

GLANZ UND GRAVUR

THE POETIC EDDA

Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta

The First Lay of Guthrun

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

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GLANZ & GRAVUR
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Gudrun sits silent over the dead Sigurd. Women tell of their own sorrows to make her weep; only when the body is uncovered does her lament break out. Preserved in the Codex Regius of the Poetic Edda (GKS 2365 4to, c. 1270). This reading edition sets the Old Norse text and the English translation side by side, stanza by stanza; the German version is on the German edition of this page. Old Norse text after Guðni Jónsson's edition (Eddukvæði), digitised by heimskringla.no. German after Karl Simrock, Die Edda (1851; 6th ed. 1876, Wikisource). English after Henry Adams Bellows, The Poetic Edda (1923). All are in the public domain.

	Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1	*Ár var, þats Guðrún* *gerðisk at deyja,* *er hon sat sorgfull* *yfir Sigurði;* *gerði-t hon hjúfra* *né höndum slá,* *né kveina um* *sem konur aðrar.*	Then did Guthrun think to die, When she by Sigurth sorrowing sat; Tears she had not, nor wrung her hands, Nor ever wailed, as other women.
2	*Gengu jarlar* *alsnotrir fram,* *þeir er harðs hugar* *hana löttu;* *þeygi Guðrún* *gráta mátti,* *svá var hon móðug,* *mundi hon springa.*	To her the warriors wise there came, Longing her heavy woe to lighten; Grieving could not Guthrun weep, So sad her heart, it seemed, would break.
3	*Sátu ítrar* *jarla brúðir,* *gulli búnar,* *fyr Guðrúnu;* *hvar sagði þeira* *sinn oftrega,* *þann er bitrastan* *of beðit hafði.*	Then the wives of the warriors came, Gold-adorned, and Guthrun sought; Each one then of her own grief spoke, The bitterest pain she had ever borne.
4	*Þá kvað Gjaflaug,* *Gjúka systir:* *"Mik veit ek á moldu* *munarlausasta;* *hefi ek fimm vera* *forspell beðit,* *tveggja dætra,* *þriggja systra,* *átta bræðra,* *þó ek ein lifi."*	Then spake Gjaflaug, Gjuki's sister: “Most joyless of all on earth am I; Husbands five were from me taken, [Two daughters then, and sisters three,] Brothers eight, yet I have lived.”
5	*Þeygi Guðrún* *gráta mátti,* *svá var hon móðug* *at mög dauðan* *ok harðhuguð* *of hrör fylkis.*	Grieving could not Guthrun weep, Such grief she had for her husband dead, And so grim her heart by the hero's body.

6

Þá kvað þat Herborg,
Húnalands dróttning:
"Hefi ek harðara
harm at segja;
mínir sjau synir
sunnan lands,
verr inn átti,
í val fellu.

Then Herborg spake, the queen of the Huns:
“I have a greater grief to tell;
My seven sons in the southern land,
And my husband, fell in fight all eight.

7

Faðir ok móðir,
fjórir bræðr,
þau á vági
vindr of lék,
barði bára
við borðþili.

[Father and mother and brothers four
Amid the waves the wind once smote,
And the seas crashed through the sides of the ship.]

8

Sjalf skylda ek göfga,
sjalf skylda ek götva,
sjalf skylda ek höndla
hrör þeira;
þat ek allt of beið
ein misseri,
svá at mér maðr engi
munar leitaði.

The bodies all with my own hands then
I decked for the grave, and the dead I buried;
A half-year brought me this to bear;
And no one came to comfort me.

9

Þá varð ek hafta
ok hernuma
sams misseris
síðan verða;
skylda ek skreyta
ok skúa binda
hersis kván
hverjan morgin.

Then bound I was, and taken in war,
A sorrow yet in the same half-year;
They bade me deck and bind the shoes
Of the wife of the monarch every morn.

10

Hon ægði mér
af afbrýði
ok hörðum mik
höggum keyrði;
fann ek húsguma
hvergi in betra,
en húsfreyju
hvergi verri."

In jealous rage her wrath she spake,
And beat me oft with heavy blows;
Never a better lord I knew,
And never a woman worse I found.”

11

Þeygi Guðrún
gráta mátti,
svá var hon móðug
at mög dauðan
ok harðhuguð
of hrör fylkis.

Grieving could not Guthrun weep,
Such grief she had for her husband dead,
And so grim her heart by the hero's body.

12

Þá kvað þat Gullrönd
Gjúka dóttir:
"Fá kanntu, fóstra,
þótt þú fróð séir,
ungu vífi
andspjöll bera."
Varaði hon at hylja
um hrör fylkis.

Then spake Gollrond, Gjuki's daughter:
“Thy wisdom finds not, my foster-mother,
The way to comfort the wife so young.”
She bade them uncover the warrior's corpse.

13

Svipti hon blæju
af Sigurði
ok vatt vengi
fyr vífs knéum:
"Líttu á ljúfan,
leggðu munn við grön,
sem þú halsaðir
heilan stilli."

The shroud she lifted from Sigurth, laying
His well-loved head on the knees of his wife:
“Look on thy loved one, and lay thy lips
To his as if yet the hero lived.”

