

Judith

Anonymous

Cotton Vitellius A xv



tweode

gifena in ðys ginnan grunde. Heo ðar ða gearwe funde
mundbyrd æt ðam mæran þeodne, þa heo ahte mæste þearfe,
hylde þæs hehstan deman, þæt he hie wiðþæs hehstan brogan
gefriðode, frymða waldend. Hyre ðæs fæder on roderum 5
torhtmod tiðe gefremede, þe heo ahte trumne geleafan

a to ðam ælmihtigan. Gefrægen ic ða Holofernus
winhatan wyrcean georne ond eallum wundrum þrymlic
girwan up swæsendo. To ðam het se gumena baldor
ealle ða yldestan ðegnas; hie ðæt ofstum miclum 10
ræfndon, rondwiggende, comon to ðam rican þeodne
feran, folces ræswan. þæt wæs þy feorðan dogore
þæs ðe Iudith hyne, gleaw on geðonce,
ides ælfscinu, ærest gesohte.
Hie ða to ðam symle sittan eodon, 15
wlance to wingedrince, ealle his weagesiðas,
bealde byrnwiggende. þær wæron bollan steape
boren æfter bencum gelome, swylce eac bunan ond orcas
fulle fletsittendum; hie þæt fæge þegon,
rofe rondwiggende, þeah ðæs se rica ne wende, 20
egesful eorla dryhten. ða wearðHolofernus,
goldwine gumena, on gytesalum,
hloh ond hlydde, hlynede ond dynede,
þæt mihten fira bearn feorran gehyran
hu se stiðmoda styrnde ond gylede, 25
modig ond medugal, manode geneahhe
bencsittende þæt hi gebærdon wel.

Swa se inwidda ofer ealne dæg
 dryhtguman sine drencte mid wine,
 swiðmod sinces brytta, oðþæt hie on swiman lagon, 30
 oferdrencte his duguðe ealle, swylce hie wæron deaðe gesle-
 gene,
 agotene goda gehwylces. Swa het se gumena aldor
 fylgan fletsittendum, oðþæt fira bearnum
 nealæhte niht seo þystre. Het ða niða geblonden
 þa eadigan mægð ofstum fetigan 35
 to his bedreste beagum gehlæste,
 hringum gehrodene. Hie hraðe fremedon,
 anbyhtscealcas, swa him heora ealdor bebead,
 byrnwigena brego, bearhtme stopon
 to ðam gysterne, þær hie Iudithðe 40
 fundon ferhðgleawe, ond ða fromlice
 lindwiggende lædan ongunnon
 þa torhtan mægð to træfe þam hean,
 þær se rica hyne reste on symbel
 nihtes inne, nergende lað, 45
 Holofernus. þær wæs eallgylden
 fleohnet fæger ymbe þæs folctogan

se rica on his reste middan, swa he nyste ræda nanne
 on gewitlocan. Wiggend stopon
 ut of ðam inne ofstum miclum, 70
 weras winsade, þe ðone wærlogan,
 laðne leodhatan, læddon to bedde
 nehstan siðe. þa wæs nergendes
 þeowen þrymful, þearle gemyndig
 hu heo þone atolan eaðost mihte 75
 ealdre benæman ær se unsyfra,
 womfull, onwoce. Genam ða wundenlocc
 scyppendes mægð scearpne mece,
 scurum heardne, ond of sceaðe abræd
 swiðran folme; ongan ða swegles weard 80
 be naman nemnan, nergend ealra
 woruldbuendra, ond þæt word acwæð:
 "Ic ðe, frymða god ond frofre gæst,
 bearn alwaldan, biddan wylle
 miltse þinre me þearfendre, 85
 ðrynesse ðrym. þearle ys me nu ða
 heorte onhæted ond hige geomor,
 swyðe mid sorgum gedrefed. Forgif me, swegles ealdor,

