
eiða vinna
fullfastliga,
fá munuð halda;
verit hefr þú Gjúka
gestr eina nótt,
mant-at-tu horska
Heimis fóstru.*

Ye twain shall all the oaths then swear
That bind full fast; few shall ye keep;
One night when Gjuki's guest thou hast been,
Will Heimir's fosterling fade from thy mind.

32 *Sigurðr: Hvat er þá, Grípir,
get þú þess fyr mér,
sér þú geðleysi
í grams skapi,
er ek skal við mey þá
málum slíta,
er ek alls hugar
unna þóttumk.*

What sayst thou, Gripir? give me the truth,
Does fickleness hide in the hero's heart?
Can it be that troth I break with the maid,
With her I believed I loved so dear?

33 *Grípir: Þú verðr, siklingr,
fyr svikum annars,
muntu Grímhildar
gjalda ráða,
mun bjóða þér
bjarthaddat man
dóttur sína,
dregr hon vél at gram.*

Tricked by another, prince, thou art,
And the price of Grimhild's wiles thou must pay;
Fain of thee for the fair-haired maid,
Her daughter, she is, and she drags thee down.

34 *Sigurðr: Mun ek við þá Gunnar
görva hleyti
ok Guðrúnu
ganga at eiga?
Fullkvæni þá
fylkir væri,
ef meintregar
mér angraði-t.*

Might I with Gunnar kinship make,
And Guthrun win to be my wife,
Well the hero wedded would be,
If my treacherous deed would trouble me not.

35 *Grípir: Þik mun Grímhildr
görva véla,
mun hon Brynhildar
biðja fýsa
Gunnari til handa,
Gotna dróttni,
heitr þú fljótliga för
fylkis móður.*

Wholly Grimhild thy heart deceives,
She will bid thee go and Brynhild woo
For Gunnar's wife, the lord of the Goths;
And the prince's mother thy promise shall win.

36 *Sigurðr: Mein eru fyr höndum,
má ek líta þat;
ratar görliga
ráð Sigurðar,
ef ek skal mærrar
meyjar biðja
öðrum til handa,
þeirar ek unna vel.*

Evil waits me, well I see it,
And gone is Sigurth's wisdom good,
If I shall woo for another to win
The maiden fair that so fondly I loved.

37 *Grípir: Ér munuð allir
eiða vinna
Gunnar ok Högni,
en þú, gramr, þriði;
þá it litum víxlið,
er á leið eruð,
Gunnar ok þú;
Grípir lýgr eigi.*

Ye three shall all the oaths then take,
Gunnar and Hogni, and, hero, thou;
Your forms ye shall change, as forth ye fare,
Gunnar and thou; for Gripir lies not.

38 *Sigurðr: Hví gegnir þat?
Hví skulum skipta
litum ok látum,
er á leið erum?
þar mun fláræði
fylgja annat
atalt með öllu;
enn segðu, Grípir.*

How meanest thou? Why make we the change
Of shape and form as forth we fare?
There must follow another falsehood
Grim in all ways; speak on, Gripir!

39 *Grípir: Lit hefir þú Gunnars
ok læti hans,
mælsku þína
ok meginhyggjur;
muntu fastna þér
framlundaða
fóstru Heimis,
sér vætr fyr því.*

The form of Gunnar and shape thou gettest,
But mind and voice thine own remain;
The hand of the fosterling noble of Heimir
Now dost thou win, and none can prevent.

40 *Sigurðr: Verst hyggjum því,
vándr munk heitinn
Sigurðr með seggjum
at sógöru;
vilda ek eigi
vélum beita
jöfra brúði,
er ek æðsta veitk.*

Most evil it seems, and men will say
Base is Sigurth that so he did;
Not of my will shall I cheat with wiles
The heroes' maiden whom noblest I hold.

41 *Grípir: Þú munt hvíla,
hers oddviti
mærr, hjá meyju
sem þín móðir sé;
því mun uppi,
meðan öld lifir,
þjóðar þengill,
þitt nafn vera.*

Thou dwellest, leader lofty of men,
With the maid as if thy mother she were;
Lofty as long as the world shall live,
Ruler of men, thy name shall remain.

42 *Sigurðr: Mun góða kván
Gunnarr eiga,
mærr með mönnum,
- mér segðu, Grípir, -
þótt hafi þrjár nætr
þegns brúðr hjá mér
snarlynd sofit?
Slíks eru-t dæmi.*

Shall Gunnar have a goodly wife,
Famed among men, speak forth now, Gripir!
Although at my side three nights she slept,
The warrior's bride? Such ne'er has been.

