

Bundling of motifs in the Saga of the Nibelungs in the Early Middle Ages

The topic of my presentation will be the bundling of motifs in the Saga of the Nibelungs in the Early Middle Ages, consequently, which historical events, motifs and characters have found their way into the Song of the Nibelungs, the Saga of the Nibelungs and have cooperated in its genesis. I want to focus here in most instances on the Song of the Nibelungs, otherwise my presentation should disrupt the time frame of this meeting.

General remarks

First of all I would like to make some general observations towards the genesis of heroic sagas. Heroic sagas did not solely exist in the lore of the Germanic tribes, but numerous peoples are known to have possessed them. Greek and Roman sagas should be borne in mind, as well as the Kirghiz Epic of Manas.

It is a common denominator of all sagas to emerge at a specific point in time, that is to say during the transition from a tribal society to an emerging class society, which is connected with the genesis of a ruling class, a nation state and an administration – to put it simply, during the transition from tribal society to civilisation. Why humans on the verge of civilisation and creation of nation states exhibit such a strong need to record historical events I cannot honestly say. Perhaps it is connected with the genesis of a ruling elite in need to justify their governance or with the advent of a new feeling of coherence in society coinciding with the creation of empires and nation states.

However, sagas are not chronicles. After a certain time of oral tradition a process of re-narration set in, in which by means of reduction, assimilation and coordination new stories and constellations appeared. Motifs were interchanged, altered and allocated to different characters. In the case of the Song of the Nibelungs we find ourselves in the comfortable situation of being able to, by means of using Roman and Greek authors as well as the authors of the newly founded Germanic kingdoms writing about the the historical events since the start of our Common Era, ascertain the historical background of the sagas. But there is more. The historians are responsible, for the most part, for relating the first sagas, which are still based heavily on objective historical fact.

The creation of nation states by the Germanic tribes sets in at the end of the fourth century and coincides with the Migration Period, at the end of which the Western Roman Empire had collapsed and a large number of Germanic nation states appear. During this time the Song of the Nibelungs comes into existence, too.

It shall be noted here that the individual members of distinct Germanic dynasties and kinships are characterized by sharing common elements in their names or their names had the same initial letter to mark them as a member of a specific family. These similarities in name did often facilitate the process of amalgamation in the saga. Thus Gunther can be regarded as personification of the kings of Burgundy, Siegfried as the kings of the Franks and Dietrich of Bern als personification of the kings of the Visigoths.

Origin of the name “Nibelungs“

Before starting with the presentation of the tangible incidents and motifs, I would like to devote some time to the question, bearing in mind that we are gathered in the city of the Nibelungs inside the museum of the Nibelungs, of what the name

Nibelungs actually means. In the Saga the name is given to a dynasty of dwarfs. Originally, the name Nibelungs is synonymous with the name for the tribe of the Franks and possibly initially for the Ripuarian Franks. Once the term existed as an addendum, but later gained an existence of its own. The first indication for this is found in the Nordic saga. There the menfolk around Siegfried are called Völsunge. In Beowulf Sigemund is called Son of Waels. The name Wälsunge is in all likelihood formed from the sons of the Waal, or the people from the Waal. In historical sources, inter alia in Sidonius Apollinaris, it is the name used for the Franks. The Waal is a tributary of the Rhine and the Salian Franks settled near this river. In the south Siegfried's people are referred to as Nibelungs, leading to the presumption that similar synonyms are used here. Furthermore, in Waltharius the term Franci nebulones bobs up, which can be translated as Nibelung Franks. In Waltharius, though, the Franci nebulones are the people of Gunther, who, in the Song of the Nibelungs, are Burgundians. At the same time the people of Gunther are, in the Klage, called Rhine-Franks. This leads to the conclusion that originally the Ripuarian or Rhine-Franks were called Nibelungs. Incidentally, this also explains why in the Song of the Nibelungs the people of Siegfried as well as the Burgundians are referred to as Nibelungs. Consequently the reason for this is that not the owner of the treasure is called Nibelung, but that in the Saga itself it is not clear who is a Frank and who is a Burgundian – this lack of clarity possibly emerges from the fact that the empire of the Ripuarian Franks was located in geographical proximity of the Burgundian kingdom on the Rhine and the second Burgundian kingdom later became part of the Frankish empire.

However, on to the respective historical motifs, events and characters of the early middle ages that can be found in the Song of the Nibelungs.

Gundahar, Aetius and Attila

Around the year 410 the Burgundians founded their first kingdom on the river Rhine under king Gundahar. Whether Worms was its' capital is not known. In 411 Gundahar and the king of the Alans, Goar, proclaimed the usurper Jovinus as anti-emperor in Mundiaccum. As Mundiaccum might mean Mainz and because of archaeological evidence it is commonly believed today that the capital - if one could call it a capital at all remains questionable - could have been in the Mainz/Wiesbaden-area. In 435 the Burgundians invaded the province Belgica I. The Roman commander Aetius, though, defeated Gundahar, so that he had to plead for peace. A year later, according to Prosper Tiro, the Huns suddenly attacked the Burgundians and king Gundahar died with the bulk of his host. The Huns may have been auxiliary troops given to Aetius by the Hun-khan Rua to assist him. The reason for the attack and exact events are unknown. After their defeat Aetius resettled the Burgundians near Lake Geneva in 443, enabling them to found their second kingdom near the river Rhone.

It shall be mentioned in this context that, according to the Lex Burgundiorum by king Gundobad, among the royal family rank a Gebecca, a Gondomar and Gislahar, where Gebecca can be identified with Gibech and Gislahar with Giselher in the Saga, Gondomar may be Gernot. These facts set forth are common knowledge and largely accepted. Anyhow, the collapse of the first Burgundian kingdom is only one of many incidents leading to the genesis of the Saga of the Nibelungs.

At this point I would like to turn to the character of Hagen of Tronje. The genesis of the legendary figure Hagen can be easily reconstructed. Hagen of Tronje embodies the Gallic-Roman military leaders, bearing similar names and being regarded by the Germanic tribes as their own kings. The most important military leader in this

respect was Aetius. As indicated in Waltharius, Hagen's name originally was of Troy. This may be attributed to the fact that Romans traced back their respective pedigrees to the Trojans.

