

GLANZ UND GRAVUR

THE POETIC EDDA

Sigurðarkviða in skamma

The Short Lay of Sigurth

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

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GLANZ & GRAVUR
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The ‘short’ Lay of Sigurd, in fact one of the longer heroic poems: Brynhild's jealousy, Sigurd's murder, her prophecy and her death by her own hand. 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 Sigurðr* *sótti Gjúka,* *Völsungr ungi,* *er vegit hafði;* *tók við tryggðum* *tveggja bræðra,* *seldusk eiða* *eljunfræknir.*	Of old did Sigurth Gjuki seek, The Volsung young, in battles victor; Well he trusted the brothers twain, With mighty oaths among them sworn.
2	*Mey buðu hánum* *ok meiðma fjölð,* *Guðrúnu ungu,* *Gjúka dóttur;* *drukku ok dæmðu* *dægr margt saman* *Sigurðr ungi* *ok synir Gjúka.*	A maid they gave him, and jewels many, Guthrun the young, the daughter of Gjuki; They drank and spake full many a day, Sigurth the young and Gjuki's sons.
3	*Unz þeir Brynhildar* *biðja fóru,* *svá at þeim Sigurðr* *reið í sinni* *Völsungr ungi,* *ok vega kunni;* *hann of ætti,* *ef hann eiga knætti.*	Thereafter went they Brynhild to woo, And so with them did Sigurth ride, The Volsung young, in battle valiant,— Himself would have had her if all he had seen.
4	*Sigurðr inn suðræni* *lagði sverð nökkvit,* *mæki málfán,* *á meðal þeirra;* *né hann konu* *kyssa gerði* *né húnskr konungr* *hefja sér at armi,* *mey frumunga* *fal hann megi Gjúka.*	The southern hero his naked sword, Fair-flashing, let between them lie; [Nor would he come the maid to kiss;] The Hunnish king in his arms ne'er held The maiden he gave to Gjuki's sons.

5

Hon sér at lífi
löst né vissi
ok at aldrlagi
ekki grand,
vamm þat er væri
eða vera hygði;
gengu þess á milli
grimmar urðir.

Ill she had known not in all her life,
And nought of the sorrows of men she knew;
Blame she had not, nor dreamed she should bear it,
But cruel the fates that among them came.

6

Ein sat hon úti
aftan dags,
nam hon svá margt
um at mælask:
"Hafa skal ek Sigurð,
- eða þó svelta, -
mög frumungan
mér á armi.

By herself at the end of day she sat,
And in open words her heart she uttered:
“I shall Sigurth have, the hero young,
E'en though within my arms he die.

7

Orð mæltak nú,
iðrumk eftir þess:
kván er hans Guðrún,
en ek Gunnars;
ljótar nornir
skópu oss langa þrá."

The word I have spoken; soon shall I rue it,
His wife is Guthrun, and Gunnar's am I;
Ill Norns set for me long desire.”

8

Opt gengr hon innan
ills of fylld,
ísa ok jökla,
aftan hvern,
er þau Guðrún
ganga á beð
ok hana Sigurðr
sveipr í rifti,
konungr inn húnski
kván frjá sína.

Oft did she go with grieving heart
On the glacier's ice at even-tide,
When Guthrun then to her bed was gone,
And the bedclothes Sigurth about her laid.
“[Now Gjuki's child to her lover goes,]
And the Hunnish king with his wife is happy;

9

"Vön geng ek vilja,
vers ok beggja,
verð ek mik gæla
af grimmum hug."

Joyless I am and mateless ever,
Till cries from my heavy heart burst forth.”

10

Nam af þeim heiftum
hvetjask at vígi:
"Þú skalt, Gunnarr,
gerst of láta
mínu landi
ok mér sjalfri;
mun ek una aldri
með öðlingi.

In her wrath to battle she roused herself:
“Gunnar, now thou needs must lose
Lands of mine and me myself,
No joy shall I have with the hero ever.

11

Mun ek aftr fara,
þars ek áðan vark
með nábornum
niðjum mínum;
þar mun ek sitja
ok sofa lífi,
nema þú Sigurð
svelta látir
ok jöfurr öðrum
æðri verðir.

