

BROT AF SIGURTHARKVITHU

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FRAGMENT OF A SIGURTH LAY

Hogni spake:

1. “(What evil deed | has Sigurth) done, That the hero’s life | thou fain wouldst have?”

Gunnar spake:

2. “Sigurth oaths | to me hath sworn, Oaths hath sworn, | and all hath broken; He betrayed me there | where truest all His oaths, methinks, | he ought to have kept.”

Hogni spake:

3. “Thy heart hath Brynhild | whetted to hate, Evil to work | and harm to win; She grudges the honor | that Guthrun has, And that joy of herself | thou still dost have.”
4. They cooked a wolf, | they cut up a snake, They gave to Gotthorm | the greedy one’s flesh, Before the men, | to murder minded, Laid their hands | on the hero bold.
5. Slain was Sigurth | south of the Rhine; From a limb a raven | called full loud: “Your blood shall redden | Atli’s blade, And your oaths shall bind | you both in chains.”
6. Without stood Guthrun, | Gjuki’s daughter, Hear now the speech | that first she spake: “Where is Sigurth now, | the noble king, That my kinsmen riding | before him come?”
7. Only this | did Hogni answer: “Sigurth we | with our swords have slain; The gray horse mourns | by his master dead.”
8. Then Brynhild spake, | the daughter of Buthli: “Well shall ye joy | in weapons and lands; Sigurth alone | of all had been lord, If a little longer | his life had been.
9. “Right were it not | that so he should rule O’er Gjuki’s wealth | and the race of the Goths; Five are the sons | for ruling the folk, And greedy of fight, | that he hath fathered.”
10. Then Brynhild laughed— | and the building echoed— Only once, | with all her heart; “Long shall ye joy | in lands and men, Now ye have slain | the hero noble.”
11. Then Guthrun spake, | the daughter of Gjuki: “Much thou speakest | in evil speech; Accursed be Gunnar, | Sigurth’s killer, Vengeance shall come | for his cruel heart.”
12. Early came evening, | and ale was drunk, And among them long | and loud they talked; They slumbered all | when their beds they sought, But Gunnar alone | was long awake.
13. His feet were tossing, | he talked to himself, And the slayer of hosts | began to heed What the twain from the tree | had told him then, The raven and eagle, | as home they rode.
14. Brynhild awoke, | the daughter of Buthli, The warrior’s daughter, | ere dawn of day: “Love me or hate me, | the harm is done, And my grief cries out, | or else I die.”
15. Silent were all | who heard her speak, And nought of the heart | of the queen they knew, Who wept such tears | the thing to tell That laughing once | of the men she had won.

Brynhild spake:

16. "Gunnar, I dreamed | a dream full grim: In the hall were corpses; | cold was my bed; And, ruler, thou | didst joyless ride, With fetters bound | in the foemen's throng.
17. ". | | Utterly now | your Niflung race All shall die; | your oaths ye have broken.
18. "Thou hast, Gunnar, | the deed forgot, When blood in your footprints | both ye mingled; All to him | hast repaid with ill Who fain had made thee | the foremost of kings.
19. "Well did he prove, | when proud he rode To win me then | thy wife to be, How true the host-slayer | ever had held The oaths he had made | with the monarch young.
20. "The wound-staff then, | all wound with gold, The hero let | between us lie; With fire the edge | was forged full keen, And with drops of venom | the blade was damp."

Here it is told in this poem about the death of Sigurth, and the story goes here that they slew him out of doors, but some say that they slew him in the house, on his bed while he was sleeping. But German men say that they killed him out of doors in the forest; and so it is told in the old Guthrun lay, that Sigurth and Gjuki's sons had ridden to the council-place, and that he was slain there. But in this they are all agreed, that they deceived him in his trust of them, and fell upon him when he was lying down and unprepared.

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