Aetius was born around 392 in Dorostorum in what is today Bulgaria. Between approximately 405 and 408 Aetius was a hostage of the Visigoth king Alarich, who treated him like a son and taught him the art of war. When Aetius returned as a hostage among the Visigoths, his father Gaudentius, a magister equitum, was slain by mutinous troops. After his return, Aetius again became a hostage. This time, though, with the Huns and their leader Khan Rua. Here Aetius became acquainted with Rua's nephews Attila and Bleda, who were the same age as Aetius and whose father Mundzuc had already died, too. Needless to say that Attila and Bleda can be linked with Etzel and Bloedel in the Song of the Nibelungs. At the same time, after the second siege of Rome in 409, Galla Placidia, sister of the Western Roman emperor Honorius, became Alarich's hostage. On the 23rd of May 410 the city of Rome, not having had an enemy inside her walls for centuries, was conquered by Alarich and plundered for several days. In this process Alarich laid his hands on a large treasure, to which I will return later when I discuss the treasure of the Nibelungs. Shortly after this Alarich died and was buried in the riverbed of the river Cosenza in Calabria. The Visigoths redirected the river for a short time and put Alarich's body into the grave, together with enormous treasure. After this, the river was allowed to return to its former course. All convicts who had taken part in the burial were slain afterwards, so as to prevent them from giving away the secret of the grave.

Still in captivity Galla Placidia in 414 married Ataulph, Alarich's successor. But Constantius, the emperor's military leader, tried with all his means to effect Galla's return, because he himself wanted to marry her in order to expand his power in the Western Roman empire. Soon Constantius forced the Visigoths to flee to Spain. Here Ataulph was assassinated in 415. In 416 eventually the Visigoth king Walja agreed with Rome to return Galla Placidia. Galla Placidia then married Constantius and gave birth to two children, a daughter named Honoria and a son named Valentinian. The events just mentioned form, among other things, the basis for the Saga of Waltharius, which in turn is a component of the Saga of the Nibelungs, and show that Aetius is one of the most important figures in the explanation of the character of Hagen of Tronje. Therefore it should be profitable to follow the other events as they, in part, reflect in the Song of the Nibelungs.

After the death of Honorius in 423 John became his successor. Galla Placidia, though, wanted her five year old son to become emperor and hence appeared with a Byzantine army, belonging to her nephew, the Byzantine emperor Theodosius, in Italy. In his distress John sent Aetius to the Huns to plead them for troops. But Aetius returned too late with the reinforcements. Upon his return, John already had been captured and executed. After a battle ending in a draw between Aetius and the Byzantine army, Galla Placidia and Aetius came to an agreement. Aetius became a count and was put in Galla Placidia's service.

After this the cometlike rise of Aetius began. In two Gallic wars, the first between 426 and 431 and the second between 435 and 440, Aetius defeated a large number of Germanic tribes, for instance the Visigoths, the Franks, the Juthungs and the Burgundians. Also the battles against the Visigoth king Theoderich, possibly married to a daughter of Alarich, have found entry into the Saga of Walther.

Whether the following episode was incorporated into the Song of the Nibelungs is doubtful. Nevertheless, I would like to relate it. Sometime during the time of the Gallic wars the king of the Franks Chlogio engaged the Western Roman empire.

Aetius occupied two strategically important areas near the hamlet Helena. Then the Romans heard a wedding-chant among the Franks. Unconcernedly the Franks celebrated a wedding. Aetius made use of that and suddenly attacked the Franks. The Roman commander soon turned the wedding into a festivity of death. The festoons and the emblazonments were speckled with blood and the bride and groom separated for ever.

It shall also be mentioned that in the year 432 Galla Placidia removed Aetius from his post as supreme commander of the armed forces to replace him with her minion Bonifacius. Aetius did not suffer this and with his remaining followers engaged Bonifacius in a battle. Aetius did not win the day in battle, though, and had to flee to the Huns. Bonifacius, however, was seriously wounded in battle and died shortly thereafter. In 433 Aetius, aided by Hunnic forces, crossed the Western Roman border and Galla Placidia was forced to reinstate the popular commander. According to Marcellinus Comes, Aetius himself killed Bonifacius using a lance prepared in advance. Later he seems to have married Bonifacius's wife Pelagia, who seems to have been a Gothic aristocrat. Here is a possible parallel to Siegfried's perfidious slaying by Hagen of Tronje with a javelin.

According to Merobaudes and Frigeridus, Aetius is reputed to have been an accomplished fighter with the javelin, who already in his childhood used icicles in lieu of javelins for practice. Furthermore, Frigeridus relates of Aetius that he was able to suffer hunger, thirst and vigils like no other fighter. The vigil of Hagen and Volker in the Song of the Nibelungs should be borne in mind here.

After a time of peace after 440 a storm gathered over Europe. The events following are certainly sources for the Song of the Nibelungs. After the death of the Hun-khan Rua in the year 434, his nephews Bleda and Attila became rulers of the gigantic Hun empire. In 445 Attila killed his brother Bleda and made himself autocrat of the Huns. But this feat did not suffice the king of the Huns. He decided to seize the two Roman empires as well. First of all the, in a military as well as in an economical sense, weaker Western Roman empire appeared to be the easier prey. Here another subterfuge came to pass. Honoria, emperor Valentinian's sister, had around 449/450 started a liaison with the chamberlain Eugenius. Valentinian used the liaison with the lower-ranking chamberlain to remove his sister from her co-regency. He betrothed her to the senator Herculanius. Eugenius seems to have been put to death. It shall be noted, that Brünhild accuses Krimhild of having married a liege to Gunther and uses the accusation to have Siegfried killed. Honoria did not want to suffer the facts and sent the eunuch Hyacinthus to Attila, to ask the king of the Huns for help. He offered money to the king of the Huns if he should be willing to help Honoria. In addition, the eunuch handed Attila a precious ring. Attila seized the opportunity and interpreted the plea for help as a promise of marriage. Attila's envoys now demanded from Valentinian Honoria's hand in marriage. Furthermore Aetius threatened Valentinian, should he proceed against his intended bride. Valentinian, though, overruled the marriage. Attila, now, demanded that he be handed over his bride and, as proof of the betrothal, displayed the ring sent to him. Simultaneously Attila demanded half the Western Roman empire and accused Valentinian of having robbed Honoria of her half of the empire. The correlation with the Song of the Nibelungs is explicit. Hagen and Gunther rob Krimhild of the treasure of the Nibelungs, whereupon Krimhild marries Etzel, the king of the Huns. These incidents, then, lead to the final battle.