Back shall I fare where first I dwelt,
Among the kin that come of my race,
To wait there, sleeping my life away,
If Sigurth's death thou shalt not dare,
[And best of heroes thou shalt not be.]

12

Látum son fara
feðr í sinni,
skal-at ulf ala
ungan lengi.
Hveim verðr hölða
hefnd léttari
síðan til sátta,
at sonr lifi?"

The son shall fare with his father hence,
And let not long the wolf-cub live;
Lighter to pay is the vengeance-price
After the deed if the son is dead."

13

Hryggr varð Gunnarr
ok hnipnaði,
sveip sínum hug,
sat of allan dag;
hann vissi þat
vilgi görla,
hvat hánum væri
vinna sæmst
eða hánum væri
vinna bezt,
alls sik Völsung
vissi firrðan
ok at Sigurð
söknuð mikinn.

Sad was Gunnar, and bowed with grief,
Deep in thought the whole day through;
Yet from his heart it was ever hid
What deed most fitting he should find,
[Or what thing best for him should be,
Or if he should seek the Volsung to slay,
For with mighty longing Sigurth he loved.]

14

Ýmist hann hugði
jafnlanga stund:
þat var eigi
afartítt,
at frá konungdóm
kvánir gengi.
Nam hann sér Högna
heita at rúnum,
þar átti hann
alls fulltrúa:

Much he pondered for many an hour;
Never before was the wonder known
That a queen should thus her kingdom leave;
In counsel then did he Hogni call,
[For him in truest trust he held.]

15 *"Ein er mér Brynhildr*
öllum betri,
of borin Buðla,
hon er bragr kvenna;
fyrr skal ek mínu
fjörvi láta
en þeirar meyjar
meiðmum týna.

“More than all to me is Brynhild,
Buthli's child, the best of women;
My very life would I sooner lose
Than yield the love of yonder maid.

16 *Vildu okkr fylki*
til fjár véla?
Gótt er at ráða
Rínar malmi
ok unandi
auði stýra
ok sitjandi
sælu njóta."

Wilt thou the hero for wealth betray?
'Twere good to have the gold of the Rhine,
And all the hoard in peace to hold,
And waiting fortune thus to win.”

17 *Einu því Högni*
andsvör veitti:
"Samir eigi okkr
slíkt at vinna,
sverði rofna
svarna eiða,
eiða svarna,
unnar tryggðir.

Few the words of Hogni were:
“Us it beseems not so to do,
To cleave with swords the oaths we swore,
The oaths we swore and all our vows.

18 *Vitum-a vit á moldu*
menn in sælli,
meðan fjórir vér
folki ráðum
ok sá inn húnski
her-Baldr lifir,
né in mætri
mægð á foldu,
ef vér fimm sonu
fæðum lengi,
áttumgóða
æxla knættim.

We know no mightier men on earth
The while we four o'er the folk hold sway,
And while the Hunnish hero lives,
Nor higher kinship the world doth hold.
If sons we five shall soon beget,
Great, methinks, our race shall grow;

19 *Ek veit görla,*
hvaðan vegir standa:
eru Brynhildar
brek ofmikil."

Well I see whence lead the ways;
Too bitter far is Brynhild's hate.”

20

"Vit skulum Guthorm
gerva at vígi,
yngra bróður,
ofróðara;
hann var fyr útan
eiða svarna,
eiða svarna,
unnar tryggðir."

“Gotthorm to wrath we needs must rouse,
Our younger brother, in rashness blind;
He entered not in the oaths we swore,
The oaths we swore and all our vows.”

21

Dælt var at eggja
óbilgjarnan,
stóð til hjarta
hjörr Sigurði.

It was easy to rouse the reckless one.
The sword in the heart of Sigurth stood.

22

Réð til hefnda
hergjarn í sal
ok eftir varp
óbilgjörnum;
fló til Guthorms
Grams ramliga
kynbirt járn
ór konungs hendi.

In vengeance the hero rose in the hall,
And hurled his sword at the slayer bold;
At Gotthorm flew the glittering steel
Of Gram full hard from the hand of the king.

