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UND
GRAVUR

THE POETIC EDDA

Gróttasöngur

The Song of Grotti

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

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The Danish king Fróði, a grandson of Odin, rules in a legendary time of peace, the famous Peace of Fróði, when no man harms another and a gold ring lies long untouched by the road. On a royal visit to Sweden he buys two giant-strong bond-women, Fenja and Menja, and sets them to the wonder-mill Grotti, which grinds out whatever the grinder asks for. Fróði makes them grind gold, peace and happiness, and grants them no rest longer than the cuckoo stays silent or a song may be sung. So the two sing their own song: they recall their giant descent and their old deeds of war, and in revenge grind out for the king, instead of gold, a hostile army and his doom. That very night the sea-king Mýsingr comes, slays Fróði and ends the Peace of Fróði. The Old Norse text follows Guðni Jónsson's edition in the *Skáldskaparmál* (Prose Edda); the English verse is the public-domain translation of Benjamin Thorpe (1866). Both are public domain.

	Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1	<i>Nú eru komnar til konungs húsar framvísar tvær, Fenja ok Menja; þær ro at Fróða Friðleifssonar máttkar meyjar at mani hafðar.</i>	Now are come to the king's house two prescient damsels, Fenja and Menja; they are with Frodi, Fríðleif's son, the powerful maidens, in thraldom held.
2	<i>þær at lúðri leiddar váru ok grjóts gréa gangs of beiddu; hét hann hvárigri hvíld né ynði, áðr hann heyrði hljóð ambátta.</i>	To the mill they both were led, and the grey stone to set a-going ordered; he to both forbade rest and solace, before he heard the maidens' voice.
3	<i>þær þyt pulu þögnhorfinnar: „Leggjum lúðra, léttum steinum.“ Bað hann enn meyjar, at þær mala skyldu.</i>	They made resound the clattering quern, with their arms swung the light stones. The maidens he commanded yet more to grind.
4	<i>Sungu ok slungu snúðga-steini, svá at Fróða man flest sofnaði; þá kvað þat Menja, var til meldrs komin:</i>	They sung and swung the whirling stone, until Frodi's thralls nearly all slept. Then said Menja — to the meal 'twas come —
5	<i>„Auð mölum Fróða, möllum alsælan, möllum fjölb féar á feginslúðri; siti hann á auði, sofi hann á dúni, vaki hann at vilja, þá er vel malit.</i>	„Riches we grind for Frodi, all happiness we grind, wealth in abundance, in gladness' mill. On riches may he sit, on down may he sleep, to joy may he wake: then 'tis well ground!

- 6 *Hér skyli engi
öðrum granda,
til bóls búa
né til bana orka,
né höggva því
hvössu sverði,
þó at bana bróður
bundinn finni.“*
- 7 *En hann kvað ekki
orð it fyrra:
„Sofið eigi meir
en of sal gaukar
eða lengr en svá
ljóð eitt kveðak.“*
- 8 *„Var-at-tu, Fróði,
fullspakr of þik,
málvinr manna,
er þú man keyptir;
kaustu at afli
ok at álitum,
en at ætterni
ekki spurðir.*
- 9 *Harðr var Hrungrnir
ok hans faðir,
þó var þjazi
þeim öflugari;
lði ok Aurnir,
okkrir niðjar,
bræðr bergrisa,
þeim erum bornar.*
- 10 *Kæmi-a Grótti
ór gréa fjalli
né sá inn harði
hallr ór jörðu,
né mæli svá
mærl bergrisa,
ef vissi vit
vætr til hennar.*
- 11 *Vér vetr nú
várum leikur
öflgar alnar
fyr jörð neðan;
stóðu meylar
at meginverkum,
færðum sjalfar
setberg ór stað.*
- Here shall not one another harm,
evil machinate, nor occasion death,
nor yet strike with the biting sword,
although a brother's slayer he find bound.'
- He had not yet said one word before:
'Sleep ye not longer than the gowks round the
house,
or than while one song I sing.'
- 'Thou wast not, Frodi, for thyself over-wise,
or a friend of men, when thralls thou boughtest;
for strength thou chosest them, and for their looks,
but of their race didst not inquire.
- Stout was Hrungrnir, and his father,
yet was Thiassi stronger than they;
Idi and Ornir our relations are,
brothers of the mountain-giants, from whom we are
born.
- Grotti had not come from the grey fell,
nor yet the hard stone from the earth;
nor so had ground the giant maid,
if her race had aught of her known.
- Nine winters we playmates were,
strong, and nurtured beneath the earth.
We maidens stood at mighty works;
ourselves we moved the fast rock from its place.