In history, now, the gigantic Battle of Chalons ensued. Without waiting for Valentinian's answer Attila's mighty force – numbers between 50.000 and 70.000 soldiers are stated – decamped. Aetius expected a direct assault on Italy and had the Alpine passes manned. Attila, though, crossed the river Rhine and passed into Gaul. Attila had trees felled galore and used them to traverse the river Rhine.

Parallels with the crossing of the river Danube by the Burgundians may exist. Aetius found himself in danger by Attila either defeating or winning as allies the Visigoths in western Gaul. In case of this happening the Western Roman empire could not possibly remain under his rule. Therefore, Aetius sent a certain Avitus to the Visigoth king Theoderich. Avitus succeeded in persuading Theoderich to join his Visigoth army with the Roman forces. The joint forces surprised Attila during his siege of Orleans. Attila backed down for the time being. Near Chalons, on the Campus Maureacus, in 451 then an enormous battle of nations ensued, a battle that has found its way into the Song of the Nibelungs. Attila's forces included amongst Huns, Ostrogoths, Gepids, Sciri, Thuringians and Rugians some Franks, Sarmatians, other slavic tribes as well as some Burgundians. On the Roman side were Visigoths, Alanes, Franks and the bigger part of the Burgundians.

The battle unfolds especially around a strategic bank. The Roman army gained the peak first. Attila urged his forces to win back the bank. The battle of the Burgundians against the Huns downwards from the Saal should be remembered here. The fight was so grim and remorseless that a streamlet near the place of the battle swelled with blood so that the wounded, in order to quench their thirst, drank from the streamlet their own blood as well as the blood of others. Here, again, a reference to the Song of the Nibelungs is in order, when the Burgundians, after Krimhild orders the Saal set alight, drink the flowing blood of the dead.

Later in the battle the Visigoth king Theoderich died. The Hun forces, though, lost strength and drew back inside their corral. Dusk terminated the battle. On the next day Attila feared that the enemy might take the encampment by force and had already ordered saddles piled into a funeral pyre in order to be able to burn himself in case of defeat. Concerning this matter again the fire on the Saal must be recalled. The Visigoths had found their dead king since. Thrismund, Theoderich's son, thereupon wanted to attack the camp of the Huns. Aetius, though, advised against an attack, possibly to avoid endangering the victory, because he knew that Attila would not be able to persist in enemy territory. Hereupon the Visigoths drew back to their homeland. At length, Attila also dared to retreat. According to Jordanis 180.000 men died in battle, according to Hydatius 300.000. The Burgundians had to suffer an extraordinary number of casualties as well.

In the Consulars, in Gregory of Tours and in Fredegar we are told similar sagas, of Aetius outwitting all sides to finally gain possession of the spoils of war. This saga might have influenced the Saga of the Nibelungs, when Hagen of Tronje gains possession of Krimhild's treasure.

A year after the massive battle Attila unexpectedly gathered another impressive army. The Hun king crossed into Italy directly this time. Aetius had withdrawn to the south to wait for Byzantine reinforcements. The situation proved to be extremely dire. Because of an epidemic, however, Attila's army became so depleted, that the Hun king was forced to retreat yet again. Before his withdrawal he threatened, if he would not be sent Honoria along with befitting dowry from the regal treasury, to effect even bigger disaster in Italy.

Shortly thereafter yet, in the year 453, Attila died during his wedding night with his Germanic bride Ildico. During the festivities after the wedding ceremony Attila had drunk his fair share of wine and had then drowsily retired to his quarters. While sleeping off his intoxication he suddenly developed a nosebleed and choked on his own blood. The next day Attila's servants were surprised that the king, contrary to his habits, had not yet risen. Therefore they forced open the door to his quarters with great clamour. Inside the room they found Attila lying dead on the bed. Ildico sat next to him, her head cloaked and crying.

It is commonly accepted that Ildico, whose name means Hildchen (t.n.: a diminution of Hilda), has influenced the character of Krimhild. The Quedlinburg

Annals relate that Attila was stabbed to death by a girl, because he had killed her father and robbed her. In the Song of the Nibelungs Attila is one of the few survivors. The motif of Attila's death, though, has survived in the Saga of the Nibelungs, if in a rather unexpected place. In the Song of the Nibelungs Siegfried is, after his violent death, put before Krimhild's door. The saga of Thidrek on the other hand has preserved a more original form. Here the Burgundians force open the door to Krimhild's quarters and throw Siegfried's dead body into her arms, causing her to wake up. This is a nice instance to observe motifs in a process of amalgamation or reorganisation. After Attila's death also the enormous empire of the Huns collapsed.

A year later, though, Aetius was slain by emperor Valentinian with his own hand, because the emperor feared Aetius's influence. Again a year later also emperor Valentinian was slain by Aetius's comrades-in-arms on the Martian fields. Valentinian has also had a strong influence on the character of Gunther in the Saga, as becomes especially evident in Waltharius.

Aetius, now, has been a legend during his lifetime. Merobaudes writes: "There is no area, no place and ultimately no tongue who does not sing your praise.". Aetius's influence on the character of Hagen of Tronje is unambiguous. But the question of the genesis of the name Hagen remains. The easy answer would be to state that Hagen is a derivation of Aetius. Already in the sixth century Gildas calls Aetius by the name Agitius. In the Quedlinburg Annals he is called Egidius and in an old Frankish chronicle Egetius. Aetius's successor in Gaul was named Aegidius. It follows from the sources just mentioned, that Agitius definitely means Aetius. As it is a common occurrence with Germanic names that an initial H is left out or inserted in front of a name, Hagen might well have been formed from Hagitius. Still in Waltharius Hagen's father is called Hagathie. It is likely that Aetius's successor Aegidius has had an influence on the character of Hagen as well. The king of the Franks, Childerich, had formed an alliance with Aegidius. Together they defeated the Visigoths in 463, on this occasion Friedrich, brother to the king of the Visigoths, was slain. In the saga, however, as related in Gregory of Tours, Fredegar and in the *Liber historiae francorum*, Aegidius is depicted as an enemy of the king of the Franks.