23

Hné hans of dolgr
til hluta tveggja,
hendr ok höfuð
hné á annan veg,
en fóta hlutr
féll aftr í stað.

The foeman cleft asunder fell,
Forward hands and head did sink,
And legs and feet did backward fall.

24

Sofnuð var Guðrún
í sæingu
sorgalaus
hjá Sigurði,
en hon vaknaði
vilja firrð,
er hon Freys vinar
flaut í dreyra.

Guthrun soft in her bed had slept,
Safe from care at Sigurth's side;
She woke to find her joy had fled,
In the blood of the friend of Freyr she lay.

25

Svá sló hon svárar
sínar hendr,
at rammhugaðr
reis upp við beð:
"Grát-a-ðu, Guðrún,
svá grimmliga,
brúðr frumunga,
þér bræðr lifa.

So hard she smote her hands together
That the hero rose up, iron-hearted:
“Weep not, Guthrun, grievous tears,
Bride so young, for thy brothers live.

26

Á ek til ungan
erfinytja,
kann-at hann firrask
ór fjándgarði;
þeir sér hafa
svárt ok dátt
enn nær numit
nýlig ráð.

Too young, methinks, is my son as yet,
He cannot flee from the home of his foes;
Fearful and deadly the plan they found,
The counsel new that now they have heeded.

27

Ríðr-a þeim síðan,
þótt sjau alir,
systursonr
slíkr at þingi.
Ek veit görla,
hví gegnir nú:
ein veldr Brynhildr
öllu bölvi.

No son will ride, though seven thou hast,
To the Thing as the son of their sister rides;
Well I see who the ill has worked,
On Brynhild alone lies the blame for all.

28

Mér unni mær
fyr mann hvern,
en við Gunnar
grand ekki vannk;
þyrmða ek sifjum,
svörnum eiðum,
síðr værak heitinn
hans kvánar vinr."

Above all men the maiden loved me,
Yet false to Gunnar I ne'er was found;
I kept the oaths and the kinship I swore;
Of his queen the lover none may call me."

29

Kona varp öndu,
en konungr fjörvi,
svá sló hon svárar
sínar hendr,
at kváðu við
kálkar í vá
ok gullu við
gæss í túni.

In a swoon she sank when Sigurth died;
So hard she smote her hands together
That all the cups in the cupboard rang,
And loud in the courtyard cried the geese.

30

Hló þá Brynhildr
Buðla dóttir
einu sinni
af öllum hug,
er hon til hvílu
heyra knátti
gjallan grát
Gjúka dóttur.

Then Brynhild, daughter of Buthli, laughed,
Only once, with all her heart,
When as she lay full loud she heard
The grievous wail of Gjuki's daughter.

31

Hitt kvað þá Gunnarr
gramr haukstalda:
"Hlær-a þú af því,
heiftgjörn kona,
glöð á gólfi,
at þér góðs viti.
Hví hafnar þú
inum hvíta lit,
feikna fæðir?
Hygg ek, at feig séir.

Then Gunnar, monarch of men, spake forth:
“Thou dost not laugh, thou lover of hate,
In gladness there, or for aught of good;
Why has thy face so white a hue,
Mother of ill? Foredoomed thou art.

32

Þú værir þess
verðust kvenna,
at fyr augum þér
Atla hjöggim,
sæir bræðr þínum
blóðugt sár,
undir dreyrgar
knættir yfir binda."

A worthier woman wouldst thou have been
If before thine eyes we had Atli slain;
If thy brother's bleeding body hadst seen
And the bloody wounds that thou shouldst bind.”

33

"Frýr-a maðr þér engi,
hefir þú fullvegit;
lítt sésk Atli
ófu þína;
hann mun ykkar
önd síðari
ok æ bera
afl it meira.

“None mock thee, Gunnar! thou hast mightily fought,
But thy hatred little doth Atli heed;
Longer than thou, methinks, shall he live,
And greater in might shall he ever remain.

34

Segja mun ek þér, Gunnarr,
- sjalfr veiztu görla, -
hvé er yðr snemma
til saka réðuð;
varð ek til ung
né ofþrungin,
fullgædd féi
á fleti bróður.