14

Á leit Guðrún
einu sinni,
sá hon döglings skör
dreyra runna,
fránar sjónir
fylkis liðnar,
hugborg jöfurs
hjörvi skorna.

Once alone did Guthrun look;
His hair all clotted with blood beheld,
The blinded eyes that once shone bright,
The hero's breast that the blade had pierced.

15

Þá hné Guðrún
höll við bolstri,
haddr losnaði,
hlýr roðnaði,
en regns dropi
rann niðr of kné.

Then Guthrun bent, on her pillow bowed,
Her hair was loosened, her cheek was hot,
And the tears like raindrops downward ran.

16

Þá grét Guðrún
Gjúka dóttir,
svá at tár flugu
tresk í gögnum
ok gullu við
gæss í túni,
mærir fuglar,
er mær átti.

Then Guthrun, daughter of Gjuki, wept,
And through her tresses flowed the tears;
And from the court came the cry of geese,
The birds so fair of the hero's bride.

17

Þá kvað þat Gullrönd
Gjúka dóttir:
"Ykkrar vissa ek
ástir mestar
manna allra
fyr mold ofan;
unðir þá hvárki
úti né inni,
systir mín
nema hjá Sigurði."

Then Gollrond spake, the daughter of Gjuki:
“Never a greater love I knew
Than yours among all men on earth;
Nowhere wast happy, at home or abroad,
Sister mine, with Sigurth away.”

18

"Svá var minn Sigurðr
hjá sonum Gjúka
sem væri geirlaukr
ór grasi vaxinn
eða væri bjartr steinn
á band dreginn,
jarknasteinn
yfir öðlingum.

“So was my Sigurth o'er Gjuki's sons
As the spear-leek grown above the grass,
Or the jewel bright borne on the band,
The precious stone that princes wear.

19

Ek þótta ok
þjóðans rekkum
hverri hæri
Herjans dísi;
nú em ek svá lítil
sem lauf séi
oft í jölstrum
at jöfur dauðan.

To the leader of men I loftier seemed
And higher than all of Herjan's maids;
As little now as the leaf I am
On the willow hanging; my hero is dead.

20

Sakna ek í sessi
ok í sæingu
míns málvinar,
valda megir Gjúka;
valda megir Gjúka
mínu bölvi
ok systur sinnar
sárum gráti.

In his seat, in his bed, I see no more
My heart's true friend; the fault is theirs,
The sons of Gjuki, for all my grief,
That so their sister sorely weeps.

21

Svá ér of lýða
landi eyðið
sem ér of unnuð
eiða svarða;
mun-a þú, Gunnarr,
gulls of njóta;
þeir munu þér baugar
at bana verða,
er þú Sigurði
svarðir eiða.

So shall your land its people lose
As ye have kept your oaths of yore;
Gunnar, no joy the gold shall give thee,
[The rings shall soon thy slayers be,]
Who swarest oaths with Sigurth once.

22 *Oft var í túni*
teiti meiri,
þá er minn Sigurðr
söðlaði Grana
ok þeir Brynhildar
biðja fóru,
armar véttar,
illu heilli."

In the court was greater gladness then
The day my Sigurth Grani saddled,
And went forth Brynhild's hand to win,
That woman ill, in an evil hour.”

23 *Þá kvað þat Brynhildr*
Buðla dóttir:
"*Vön sé sú véttr*
vers ok barna,
er þik, Guðrún,
gráts of beiddi
ok þér í morgun
málrúnar gaf."

Then Brynhild spake, the daughter of Buthli:
“May the witch now husband and children want
Who, Guthrun, loosed thy tears at last,
And with magic today hath made thee speak.”

24 *Þá kvað þat Gullrönd*
Gjúka dóttir:
"*Þegi þú, þjóðleið,*
þeira orða;
urðr öðlinga
hefir þú æ verit;
rekr þik alda hver
illrar skepnu,
sorg sára
sjau konunga
ok vinspell
vífa mest."

Then Gollrond, daughter of Gjuki, spake:
“Speak not such words, thou hated woman;
Bane of the noble thou e'er hast been,
[Borne thou art on an evil wave,
Sorrow hast brought to seven kings,]
And many a woman hast loveless made.”

25 *Þá kvað þat Brynhildr*
Buðla dóttir:
"*Veldr einn Atli*
öllu bölvi
of borinn Buðla
bróðir minn.

Then Brynhild, daughter of Buthli, spake:
“Atli is guilty of all the sorrow,
[Son of Buthli and brother of mine,]

26 *Þá er vit í höll*
húnskrar þjóðar
eld á jöfri
ormbeðs litum,
þess hefi ek gangs
goldit síðan,
þeirar sýnar,
sáumk ey."

When we saw in the hall of the Hunnish race
The flame of the snake's bed flash round the hero;
[For the journey since full sore have I paid,
And ever I seek the sight to forget.]”

27

Stóð hon und stoð,
strengði hon efli;
brann Brynhildi
Buðla dóttur
eldr ór augum,
eitri fnæsti,
er hon sár of leit
á Sigurði.

By the pillars she stood, and gathered her strength,
From the eyes of Brynhild, Buthli's daughter,
Fire there burned, and venom she breathed,
When the wounds she saw on Sigurth then.

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