Clovis and Chrothechildis

In the further course of my presentation I would like to present the character of Siegfried in more detail and, accordingly, also Frankish history and saga. As stated before, Siegfried to some extent embodies the Frankish kings, and already in the saga about Siegfried's childhood and youth ancient Frankish subject-matter from sagas appears.

It is told in the *Liber historiae francorum* that the Frankish king Chlogio captured Tournai after crossing the river Rhine and passing the Kohlenwald (t.n.: literally coal-forest). Already in Roman times the Kohlenwald was understood to be a part of the forests of the Ardennes. In the Song of the Hürne Seyfrid now, the blacksmith sends Siegfried into the forest to a charburner. He hopes that Siegfried falls victim to a dragon living inside the forest.

The saga of Siegfried's childhood reported in the saga of Thidrek is, with the exception of the motif of the blacksmith, almost identical with the Saga of Wolfdietrich. The Saga of Wolfdietrich, in turn, can for the most part be associated with the saga around the Frankish king Childerich, as related by Gregory of Tours as well as Fredegar and the *Liber historiae francorum*. In addition, a variant of the Saga of Wolfdietrich narrates that Wolfdietrich receives a shirt from the hands of Saint George, which protects him from all kinds of weapons and the throat of dragons. Saint George once took the shirt from the hero Balmunt. Saint George,

now, is known as a dragon slayer. His shirt protects Wolddietrich the same way as his callused skin protects Siegfried and the name Balmunt reminds one of Balmunc.

I will cover Clovis, Childerich's son, in more detail now, because he has had an especially strong influence on the character of Siegfried particularly in the Song of the Nibelungs. To begin with I have to say that both the dates as well as the chronology of events are relatively uncertain. For a long time the information given by Gregory of Tours was used, until it was noticed that Gregory hardly ever used chronicles but took down a lot from oral tradition and arranged facts not by year, but by person. But on towards Clovis.

Clovis was born in 466 as son to Childerich, king of the Salian Franks. Childerich died about 481 and the fifteen-year-old Chlodwig became ruler in the kingdom of his father, which at this time encompassed some districts of the Salian Franks and a small portion of Gaul. Clovis inherited from his father the civil service and the military administration of the province Belgica Secunda. In 486 Clovis and the Frankish king Ragnachar attacked the kingdom of Syagrius. Syagrius was Aegidius's son and had inherited from his father his Gallo-Roman dominion. The capital was Soissons. Childerich had been an ally and as a foedes possibly a subaltern to Aegidius. Syagrius was defeated and took flight to the Visigoth king Alarich II. Alarich, though, turned Syagrius over to Clovis. Perhaps the wedding between the Ostrogoth king Theoderich with Clovis's sister Audeflada around 494 played a role here. Syagrius was incarcerated and secretly assassinated. Syagrius's kingdom was divided between Clovis and Ragnachar. According to the *Liber historiae francorum* Clovis also gained the treasure of Syagrius. Clovis's new capital became Soissons. There may be a link between Soissons and Xanten.

In the year 500, then, Clovis was included into the civil war in Burgundy. The following incidents have had a sizable influence on the Saga of the Nibelungs. At that time the kingdom of Burgundy was ruled by the brothers Gundobad, residing in Lyons, and Godigisel, residing in Geneva. Both were great-grandchildren of the Visigoth king Walja. Two further brothers, Chilperich II. and Godomar, had already died. Gundobad positively proved to be the more influential of the two brothers. In his youth Gundobad had served with his uncle Ricimer, the powerful Western Roman commander and secret ruler of the Western Roman empire, and had beheaded the emperor Anthiemus in a Roman church with his own hands. After the death of Ricimer, Gundobad even became ruler of the Western Roman empire and in 473 made emperor Glycerius ruler of the Western Roman empire. In 474, though, he returned to Burgundy.

Godigisel, now, begrudged his brother his power. The *Passio Sigismundi* relates that Godigisel ruled but a third of the territory of the state, and that he thus felt betrayed by Gundobad. Therefore Godigisel forged a secret alliance with Clovis and promised tribute and possibly land if he should agree to the alliance. Clovis accepted and entered Burgundian territory. Gundobad asked his brother for help and he, acting innocently, promised it. The armies met at Dijon. Then Godigisel suddenly passed over to Clovis's side and Gundobad's army, caught off guard, was defeated. Gundobad retreated to Avignon to be sieged there by Clovis. Avignon could not be taken, though. During the siege Gundobad's clever counsellor Arigius defected to Clovis's side. Arigius convinced Clovis to end the siege and enter into negotiations with Gundobad. Gundobad promised Clovis tribute and Clovis left Avignon. Gundobad, possibly with help from the Visigoths, succeeded in raising a new army and defeated Godigisel in battle. Godigisel entrenched in Vienne. Gundobad, though, was able to enter the city and Godigisel and his family were slain. All noblemen who had taken sides with Godigisel were executed as well.

After this victory Gundobad forged a close alliance with Clovis. The negotiations were again conducted by Arigius. The alliance was especially of a military nature and homed in on the Alemanni and Visigoths. The alliance was to be affirmed by a marriage, namely by a marriage between Clovis and Gundobad's daughter. The young bride, though, died before her departure. As a substitute Chrotechildis, the daughter of Gundobad's dead brother Chilperich II., was chosen. Clovis agreed to the change of the bride and married Chrothechildis. The alliance should soon pay off for both sides. Ten years later the Alemanni were conquered and the Visigoths had lost almost all of Gaul.

I would like to pause here for a moment in order to show the parallels to the Saga of the Nibelungs. In the Song of the Nibelungs the upstart from Xanten appears in Worms and wants to wrest his kingdom from Gunther. Gunther has the clever counsellor Hagen of Tronje at his disposal. The Burgundians manage to becalm Siegfried and win him over as an ally. Together with Siegfried the Burgundians defeat the Saxons and the Danes. In the end, Siegfried marries Gunther's sister Kriemhild.