43 *Grípir: Saman munu brullup
bæði drukkin
Sigurðar ok Gunnars
í sölum Gjúka;
þá hömum víxlið,
er it heim komið;
hefr hvárr fyr því
hyggju sína.*

The marriage draught will be drunk for both,
For Sigurth and Gunnar, in Gjuki's hall;
Your forms ye change, when home ye fare,
But the mind of each to himself remains.

44 *Sigurðr: Hvé mun at ynði
eftir verða
mægð með mönnum?
Mér segðu, Grípir.
Mun Gunnari
til gamans ráðit
síðan verða
eða sjalfum mér?*

Shall the kinship new thereafter come
To good among us? Tell me, Gripir!
To Gunnar joy shall it later give,
Or happiness send for me myself?

45 *Grípir: Minnir þik eiða,
máttu þegja þó,
anntu Guðrúnu
góðra ráða;
en Brynhildr þykkisk
brúðr vargefín,
snót fiðr vélar
sér at hefndum.*

Thine oaths remembering, silent thou art,
And dwellest with Guthrun in wedlock good;
But Brynhild shall deem she is badly mated,
And wiles she seeks, herself to avenge.

46 *Sigurðr: Hvat mun at bótum
brúðr sú taka,
er vélar vér
vífi gerðum?
Hefir snót af mér
svarna eiða
enga efnda,
en unað lítit.*

What may for the bride requital be,
The wife we won with subtle wiles?
From me she has the oaths I made,
And kept not long; they gladdened her little.

47 *Grípir: Mun hon Gunnari
görva segja,
at þú eigi vel
eiðum þyrmðir,
þá er ítr konungr
af öllum hug,
Gjúka arfi,
á gram trúði.*

To Gunnar soon his bride will say
That ill didst thou thine oath fulfill,
When the goodly king, the son of Gjuki,
With all his heart the hero trusted.

48 *Sigurðr: Hvat er þá, Grípir,
get þú þess fyr mér,
mun ek saðr vera
at sögu þeiri,
eða lýgr á mik
lofsæl kona
ok á sjalfa sik?
Segðu, Grípir, þat.*

What sayst thou, Gripir? give me the truth!
Am I guilty so as now is said,
Or lies does the far-famed queen put forth
Of me and herself? Yet further speak.

49 *Grípir: Mun fyr reiði
rík brúðr við þik
né af oftrega
allvel skipa;
viðr þú góðri
grand aldrigi,
þó ér víf konungs
vélum beittuð.*

In wrath and grief full little good
The noble bride shall work thee now;
No shame thou gavest the goodly one,
Though the monarch's wife with wiles didst cheat.

50 *Sigurðr: Mun horskr Gunnarr
at hvötun hennar
Gutþormr ok Högni
ganga síðan?
Munu synir Gjúka
á sífjugum mér
eggjar rjóða?
Enn segðu, Grípir.*

Shall Gunnar the wise to the woman's words,
And Gotthorm and Hogni, then give heed?
Shall Gjuki's sons, now tell me, Gripir,
Redden their blades with their kinsman's blood?

51 *Grípir: Þá er Guðrúnu
grímt um hjarta;
bræðr hennar
þér til bana ráða,
ok at engu verðr
ynði síðan
vitru vífi;
veldr því Grímhildr.*

Heavy it lies on Guthrun's heart,
When her brothers all shall bring thee death;
Never again shall she happiness know,
The woman so fair; 'tis Grimhild's work.

52 *Grípir: Því skal hugga þik,
hers oddviti,
sú mun gift lagið
á grams ævi:
Mun-at mætri maðr
á mold koma
und sólar sjöt,
en þú, Sigurðr, þykkir.*

Ever remember, ruler of men,
That fortune lies in the hero's life;
A nobler man shall never live
Beneath the sun than Sigurth shall seem.

53 *Sigurðr: Skiljumk heilir,
mun-at sköpum vinna.
Nú hefir þú, Grípir, vel
gört sem ek beiddak.
Fljótt myndir þú
fríðri segja
mína ævi,
ef þú mættir þat.*

Now fare thee well! our fates we shun not;
And well has Gripir answered my wish;
More of joy to me wouldst tell
Of my life to come if so thou couldst.

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