sigor ond soðne geleafan, þæt ic mid þys sweorde mote
 geheawan þysne morðres bryttan; geunne me minra gesynta, 90
 þearlmod þeoden gumena. Nahte ic þinre næfre
 miltse þon maran þearfe. Gewrec nu, mihtig dryhten,
 torhtmod tires brytta, þæt me ys þus torne on mode,
 hate on hreðre minum." Hi ða se hehsta dema
 ædre mid elne onbryrde, swa he deðanra gehwylcne 95
 herbuendra þe hyne him to helpe seceð
 mid ræde ond mid rihte geleafan. þa wearðhyre rume on
 mode,
 haligre hyht geniwod; genam ða þone hæðenan mannan
 fæste be feaxe sinum, teah hyne folmum wiðhyre weard
 bysmerlice, ond þone bealofullan 100
 listum alede, laðne mannan,
 swa heo ðæs unlædan eaðost mihte
 wel gewealdan. Sloh ða wundenlocc
 þone feondsceaðan fagum mece,
 heteponcolne, þæt heo healfne forcearf 105
 þone sweoran him, þæt he on swiman læg,
 druncen ond dolhwund. Næs ða dead þa gyt,
 ealles orsawle; sloh ða eornoste

ides ellenrof oðre siðe
þone hæðenan hund, þæt him þæt heafod wand 110
forðon ða flore. Læg se fula leap
gesne beæftan, gæst ellor hwearf
under neowelne næs ond ðær genyðerad wæs,
susle gesæled syððan æfre,
wyrnum bewunden, witum gebunden, 115
hearde gehæfted in hellebryne
æfter hinsiðe. Ne ðearf he hopian no,
þystrum forðylmed, þæt he ðonan mote
of ðam wyrmsele, ac ðær wunian seal
awa to aldre butan ende forð 120
in ðam heolstran ham, hyhtwynna leas.
Hæfde ða gefohten foremærne blæd
Iudith æt guðe, swa hyre god uðe,
swegles ealdor, þe hyre sigores onleah.
þa seo snotere mægð snude gebrohte 125
þæs herewæðan heafod swa blodig
on ðam fætelse þe hyre foregenga,
blachleor ides, hyra begea nest,
ðeawum geðungen, þyder on lædde,

ond hit þa swa heolfrig hyre on hond ageaf, 130
 higeðoncolre, ham to berenne,
 Iudith gingran sinre. Eodon ða gegnum þanonne
 þa idesa ba ellenþriste,
 oðþæt hie becomon, collenferhðe,
 eadhreðige mægð, ut of ðam herige, 135
 þæt hie sweotollice geseon mihten
 þære wlitegan byrig weallas blican,
 Bethuliam. Hie ða beahhrodene
 feðelaste forðonettan,
 oðhie glædmode gegan hæfdon 140
 to ðam wealgate. Wiggend sæton,
 weras wæccende wearde heoldon
 in ðam fæstenne, swa ðam folce ær
 geomormodum Iudith bebead,
 searoðoncol mægð, þa heo on siðgewat, 145
 ides ellenrof. Wæs ða eft cumen
 leof to leodum, ond ða lungre het
 gleawhydig wif gumena sumne
 of ðære ginnan byrig hyre togeanes gan,
 ond hi ofostlice in forlæton 150

þurh ðæs wealles geat, ond þæt word acwæð
 to ðam sigefolce: "Ic eow secgan mæg
 þoncwyrdē þing, þæt ge ne þyrfen leng
 murnan on mode. Eow ys metod bliðe,
 cyninga wuldor; þæt gecyðed wearð 155
 geond woruld wide, þæt eow ys wuldorblæd
 torhtlic toward ond tir gifeðe
 þara læðða þe ge lange drugon."
 þa wurdon bliðe burhsittende,
 syððan hi gehyrdon hu seo halige spræc 160
 ofer heanne weall. Here wæs on lustum.
 Wiðþæs fæstengeates folc onette,
 weras wif somod, wornum ond heapum,
 ðreatum ond ðrymmum þrungon ond urnon
 ongean ða þeodnes mægð þusendmælum, 165
 ealde ge geonge. æghwylcum wearð
 men on ðære medobyrig mod areted,
 syððan hie ongeaton þæt wæs Iudith cumen
 eft to eðle, ond ða ofostlice
 hie mid eaðmedum in forleton. 170
 þa seo gleawe het, golde gefrætewod,