In history, on the other hand, Clovis, the upstart from Soissons besieges Gundobad at Avignon. Gundobad has the clever counsellor Arigius at his disposal. The Burgundians manage to becalm Siegfried and to forge an alliance with him. Clovis marries Gundobad's niece Chrotechildis. Together with Clovis the Burgundians defeat the Alemanni and the Visigoths.

Regarding the marriage between Clovis and Chrotechildis we possess ample records of the first sagas in Gregory of Tours, Fredegar and the *Liber historiae francorum*.

Gregory of Tours already alleges that Gundobad had killed Chrotechildis's father with his sword and had had her mother thrown in the water with a stone around her neck. Whether Gundobad had his brother killed is not substantiated. The alleged murder, though, was later used as justification of the conquest of Burgundy by the Franks. According to Fredegar, Clovis sends his subaltern Aurelianus to the Burgundians with a ring, to win over Chrotechildis. At the last moment, though, Aridius tries to prevent the marriage, for he fears Chrotechildis's revenge. So he sends an army after the departed Chrotechildis. Chrotechildis manages to escape. Merely the palanquin and the treasures fall back into the hands of the Burgundians.

According to the *Liber historiae francorum* Aurelianus hands over the ring and the bridal adornment to Chrotechildis. But she refuses to marry Clovis, because he is still a heathen. Clovis therefore courts Gundobad for Chrotechildis's hand in marriage. Gundobad, however, refuses him. Clovis then threatens with war. Yet when the Burgundians find Clovis's ring in Chrotechildis's possession, the Burgundians are of the opinion that Clovis may be able to justify a war with a legitimate claim to Chrotechildis and hand over the daughter of the king. During the wedding night Chrotechildis demands of Clovis to become a Christian and demand her heritage from Gundobad in her name. Clovis thus demands from Gundobad his wife's treasure. The Burgundians, in their fear of Clovis, do not only hand over a great deal of the treasure but also offer half the Burgundian kingdom to Clovis. Aurelianus retorts: "My liege, king Clovis, is your son, and all you have is yours."

On the basis of sagas passed down by Gregory, Fredegar and the *Liber historiae francorum* we are not only able to recognise the first sagas that finally led to the genesis of the Saga of the Nibelungs, but we can also point out connections and points of amalgamation with earlier and later motifs in sagas. There are points of amalgamation between Arigius, the Gallo-Roman commander and counsellor to Gundobad, and Aetius, the Gallo-Roman commander and counsellor to Valentinian. Ildica marries Attila and kills him in revenge during the wedding night. Chrotechildis marries Clovis to satisfy her need for revenge against Gundobad. Both Ildico and Chrotechildis share the component Hild- in their names, that can also be

found in the names of Krimhild as well as Brünhild. And the Burgundians offer a treasure and half the kingdom to Clovis when they find his ring in the possession of Chrotechildis. Attila, now, demands Honoria and half the Western Roman empire of Valentinian after showing him Honoria's ring.

It must be mentioned here that Godigisel's wife arguably bore the name of Theudelinde and that in the Saga Giselher becomes betrothed to Rüdiger's daughter Dietlind. In addition let it be said that in all sagas around Clovis's wooing he woos for her without ever having seen her. Siegfried has to wait a long time in Worms, too, before he is allowed to see Kriemhild.

The further history of Clovis also shows parallels to the Saga of the Nibelungs. Around 506 Burgundians and Franks launched an attack on their arch-enemies, the Alemanni, wherein, beside Clovis, also the Ripuarian Franks under their king Sigibert took part. The Burgundians were possibly led into battle by Sigismund, a son of Gundobad. The extremely gory battle ended with the utter defeat of the Alemanni. The supreme king of the Alemanni died. The reign of the Alemanni was divided among the Franks and the Burgundians. According to the Vita Vedastis, however, Clovis detained the king of the Alemanni. In the Song of the Nibelungs, now, Liudeger and Liudegast are captured by Siegfried.

After that the tensions between Clovis and the the Visigoth king Alarich II. worsened. Fredegar hands down a saga, in which an arbitrage by the hands of Theoderich obliges the Visigoths to cover Clovis's envoy, sitting on his horse and holding his javelin high in the air, with gold solidi. Even the tip of the javelin has to be covered. The Visigoths, now, refuse this and thus a war ensues. In the Nordic saga the Aesir are requested to atone the death of Otr by filling his skin on the inside and outside with gold and to cover even the free-flowing beard with gold.

In 507 the allied Burgundians and Franks attacked the Visigoths. At Clovis's side fought Chloderich, son to Sigibert the Limping, who started to bear this name when he, after wounds received in the battle against the Alemanni, developed a limp. The Burgundian army ought to have been led by Sigismund and Godomar, Gundobad's sons. Even before the battle, as Gregory of Tours relates, the Franks are reputed not to have known how to cross the river Vienne. There appeared in the morning a deer hind of marvellous proportions and crossed the river. In this place the Franks were able to cross the river.

Near Poitiers the battle was joined. The Visigoths suffered defeat and, according to Gregory, Clovis is reputed to have killed the Visigoth king with his own hands. With the battle in progress Clovis almost met his death when he was hit by several spears. Because of his sound suit of armour and his swift horse he survived.

After the battle Amalarich, the five-year-old son of Alarich II. and also a grandson of Theoderich, was brought to Spain. Gesalich, illegitimate son of Alarich, though, was proclaimed new Visigoth king in Narbonne. Meanwhile, the Franks and Burgundians pressed further south. At the beginning of the year 508 the Visigoth capital Toulouse fell. Here, according to Gregory of Tours, the Visigoth treasure fell into Clovis's hands. According to Procopius, though, a great deal of the treasure was brought into the fortified city of Carcassonne, which the Franks were not able to conquer. Here I would like to turn to the treasure of the Nibelungs for a short while. There is more than one treasure having led to the genesis of the saga around the treasure of the Nibelungs. During those times, the state was made up not only of the components of the people, the territory and the army, but also of the king's treasure, that enabled the ruler to pay his subjects. For Siegfried having won the treasure of the Nibelungs, that feat is tantamount to becoming king. Clovis, now, took the treasures of several kingdoms. The Visigoth treasure of Alarich II., though, was legendary during Alarich's lifetime, because Alarich I. once based it on the booty from the Sack of Rome. A connection between Alarich and Alberich, keeper of

the treasure, seems plausible. Furthermore, the burial of Alarich in the river Busento together with considerable riches might have contributed to the saga around the sunken treasure in the river Rhine. To search for the treasure of the Nibelungs in the Rhine, thus, seems to me to be a futile venture.