To thee I say, and thyself thou knowest,
That all these ills thou didst early shape;
No bonds I knew, nor sorrow bore,
And wealth I had in my brother's home.

35

Né ek vilda þat,
at mik verr ætti,
áðr þér Gjúkungar
riðuð at garði,
þrír á hestum
þjóðkonungar,
en þeira för
þörfgi væri.

Never a husband sought I to have,
Before the Gjukungs fared to our land;
Three were the kings on steeds that came,—
Need of their journey never there was.

36

Þeim hétumk þá
þjóðkonungi,
er með gulli sat
á Grana bógum;
var-at hann í augu
yðr um líkr
né á engi hlut
at álitum,
þó þykkizk ér
þjóðkonungar.

To the hero great my troth I gave
Who gold-decked sat on Grani's back;
Not like to thine was the light of his eyes,
[Nor like in form and face are ye,]
Though kingly both ye seemed to be.

37

Ok mér Atli þat
einni sagði,
at hvárki lézk
höfn of deila,
gull né jarðir,
nema ek gefask létak,
ok engi hlut
auðins féar,
þá er mér jóðungri
eigu seldi
ok mér jóðungri
aura talði.

And so to me did Atli say
That share in our wealth I should not have,
Of gold or lands, if my hand I gave not;
[More evil yet, the wealth I should yield,]
The gold that he in my childhood gave me,
[The wealth from him in my youth I had.]

38

Þá var á hvörfun
hugr minn um þat,
hvárt ek skylda vega
eða val fella
böll í brynju
um bróður sök;
þat myndi þá
þjóðkunnt vera
mörgum manni
at munar stríði.

Oft in my mind I pondered much
If still I should fight, and warriors fell,
Brave in my byrnie, my brother defying;
That would wide in the world be known,
And sorrow for many a man would make.

39

Létum síga
sáttmál okkur
lék mér meir í mun
meiðmar þiggja,
bauga rauða
burar Sigmundar;
né ek annars manns
aura vildak.

But the bond at last I let be made,
For more the hoard I longed to have,
The rings that the son of Sigmund won;
No other's treasure e'er I sought.

40

Unnak einum
né ýmissum,
bjó-at of hverfan
hug men-Skögul;
allt mun þat Atli
eftir finna,
er hann mína spyrr
morðför görva,

One-alone of all I loved,
Nor changing heart I ever had;
All in the end shall Atli know,
When he hears I have gone on the death-road
hence.”

41

at þeygi skal
þunngeð kona
annarrar ver
aldri leiða;
þá mun á hefndum
harma minna."

“Never a wife of fickle will
Yet to another man should yield.
So vengence for all my ills shall come.”

42

Upp reis Gunnarr
gramr verðungar,
ok um hals konu
hendr of lagði;
gengu allir
ok þó ýmissir
af heilum hug
hana at letja.

Up rose Gunnar, the people's ruler,
And flung his arms round her neck so fair;
And all who came, of every kind,
Sought to hold her with all their hearts.

43

Hratt af halsi
hveim þar sér,
lét-a mann sik letja
langrar göngu.

But back she cast all those who came,
Nor from the long road let them hold her;

44

Nam hann sér Högna
hvetja at rúnum:
"Seggi vil ek alla
í sal ganga
þína með mínum,
- nú er þörf mikil, -
vita, ef meini
morðför konu,
unz af méli
enn mein komi;
þá látum því
þarfar ráða."

In counsel then did he Hogni call:
“Of wisdom now full great is our need.
Let the warriors here in the hall come forth,
Thine and mine, for the need is mighty,
If haply the queen from death they may hold,
Till her fearful thoughts with time shall fade.”

45

Einu því Högni
andsvör veitti:
"Leti-a maðr hana
langrar göngu,
þars hon aftrborin
aldri verði;
hon kröng of komsk
fyr kné móður,
hon æ borin
óvilja til,
mörgum manni
at móðtrega."

[Few the words of Hogni were:]
“From the long road now shall ye hold her not,
That born again she may never be!
Foul she came from her mother forth,
And born she was for wicked deeds,
[Sorrow to many a man to bring.]”

46

Hvarf sér óhróðugr
andspilli frá,
þar er mörk menja
meiðmum deildi.