hyre ðinenne þancolmode
þæs herewæðan heafod onwriðan
ond hyt to behðe blodig ætywan
þam burhleodum, hu hyre æt beaduwe gespeow. 175
Spræc ða seo æðele to eallum þam folce:
"Her ge magon sweotole, sigerofe hæleð,
leoda ræswan, on ðæs laðestan
hæðenes heaðorinces heafod starian,
Holofernus unlyfigendes, 180
þe us monna mæst morðra gefremede,
sarra sorga, ond þæt swyðor gyt
ycan wolde, ac him ne uðe god
lengran lifes, þæt he mid læddum us
eglan moste; ic him ealdor oðþrong 185
þurh godes fultum. Nu ic gumena gehwæne
þyssa burgleoda biddan wylle,
randwigendra, þæt ge recene eow
fysan to gefeohte. Syððan frymða god,
arfæst cyning, eastan sende 190
leohtne leoman, beraðlinde forð,
bord for breostum ond byrnhomas,

scire helmas in sceaðena gemong,
 fyllan folctogan fagum sweordum,
 fæge frumgaras. Fynd syndon eowere 195
 gedemed to deaðe, ond ge dom agon,
 tir æt tohtan, swa eow getacnod hafað
 mihtig dryhten þurh mine hand."
 þa wearðsnelra werod snude gegearewod,
 cendra to campe. Stopon cynerofe 200
 secgas ond gesiðas, bæron sigepufas,
 foron to gefeohte forðon gerihte,
 hæleðunder helmum, of ðære haligan byrig
 on ðæt dægred sylf. Dynedan scildas,
 hlude hlummon. þæs se hlanca gefeah 205
 wulf in walde, ond se wanna hrefn,
 wælgifre fugel. Wistan begen
 þæt him ða þeodguman þohton tilian
 fylle on fægum; ac him fleah on last
 earn ætes georn, urigfeðera, 210
 salowigpada sang hildeleoð,
 hyrnednebbas. Stopon heaðorincas,
 beornas to beadowe, bordum beðeahte,

hwealfum lindum, þa ðe hwile ær
 elðeodigra edwit þoledon, 215
 hæðenra hosp. Him þæt hearde wearð
 æt ðam æscplegan eallum forgolden,
 Assyrium, syððan Ebreas
 under guðfanum gegan hæfdon
 to ðam fyrdwicum. Hie ða fromlice 220
 leton forðfleogan flana scuras,
 hildenædran, of hornbogan,
 strælas stedehearde; styrmdon hlude
 grame guðfreca, garas sendon
 in heardra gemang. Hæledwæron yrre, 225
 landbuende, laðum cynne,
 stopon stýrnmode, stercedferhðe,
 wrehton unsofte ealdgeniðlan
 medowerige; mundum brugdon
 scealcas of sceaðum scirmæled swyrd, 230
 ecgum gecoste, slogon eornoste
 Assiria oretmæcgas,
 niðhycgende, nanne ne sparedon
 þæs herefolces, heanne ne ricne,

cwicera manna þe hie ofercuman mihton. 235
 Swa ða magoþegnas on ða morgentid
 ehton elðeoda ealle þrage,
 oðþæt ongeaton ða ðe grame wæron,
 ðæs herefolces heafodweardas,
 þæt him swyrdgeswing swiðlic eowdon 240
 weras Ebrisce. Hie wordum þæt
 þam yldestan ealdorþegnum
 cyðan eodon, wrehton cumbolwigan
 ond him forhtlice færspeþ bodedon,
 medowerigum morgencollan, 245
 atolne ecgplegan. þa ic ædre gefrægn
 slegefæge hæleð slæpe tobredon
 ond wiðþæs bealofullan burgeteldes
 werigferhðe hwearfum þringan,
 Holofernus. Hogedon aninga 250
 hyra hlaforde hilde bodian,
 ærðon ðe him se egesa on ufan sæte,
 mægen Ebrea. Mynton ealle
 þæt se beorna brego ond seo beorhte mægð
 in ðam wlitegan træfe wæron ætsomme, 255