According to Gregory of Tours, Clovis, after the conquest of Tours, turned north again and took the sizable treasure with him. His son Theoderich, though, went on to Septimania in order to capture, aided by the Burgundians, Septimania to give the Burgundians access to the sea. After the capture of Angouleme Clovis returned to Tours, where the Byzantine emperor honoured him especially by sending him a purple cloak and a diadem. This deed was aimed at the Ostrogoth king Theoderich, who was at war with the Byzantine empire. After having received the insignia Clovis mounted his horse and distributed with his own hand gold and silver among the people present. In this place I would like to refer the listener to the distribution of the gold of the Nibelungs by Kriemhild. Clovis's new capital now became Paris.

The war, though, did not carry on to run so advantageous for the allies. Theoderich the Great intervened into the fights and sent relief to Arles. Theoderich's commander Ibba drove the Franks and the Burgundians back and they suffered defeat. The Burgundians were again deprived of all their conquests. Theoderich left Aquitaine to the Franks, but secured the remainder of the Visigoth kingdom, encompassing Spain and Septimania, for his grandson. Theoderich's commander Ibba, incidentally, bore the full name of Ildebad or Hildebad. It is possible that from Hildebad Hildebrand was formed later on.

Probably in the year 508 Clovis became a Christian and was baptised. Clovis was the first Germanic king to become a Catholic, in contrast to the Germanic kings who adhered to the Arian faith. The baptism was performed by bishop Remigius in Reims. The event was witnessed by many bishops from all of Gaul. Together with Clovis three thousand of his followers, his sister Alboflede and his sister Lantechilde, who had earlier converted to the Arian faith, were baptised. The Vita of Remigius reports, that during the baptism of Clovis the throng of people was so dense that Remigius could not reach the oil used for anointment. Suddenly a dove from heaven appeared and brought the bishop the oil in a holy vial. I believe, that between the baptism of Clovis and the bath in the dragon's blood runs a parallel, though this may seem absurd at a first glance. Already bishop Avitus, who sent a congratulatory letter to Clovis on the occasion of his baptism, related the baptism with the military strength and the victories of Clovis. Furthermore, the Nordic version as well as the saga of Thidrek relate that Siegfried is, after tasting from the dragon's brew, able to understand the language of the birds. During Clovis's baptism, now, a dove, arguably signifying the Holy Spirit, is reputed to have appeared. In addition to that the source indicated in Wolddietrich points toward Saint George and thus links invulnerability and the slaying of the dragon with Christian symbolism.

After defeating the Visigoths Clovis started to dispose of the other Frankish kings and unified all of the Frankish realm under his sceptre.

According to Gregory of Tours he first sent envoys to Chloderich, son of Sigibert the Limping, and let him know that he was willing to support him in case he wanted to eliminate his father and become king himself. When Sigibert wandered through the Buchonian forest near Fulda to hunt, his son sent murderers after him, who killed Sigibert when he slept in his tent at noon. Certainly here a reference to the death of Siegfried during a hunt is to be made.

Chloderich informed Clovis of the death of his father and invited him to choose something from the treasure of Sigibert. Clovis sent his men to Chloderich. He opened Sigibert's treasure chests for them. Clovis's followers asked Chloderich to show them all the pieces from the chest. When Chloderich reached deeper inside the chest and buried his hands in the gold, one of Clovis's men smashed his

poleaxe into his skull. Clovis now suggested to the Franks to accept him as king. Thus Clovis gained the kingdom of the Ripuarian Franks without a fight. That this further tradition by Gregory also found its way into the Song of the Nibelungs will be shown later on.

After the bloody deed Clovis turned against Chararich. Clovis lured Chararich and his son into a trap and imprisoned them. He divested them of royal dignity and put them into a monastery. But when Chararich's son threatened Clovis, Clovis had them both beheaded.

Clovis attacked the third Frankish king, Ragnachar of Cambray, after having bribed many of his men by means of gilded ore. Ragnachar's men were also discontented with their king. Ragnachar had a subaltern named Farro. Whenever he was brought food or a present it was his custom to say that this was enough for him and his Farro. When Ragnachar sent out scouts to find out about the size of Clovis's army, they answered, that there were more than enough warriors for him and his Farro. Ragnachar was defeated and, together with his brother Richar, was led bound before Clovis. Clovis split both their heads with the poleaxe. When Ragnachar's men realized that Clovis had betrayed them with gilded ore they started to complain. Clovis, however, retorted that they should count themselves lucky that he was willing to keep people alive who had betrayed their liege. Ragnachar's second brother, Rignomer, was killed on orders from Clovis near Le Mans. Land and treasure again lined Clovis's pockets.

It is a striking feature of this last story about the conquest of Ragnachar's kingdom that there is a remarkable identity of names with the Nordic Saga of Sigurd. There the Aesir hand over the treasure of Andvarafors to Hreidmar and his sons Regin and Fafnir in compensation for the slaying of Otr, who had been struck dead in the guise of an otter by Loki. Regin resembles Ragnachar, Hreimar resembles Rignomer and Farro resembles Fafnir. A connection between saga and history might possibly exist.

Clovis died in the year 511 of natural causes. The kingdom was divided among his sons. That Clovis's name did not permeate into the saga is most likely caused by the fact that several kings of the Ripuarian Franks were named Sigibert and both Sigismund, who converted to Catholic faith even before Clovis, and his son Sigerich both had the component of Sig- in their names. Beyond that, the fact that according to Sidonius Apollinaris a prince Sigismer, possibly a Rhine-Frank, around 470 married a Burgundian princess, possibly the daughter of Chilperich I, and appeared exquisitely adorned at the Burgundian court might have played a role. Clovis, now, also married a Burgundian princess, whose father also bore the name of Chilperich.