From the speaker gloomily Gunnar turned,
For the jewel-bearer her gems was dividing;

47

Leit hon of alla
eigu sína,
soltnar þýjar
ok salkonur;
gullbrynju smó,
- var-a gott í hug, -
áðr sik miðlaði
mækis eggjum.

On all her wealth her eyes were gazing,
On the bond-women slain and the slaughtered slaves.
Her byrnie of gold she donned, and grim
Was her heart ere the point of her sword had pierced it;

48

Hné við bollstri
hon á annan veg
ok hjörunduð
hugði at ráðum:

On the pillow at last her head she laid,
And, wounded, her plan she pondered o'er.

49

"Nú skulu ganga,
þeir er gull vili
ok minni því
at mér þiggja;
ek gef hverri
of hróðit sigli,
bók ok blæju,
bjartar váðir."

“Hither I will that my women come
Who gold are fain from me to get;
Necklaces fashioned fair to each
Shall I give, and cloth, and garments bright.”

50

Þögðu allir,
við því orði
ok allir senn
andsvör veittu:
"Ærnar soltnar,
munum enn lifa.
Verða salkonur
sæmð at vinna."

Silent were all as so she spake,
And all together answer made:
“Slain are enough; we seek to live,
Not thus thy women shall honor win.”

51

Unz af hyggjandi
hörskrýdd kona,
ung at aldri
orð viðr of kvað:
"Vilk-at ek mann trauðan
né torbænan
um óra sök
aldri týna.

Long the woman, linen-decked, pondered,—
—Young she was,— and weighed her words:
“For my sake now shall none unwilling
Or loath to die her life lay down.

52

Þó mun á beinum
brenna yðrum
færi eyrir,
þá er ér fram komið,
neitt Menju góð,
mín at vitja.

But little of gems to gleam on your limbs
Ye then shall find when forth ye fare
To follow me, or of Menja's wealth.

53

Sezktu niðr, Gunnarr,
mun ek segja þér
lífs örvæna
ljósa brúði;
mun-a yðvart far
allt í sundi,
þótt ek hafa
öndu látit.

Sit now, Gunnar! for I shall speak
Of thy bride so fair and so fain to die;
Thy ship in harbor home thou hast not,
Although my life I now have lost.

54

Sátt munuð it Guðrún
snemr, en þú hyggir;
hefir kunn kona
við konungi
daprar minjar
at dauðan ver.

Thou shalt Guthrun requite more quick than thou thinkest,
Though sadly mourns the maiden wise
Who dwells with the king, o'er her husband dead.

55

Þar er mær borin,
- móðir fæðir, -
sú mun hvítari
en inn heiði dagr
Svanhildr vera,
sólar geisla.

A maid shall then the mother bear;
Brighter far than the fairest day
Svanhild shall be, or the beams of the sun.

56

Gefa muntu Guðrúnu
góðra nökkurum
skeyti skæða
skatna mengi;
mun-at at vilja
versæl gefin;
hana mun Atli
eiga ganga,
of borinn Buðla,
bróðir minn.

Guthrun a noble husband thou givest,
Yet to many a warrior woe will she bring,
Not happily wedded she holds herself;
Her shall Atli hither seek,
[Buthli's son, and brother of mine.]

57

Margs á ek minnask,
hvé við mik fóru,
þá er mik sára
svikna höfðuð,
vaðin at vilja
vark, meðan ek lifðak.

Well I remember how me ye treated
When ye betrayed me with treacherous wiles;
Lost was my joy as long as I lived.

58

Muntu Oddrúnu
eiga vilja,
en þik Atli mun
eigi láta;
it munuð lúta
á laun saman,
hon mun þér unna
sem ek skyldak,
ef okkr góð of sköp
gerði verða.

Oddrun as wife thou fain wouldst win,
But Atli this from thee withholds;
Yet in secret tryst ye twain shall love;
She shall hold thee dear, as I had done
If kindly fate to us had fallen.

59

Þik mun Atli
illu beita,
muntu í öngan
ormgarð lagiðr.

Ill to thee shall Atli bring,
When he casts thee down in the den of snakes.