Iudith seo æðele ond se galmoda,
egesfull ond afor. Næs ðeah eorla nan
þe ðone wiggend aweccan dorste
oððe gecunnian hu ðone cumbolwigan
wiðða halgan mægð hæfde geworden, 260
metodes meowlan. Mægen nealæhte,
folc Ebrea, fuhton þearle
heardum heoruwæpnum, hæfte guldon
hyra fyrngeflitu, fagum swyrdum,
ealde æfðoncan; Assyria wearð 265
on ðam dægeweorce dom geswiðrod,
bælc forbigeð. Beornas stodon
ymbe hyra þeodnes træf þearle gebylde,
sweorcendferhðe. Hi ða somod ealle
ongunnon cohhetan, cirman hlude 270
ond gristbitian, gode orfeorme,
mid toðon torn þoligende. þa wæs hyra tires æt ende,
eades ond ellendæda. Hogedon þa eorlas aweccan
hyra winedryhten; him wiht ne speow.
þa wearðsiðond late sum to ðam arod 275
þara beadorinca, þæt he in þæt burgeteld

niðheard neðde, swa hyne nyd fordraf.
Funde ða on bedde blacne licgan
his goldgifan gæstes gesne,
lifes belidenne. He þa lungre gefeoll 280
freorig to foldan, ongan his feax teran,
hreoh on mode, ond his hrægl somod,
ond þæt word acwæð to ðam wiggendum
þe ðær unrote ute wæron:
"Her ys geswutelod ure sylfra forwyrd, 285
toward getacnod þæt þære tide ys
mid niðum neah geðrunge, þe we sculon nyde losian,
somod æt sæcce forweorðan. Her liðsweorde geheawen,
beheafdod healdend ure." Hi ða hreowigmode
wurpon hyra wæpen of dune, gewitan him werigferhðe 290
on fleam sceacan. Him mon feaht on last,
mægeneacen folc, oðse mæsta dæl
þæs heriges læg hilde gesæged
on ðam sigewonge, sweordum geheawen,
wulfum to willan ond eac wælgifrum 295
fluglum to frofre. Flugon ða ðe lyfdon,
laðra lindwerod. Him on laste for

sweot Ebrea sigore geweorðod,
dome gedyrsoð; him feng dryhten god
fægre on fultum, frea ælmihtig. 300
Hi ða fromlice fagum swyrdum,
hæleðhigerofe, herpaðworhton
þurh laðra gemong, linde heowon,
scildburh scæron. Sceotend wæron
guðe gegremede, guman Ebrisce; 305
þegnas on ða tid þearle gelyste
gargewinnes. þær on greot gefeoll
se hyhsta dæl heafodgerimes
Assiria ealdorduguðe,
laðan cynnes. Lythwon becom 310
cwicera to cyððe. Cirdon cynerofe,
wiggend on wiðertrod, wælsceð on innan,
reocende hræw. Rum wæs to nimanne
londbuendum on ðam laðestan,
hyra ealdfeondum unlyfigendum 315
heolfrig herereaf, hyrsta scyne,
bord ond bradswyrd, brune helmas,
dyre madmas. Hæfdon domlice

on ðam folcstede fynd oferwunnen
eðelweardas, ealdhettende 320
swyrdum aswefede. Hie on swaðe reston,
þa ðe him to life laðost wæron
cwicera cynna. þa seo cneoris eall,
mægða mærost, anes monðes fyrst,
wlanc, wundenlocc, wagon ond læddon 325
to ðære beorhtan byrig, Bethuliam,
helmas ond hupseax, hare byrnan,
guðsceorp gumena golde gefrætewod,
mærra madma þonne mon ænig
asecgan mæge searoþoncelra; 330
eal þæt ða ðeodguman þrymme geeodon,
cene under cumblum on compwige
þurh Iudithe gleawe lare,
mægðmodigre. Hi to mede hyre
of ðam siðfate sylfre brohton, 335
eorlas æscrofe, Holofernes
sweord ond swatigne helm, swylce eac side byrnan
gerenode readum golde, ond eal þæt se rinca baldor
swiðmod sincea ahte oððe sundoryrfes,

beaga ond beorhtra maðma, hi þæt þære beorhtan idese 340
ageafon gearoþoncolre. Ealles ðæs Iudith sægde
wuldor weroda dryhtne, þe hyre weorðmynde geaf,
mærðe on moldan rice, swylce eac mede on heofonum,
sigorlean in swegles wuldre, þæs þe heo ahte soðne geleafan
to ðam ælmihtigan; huru æt þam ende ne tweode 345
þæs leanes þe heo lange gyrnde. ðæs sy ðam leofan drihtne
wuldor to widan aldre, þe gesceop wind ond lyfte,
roderas ond rume grundas, swylce eac reðe streamas
ond swegles dreamas, ðurh his sylfes miltse.