Sigismund and the fall of the second Burgundian kingdom

In the year 516 Gundobad died and Gundobad's son Sigismund became autocrat of the Burgundians. Sigismund lent his name to Sigmund in the Saga. After the death of his first wife Ostrogotho, daughter of Theoderich the Great, Sigismund married a Catholic Burgundian. On a festive day Sigismund's spouse had donned the attire of Ostrogotho. Sigerich, though, the son of Sigismund and Ostrogotho, went into a rage and abused his stepmother in public. After this incidence Sigerich's stepmother defamed Sigerich with his father and claimed that he strove for Sigismund's throne and life. Sigismund believed his wife. When Sigerich was inebriated with wine one day he lay down and fell asleep. Then two of Sigismund's menials appeared, put a rag under Sigerich's head and strangled him in the year 522. Again, this motif is found in the Saga of the Nibelungs. Here, however, it is transferred on Kriemhild and Brünhild, when Kriemhild fights with Brünhild and discloses to her the cheating in the marriage-bed. Brünhild thereupon brings about

the assassination of Siegfried. In the saga of Thidrek, still, the conflict escalates when Brünhild sits on the high chair of Kriemhild's mother and Kriemhild reproaches Brünhild in saying that she had the same right to sit in the high chair. The other incidents can also be found in the Saga of the Nibelungs.

After the death of his grandson Theoderich declared war on the Burgundians and mobilised his army. The Franks took advantage of this and attacked the Burgundians first. The Burgundians suffered defeat. Godomar escaped. Sigismund, though, was betrayed by his own people and was turned over to the Frankish king Chlodomer. Godomar managed to come to an agreement with the Ostrogoths and to assemble a new army. Hereupon Chlodomer had Sigismund and his whole family killed and had their bodies thrown into a well. During the subsequent decisive battle near Viserontia the Burgundians were already in flight when, during the chase, Chlodomer went astray into a host of enemy fighters and was hit in his breast by a javelin. The Burgundians, then, stuck Chlodomer's severed head on a stake and showed it to the Franks. Recognizing the head of their king by the long hair the Franks abandoned battle and made peace.

Here again we find motifs from the saga, but again in a place not too easily conjecturable. Thus Sigismund's body is thrown into well while Siegfried dies near a spring. Furthermore, Chlodomer is killed by a javelin into his breast, just like Siegfried.

After Chlodomer's death his kingdom was ruled by his brothers Chlothachar and Childibert. The guardianship over the three underage sons of Chlodomer, though, was assumed by Chrotechildis. When the three sons came of age and Chlothachar and Childibert were asked to release the realm, they summoned Chrotechildis and the boys under the false pretence of wanting to proclaim them kings. Chlothachar, though, immediately grabbed the older boy and stabbed him. His brother kneeled before Childibert, clasped his knees and begged for his life. Childibert, though, tossed the child towards Chlothachar, who also killed him. After this also the servants and educators of the boys were slain. The third boy went into a monastery. This motif is found in the Saga again, when Hagen slays Kriemhild's child in a hall in Etzel's court. In the saga of Thidrek Hagen beheads Kriemhild's child and throws the head to her chest. Then he chops off the head of the boy's guardian. In the saga of Thidrek Kriemhild even tempts Hagen to kill her son by instigating her son to slap Hagen in the face. I would like to return here to the contribution of Mrs. Schäfer with the Nibelungenlied-Gesellschaft, who mentions an episode from the legend in the context of the incidents just portrayed. Here Childibert and Chlothachar are reputed to have sent scissors and knife to the mother, together with the question which of the two items were suited for the children of Chlodomer. The scissors meant cutting off the hair und thus the monastery, the knife, yet, meant death. Chrotechildis chose the knife, stating: "If they are not allowed to become king, they are better off dead.". In this early saga the cruel streaks, which we can find later on in Kriemhild, are already foreshadowed.

In the year 532 Chlothachar and Childibert again attacked Burgundy and conquered the kingdom. Already with Gregory of Tours the conquest is justified by stating that the sons merely executed their mother's revenge.

Radegundis

Already a year earlier the sons of Clovis, Chlothachar and Theuderich, had attacked the kingdom of Thuringia and the Thuringians had suffered a crushing defeat near the river Unstruth. King Hermenefried, who can be linked to Irnfrit in the Song of the Nibelungs, and his family were able to escape. His niece Radegundis and her brother, though, fell in Frankish hands. Between Chlothachar and Theuderich a conflict about Radegundis ensued. In the end Radegundis was awarded to Chlothachar. After his return the twelve-year-old Radegundis was educated in

Ateia. There, already, she strongly turned towards the Christian faith. In 534 Theuderich summoned Hermenfried to Zülpich, using the pretence of wanting to negotiate a peace treaty. There the Thuringian king was cast from the city walls to his death. Chlothachar, now, married Radegundis. But she refused Chlothachar in the marriage bed. Soon the king was ridiculed to have married a nun and not a queen. When insurgencies erupted in Thuringia, Chlothachar had Radegundis's brother killed, because he had wanted to flee from his captivity. Radegundis thereupon left Chlothachar and became a nun. All her precious attire and her jewellery she gave to the poor, together with her valuable golden belt.

Here again we find motifs from the Saga of the Nibelungs. Radegundis is, just like Brünhild, attained in a distant country. Like Brünhild, she refuses her husband in the marriage bed. Furthermore, Radegundis's belt receives special notice in the sources. Also Brünhild's belt plays an important role in the Saga of the Nibelungs.

Brunichildis, Sigibert and Fredigundis

In the year 561 Chlotachar died and willed the Frankish kingdom to his sons Sigibert, Chilperich, Guntchramn and Charibert. A year later Sigibert fended of an attack by the Avars and their Chagan Baian. In 565 or 566 the Avars attacked the Franks again. This time the Franks were defeated and Sigibert went into captivity. During the battle the Avars, reputed to be expert magicians, are said to have used all kinds of appearances. The defeat, though, did not have any consequences. Sigibert entered into an agreement with the Avars and returned to Reims. Whether the title of Chagan, meaning the Khan of Khans, contributed to the genesis of the name Hagen must remain doubtful.