60

Þat mun ok verða
þvígit lengra,
at Atli mun
öndu týna,
sælu sinni,
ok sona lífi,
því at hánum Guðrún
grýmir á beð
snörpum eggjum
af sárum hug.

But soon thereafter Atli too
His life, methinks, as thou shalt lose,
[His fortune lose and the lives of his sons;]
Him shall Guthrun, grim of heart,
With the biting blade in his bed destroy.

61

Sæmri væri Guðrún,
systir ykkur,
frumver sínum
at fylgja dauðum,
ef henni gæfi
góðra ráða
eða ætti hon hug
ossum líkan.

It would better beseem thy sister fair
To follow her husband first in death,
If counsel good to her were given,
Or a heart akin to mine she had.

62

Ört mæli ek nú,
en hon eigi mun
of óra sök
aldri týna;
hana munu hefja
hávar bárur
til Jónakrs
óðaltorfu.

Slowly I speak,— but for my sake
Her life, methinks, she shall not lose;
She shall wander over the tossing waves,
To where Jonak rules his father's realm.

63

[Ala mun hún sér jóð,
erfivörðu],
erfivörðu,
Jónakrs sonum;
mun hon Svanhildi
senda af landi,
sína mey
ok Sigurðar.

Sons to him she soon shall bear,
Heirs therewith of Jonak's wealth;
But Svanhild far away is sent,
The child she bore to Sigurth brave.

64

Hana munu bíta
Bikka ráð,
því at Jörmunrekkr
óþarft lifir;
þá er öll farin
ætt Sigurðar;
eru Guðrúnar
græti at fleiri.

Bikki's word her death shall be,
For dreadful the wrath of Jormunrek;
So slain is all of Sigurth's race,
And greater the woe of Guthrun grows.

65

Biðja mun ek þik
bænar einnar,
- sú mun í heimi
hinzt bæn vera -:
Láttu svá breiða
borg á velli,
at undir oss öllum
jafnrúmt séi,
þeim er sultu
með Sigurði.

Yet one boon I beg of thee,
The last of boons in my life it is:
Let the pyre be built so broad in the field
That room for us all will ample be,
[For us who slain with Sigurth are.]

66

Tjaldi þar um þá borg
tjöldum ok skjöldum,
valarift vel fáð
ok Vala mengi;
brenni mér inn húnska
á hlið aðra.

With shields and carpets cover the pyre,
Shrouds full fair, and fallen slaves,
And besides the Hunnish hero burn me.

67
Brenni inum húnska
á hlið aðra
mína þjóna
menjum göfga:
tveir at höfðum
ok tveir haukar;
þá er öllu skipt
til jafnaðar.
68
Liggi okkar enn í milli
malmr hringvariðr,
egghvast járn,
sem endr lagit,
þá er vit bæði
beð einn stigum
ok hétum þá
hjóna nafni.
69
Hrynja hánum þá
á hæl þeygi
hlunnblik hallar
hringi litkuð,
ef hánum fylgir
ferð mín heðan;
þeygi mun ór för
aumlig vera.
70
Því at hánum fylgja
fimm ambáttir,
átta þjónar,
eðlum góðir,
fóstrman mitt
ok faðerni,
þat er Buðli gaf
barni sínu.
71
Margt sagða ek,
munda ek fleira,
er mér meir mjötuðr
málrúm gæfi;
ómum þverr,
undir svella,
satt eitt sagðak,
svá mun ek láta."

Besides the Hunnish hero there
Slaves shall burn, full bravely decked,
Two at his head and two at his feet,
A brace of hounds and a pair of hawks,
For so shall all be seemly done.
Let between us lie once more
The steel so keen, as so it lay
When both within one bed we were,
And wedded mates by men were called.
The door of the hall shall strike not the heel
Of the hero fair with flashing rings,
If hence my following goes with him;
Not mean our faring forth shall be.
Bond-women five shall follow him,
And eight of my thralls, well-born are they,
Children with me, and mine they were
As gifts that Buthli his daughter gave.
Much have I told thee, and more would say
If fate more space for speech had given;
My voice grows weak, my wounds are swelling;
Truth I have said, and so I die.”

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