

The Funeral of James Ogilvie, known as Earl Sir Bearengaer hinn Raudi

By Sharon Smith, aka Bunky, of Snow Water Protogrove

Background- Over the summer, I was asked to lead a funeral rite for a friend in the local SCA, who had a Norse persona. His wife wanted a Norse-style funeral for him, as while religiously he was agnostic, he was very interested in historical Norse practices. Within the Society, he was a Knight who'd been King & was extremely active in martial arts & that is reflected in the rite. The rite itself is modeled as closely on historical sources as was practical. It is in two sections. The first took place at the funeral home & consisted of invocations to specific deities & a sumble in honor of the deceased. The second place took place at the cemetery in which there were more invocations & we burned a small effigy of the deceased while his coffin was lowered into the grave. An especially nice touch at that point was when one of the Knights stepped forward & recited a funeral poem of his own creation, "The Jarl Sails Alone". It was completely unplanned but turned out to be absolutely perfect. Those parts not cited as coming from a particular source were written by myself, with input from Bear's widow. Permission is granted to use & adapt this rite as needed.

Greeting and Statement of Purpose

Goði:

Family, Friends and Kindred - attend now to my words! We are joined together in memorial to honor our fallen kinsman and friend. Open your hearts and do not let this moment pass you by, for life is fleeting and we are here together now! Let our deeds this day be written among the heavens that we may never forget the man born as James Robert Ogilvie, who became Earl Sir Bearengaer hinn Raudi in the S.C.A. and who was known to all and sundry simply as Bear.

Hammer-Hallowing:

Goði:

Hail Mighty Thor	faithful folk friend,
wise world warder,	Jord's famous son.
Great god riding	the vast sky's vault,
battle proved Bear	bedecked with stars.

Goði holds up hammer

As we hold high	this holy hammer,
let wicked wrights	and evil etins,
flee in terror	from the fiery fierce

searing splendour of your god-strength.

Beloved hallower of hall and hearth,
grant us your gift and bless this place.
Let us be safe, firm in friendship,
strong in spirit, and true in troth.¹

Invocations

Goði:

Hail to the Day, Hail to the Sons of Day
Hail to Night and its Daughter!
Gaze on us gently, grant us sitting here
Your blessings in our battles.
Hail to the gods, hail to the goddesses
Hail to the all-giving earth!
Wisdom and lore, as long as we live
Grant us, and healing hands²

Goði:

Invoking the aid of Odin our father
And Bragi the bard-god, the brew of dwarves,
Poetry we pour, the potent drink.
Quaff now this cup of Kvasir's blood.
Remember the roving Rider of Yggdrasil
Stole the stuff to bestow on men.
The gallows-god in Gunlod's bed
Won the wondrous wine of bards,
And in form of feather flew with the gift,
The magical mead that men might sing!
Give thanks for the gift to Gauta-Tyr,
And raise now the praise of the Raven-god!³

Goði:

Great Thor the Thunderer!
Warder of life, Waker of Lightning,
Thrice mighty Thurse-queller
Of Earth Mother the Ase-son,
Allfather's Red Aetheling,
Holiness and Hallower,
Woe of the World Serpent,
Wain-God and Wind Rider:
Our greatest blot and blessing,
To help, in Midgard's holding
Against foes of frith and freedom,

You, Lorrider, Lord of Mjollnir!

Thanks to You, Thor
Well do You ward us,
Bring we gladly brimming meadhorns
Your thirst to quench, Thunderer
Gift to You, God of Storms
Our life, love and laughter,
That you ever them enjoy,
For in grith grow we truly
Warded by Woden's Son! ⁴

Godi:

Today we gather to praise the life & great deeds of our friend, Bearangaer.
Bearangaer who was Prince & Viscount of Drachenwald
Bearangaer who was Knight, Count & King of the Midlrealm
Who led that Kingdom's army at the Third Pennsic War

Introduction of the Heirs

Godi:

See & recognize the heirs of James Robert Ogilvy, Janet Davis & Raymond Bearengaer Ogilvie .
Let all honor & standing due to Bearangaer pass to them as it can & is proper.
Let his wealth be given to them and likewise his lands.