12 Veltum grjóti
of garð risa,
svá at fold fyrir
fór skjalfandi;
svá slöngðum vit
snúðga-steini,
höfga-halli,
at halir tóku.

We rolled the stone o'er the giants' house,
so that earth thereby shrank trembling;
so hurled we the whirling rock,
that men could take it.

13 En vit síðan
á Svíþjóðu
framvísar tvær
í folk stigum,
beiddum björnu,
en brutum skjöldu,
gengum í gögnum
gráserkjat lið.

But afterwards, in Sweden,
we prescient two among people went,
chased the bear, and shattered shields;
went against a grey-sarked host.

14 Steypðum stilli,
studdum annan,
veittum góðum
Gothormi lið;
var-a kyrrseta,
áðr Knúi felli.

We overthrew one prince, propped up another,
to the good Guthorm afforded aid;
no quiet was there ere Knui fell.

15 Fram heldum því
þau misseri,
at vit at köppum
kenndar várum;
þar sorðu vit
skörpum geirum
blóð ór benjum
ok brand ruðum.

Thus we went on all those winters,
so that in conflicts we were known;
there we carved, with our sharp spears,
blood from wounds, and reddened brands.

16 Nú erum komnar
til konungs húsa
miskunnlausar
ok at maní hafðar;
aurr etr iljar,
en ofan kulði,
drögum dolgs sjötul,
daprt er at Fróða.

Now are we come to a king's house, unpitied both,
and in thraldom held; gravel gnaws our feet,
and above 'tis cold; a foe's host we draw.
Sad 'tis at Frodi's!

17 Hendr skulu hvílask,
hallr standa mun,
malit hefi ek fyr mik
mitt of leiti;
nú mun-a höndum
hvíld vel gefa,
áðr fullmalit
Fróða þykki.

Hands must rest, the stone shall stand still;
for me I have my portion ground.
To hands will not rest be given,
until Frodi thinks enough is ground.

18 *Hendr skulu höndla
harðar trjónur,
vápn valdreyrug,
vaki þú, Fróði,
vaki þú, Fróði,
ef þú hlýða vill
söngum okkrum
ok sögnum fornum.*

Hands shall hold falchions hard,
the weapon slaughter-gory.
Wake thou, Frodi! Wake thou, Frodi!
if thou wilt listen to our songs and sagas old.

19 *Eld sé ek brenna
fyr austan borg,
vígspjöll vaka,
þat mun víti kallaðr,
mun herr koma
hinig af bragði
ok brenna bæ
fyr buðlungi.*

Fire I see burning east of the burgh;
tidings of war are rife:
that should be a token;
a host will forthwith hither come,
and the town burn over the king.

20 *Mun-at þú halda
Hleiðrar stóli,
rauðum hringum
né regingrjóti;
tökum á möndli,
mær, skarpara,
erum-a varmar
í valdreyra.*

Thou wilt not hold the throne of Lethra,
rings of red gold, or mighty mill-stone.
Let us ply the winch, girl! yet more rapidly:
are we not grown up in deadly slaughter?

21 *Mól míns föður
mær rammliga,
því at hon feigð fira
fjölmargra sá;
stukku stórar
steðr frá lúðri
járni varðar,
möllum enn framar!*

My father's daughter has stoutly ground,
because the fate of many men she saw.
Huge fragments spring from the mill-stone
into the Orneflord. Let us grind on!

22 *Möllum enn framar!
Mun Yrsu sonr,
niðr Halfdanar,
hefna Fróða;
sá mun hennar
heitinn verða
burr ok bróðir,
vitum báðar þat.*

Let us grind on! Yrsa's son, Halfdan's kinsman,
will avenge Frodi:
he will of her be called son and brother:
we both know that.'

23 *Mólu meyjar,
megins kostuðu,
váru ungar
í jötunmóði;
skulfu skaptré,
skauzk lúðr ofan,
hrait inn höfgi
hallr sundr í tvau.*

The maidens ground, their might applied;
the damsels were in Jotun-mood,
the axes trembled; the stone fell from above,
the ponderous rock was in shivers split.

24 *En bergrisa
brúðr orð of kvað:
„Malit höfum, Fróði,
sem munum hætta,
hafa fullstaðit
fljóð at meldri.“*

But the mountain-giants' maiden said:
„Frodi! we have ground; together we cease.
The maidens have stood at the grinding long.’

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