Heirs toast & present grave goods

Godi:

Cattle die, kinsmen die,
one day you yourself will die;
but the words of praise will not perish
when a man wins fair fame.
Cattle die, kinsmen die,
one day you die yourself;
I know one thing that never dies -
the dead man's reputation. ⁵

Eulogy

-Young Bear (Best friend of Bear)

Special Toasts & Offerings

(by close friends of Bear, specially asked by the widow to speak)

- Barok
- Elizabeth

Open toasts & offerings

-Anyone else that wants to speak or give a grave good may do so at this time. Please speak to the officiant of the rite before it starts so that your name may be added to the list.
-Proceed sumble-style through those who wish to speak. All toasts, boasts & stories must be about Bear. There are two horns present for toasting, one has mead & the other has ginger ale. Toasts may be made with either.

Closing Prayer

Goði:

Lo, there do I see my father.

Lo, there do I see my mother, my sisters and my brothers.

Lo there do I see the line of my people back to the beginning.

Lo, they do call to me.

They bid me take my place in Asgard at the halls of Valhalla,

Where spirits of the brave may live forever.

Lo, here do I see my son.

Lo, here do I see my daughter, their daughters and sons.

Lo, here do I see the line of my people forward to the mists of tomorrow.

Lo, they do call to me.

They bid me take my place in Midgard at the hearth of our folk.

Where the memories and spirits of the family will live forever.⁶

Closing Song-- Born on the Listfield

-Song chosen by the widow & is a popular SCA song about Knightly valor.
I do not know the name of the author

Procession to Cemetery

Squires will act as honor guard/ pallbearers
Leah Janette will release squires from their fealty

Invocations

Goði:

Hail Allfather Odin!

Hail old grim one!

Thou who sacrificed the nine
for our sakes, the greatest of gifts
from your time on the windy tree.
we are awed by thy craft.

Hail Odin!

Hail All Mighty Thor!

Thy Strength and Valor
light our life with bright example
thy thunder guards our ways.

Thy protection keeps us safe
from those things both here and
beyond the ken of man.

Hail Thor!

Hail to the Gods of the Æsir and Vanir!

Hail to the Goddesses of the Æsir and Vanir!

Hail to mighty, fecund Nerthus!

Hail to the Sky over head.

We praise the Gods freely and are helped in return!

Hail to these Holy Ones who dwell together!

Hail to the day! Hail to the sons of day!

Hail to the night and her gracious kin!

With pleasing eyes may you look upon us,
and give victory to those gathered here!

Hail honored ancestors!

Hail kinfolk!

May your strengths and
your wisdom ever flourish.

You live on within us and without.

Hail honored kinfolk! ⁷

Final Toast

Goði:

Bearangaer, we have sung of your great deeds
Remembered here by all the folk
Your name will live on among us
Your tales will always be told

Now, we send you on to AEsghard
so that you may join your fellow warriors
and prepare to defend us
And keep us safe at Ragnarok

In days of old, we sent the spirit to the Gods
On the pathway of fire and smoke
Today, we return our kinsman to the womb of the earth
Let his body rest in the arms of Nerthus
With his earthly pain taken from him
While his soul rises up on the fire
To his revels in Odin's Hall

Sending the Soul to Valhalla

Assistants light boat with effigy on fire

Goði:

Odin, One-Eye
A warrior stands before you
Claiming his right to enter
Your bright hall in AEsgard.
Open your doors!
Welcome him in
Seat him at your table
Bid him eat & drink
He has earned his place in Valhalla

(Syr Haykon Oaktall recited his poem here, while the effigy was burning)

Closing Song - Shower Song ⁸

- This tune was also chosen by the widow & is a very funny song comparing the great Pennsic War- a huge SCA event of over 14,000 people- to Valhalla. It was one of Bear's favorite songs.

Sources

1 Thorshof

2 "Sigdrifumál":2-3, also called The Lay of Sigdrifa

3 source unknown

4 © Odindis 2000

5 Havamal 75-76

6 Original from The 13th Warrior, based on Ibn Fadlan's description of a Rus funeral rite; version edited and expanded by Thomas Hoffman of the Gamall-steinn Hearth

7 adapted from an invocation written by Crowfuzz

8 Words and music Donnan MacDubhsidhe