In 566 Sigibert wooed Brunichildis, daughter of the Visigoth king Athanagild. Sigibert sent a legation and a lot of presents to Spain. Their leader was Gogo, leader of the palace school and a master of oratory. Venantius Fortunatus writes to him, "You ban the lamentations of the sorrowful and instil joy. You nurture them with the dew of your lips, so that they may not die of thirst." Athanagild did not deny Sigibert his daughter and sent her to the Frankish kingdom across the wintery Pyrenees. Later Fredegar recounts, that Brunichildis had instigated Sigibert to assassinate Gogo. As we learn from Gregory of Tours, though, Gogo died of natural causes in 581. Here, again, the Saga of the Nibelungs is apparent. The envoy in the Song of the Nibelungs, who woos for Brünhilde on behalf of his king, is Siegfried, though. Later Brünhild instigates Gunther to assassinate Siegfried.

Sigibert's brother Chilperich begrudged his brother his marriage and wooed for Brunichildis's sister Gaileswintha. Athanagild again did not deny his daughter and liberally provided her with dowry, including some cities. But Chilperich did not manage to be faithful to Gaileswintha, especially not because of Fredigundis, who had been Chilperich's inamorata even before Gaileswintha. When Gaileswintha demanded a divorce she was found strangled in her bed the next morning. This finally led to war between Sigibert and Chilperich. Sigibert, leader of the Germanic peoples as well, had the superior army. Chilperich and his family withdrew behind the walls of Tournai and entrenched there. Fredigundis, though, had sent two assassins as a last resort. When Chilperich's army proclaimed Sigibert to be their king the assassins turned to Sigibert and pretended to bring forward important business. Suddenly they pulled out their two big knives, which had also been dipped into poison, and thrust them in Sigibert's side. Sigibert died on the spot.

Sigibert's five-year-old son Childibert was instantly captured by Sigibert's noblemen, who assumed leadership in Sigibert's kingdom. Chilperich assumed power over Brunichildis. He contended himself, though, with banning her to Rouen. The treasure she had brought with her to Paris, though, he absorbed into his estate.

Consequently, in history, Brunichildis, after the murder of her husband, is robbed of her treasure, just like Kriemhild is in the Song of the Nibelungs.

Chilperich, now, sent his son Merowech with an army against Poitiers in order to capture the city. But Merowech went to Rouen to Brunichildis and married her. The reason for this may have been that Merowech was the stepson of Fredigundis and had, bearing in mind her malice and the influence Fredigundis had on Chilperich, to fear for his life.

Chilperich hereupon wanted to put his son in a monastery. On his way to the monastery, though, Merowech was freed by Guntchramn Bosos's men and escaped to the St. Martin's basilica in Tours. Chilperich gathered an army and marched on Tours. Fredigundis, however, continued to act behind the scenes. She abetted duke Leudast, who was in love with Fredigundis. Leudast, now, tried to lure Merowech from the basilica. But only Merowech's servants fell for Leudast's cunning. The servants were killed by the sword. Here again we find a motif from the Song of the Nibelungs. Kriemhild instigates Bloedel to fight against the Burgundians and the Huns kill all servants of the Burgundians. Merowech, finally, managed to escape. Sigibert's noblemen, though, refused to come to his aid.

Brunichildis and Merowech hence granted Prätectus, the bishop of Rouen who had married them, five bundles of treasures. Prätectus, now, distributed the treasures among the people in order to turn the mood against Chilperich and in favour of Merowech. But the plan misfired. Chilperich took the remaining treasures away from Prätectus and banned him. Here again is a motif from the Song of the Nibelungs. Kriemhild distributes the treasure of the Nibelungs to turn the mood against the Burgundians.

Also the following events are mirrored in the Song of the Nibelungs. Fredigundis told Merowech via Chilperich's men that she intended to leave Chilperich and wanted to join him. But he had to meet them. Merowech gathered the bravest of his men and went to the would-be defectors. But he went into a trap. In the court Merowech was surrounded and he and his men were arrested. Then envoys were sent to Chilperich. But before the king arrived, all prisoners had been put to a gruesome death. Chilperich was told that Merowech, in fear of his father, had killed himself. Also Fredigundis's second stepson Chlodovech was killed in a similar way. Here, too, parallels to the Saga of the Nibelungs are easily identified. Kriemhild summons her brothers to Attila's court. There they are surrounded and killed.

In 584 Chilperich was assassinated. He had just returned from hunting and had his hand on the shoulder of a servant when a murderer put a knife under his armpit into his breast and pierced his abdomen with a second thrust. Fredegar later reports, that Brunichildis had instigated a common man named Falco to commit the murder. In the *Liber historiae francorum*, on the other hand, Fredigundis is said to have instigated the murder of Chilperich, because Chilperich had learned of her affair with Landerich. In all probability neither woman had a hand in his death, but Chilperich fell victim to an assault of the noblemen. Here again, though, we possess a coeval account of the historical incident by Gregory of Tours and the first sagas in Fredegar and the *Liber historiae francorum*. Just like Sigibert the Limping, Chilperich is murdered while hunting, only that the queen this time is Brunichildis and not Chrotechildis. Here is an instance to watch the same historical motifs leading into amalgamation in the Saga.

After Chilperich's death Guntrachamn held a protective hand over Fredigundis and her four-month-old son Chlothachar II. After having recuperated from her shock, Fredigundis instigated several assaults. The assaults on Brunichildis and her son Childibert, though, failed. Bishop Prätectus, however, fell victim to one of her plots. He was knifed while kneeling in a church and singing Psalms. In 593 Guntchramn died. Childibert now tried to annex the kingdom of Chlothachar and Fredigundis. In

the battle of Droizy, though, Childibert suffered a crushing defeat. In 596 Childibert suddenly died. An attempt on his life with poison was suspected. Childibert's kingdom was then divided among his sons Theuderich and Theudebert.

Brunichildis took guardianship over the underage grandchildren. In 597 Fredigundis died of natural causes. She, who had so many lives to answer for, did not meet her just punishment.

In 599 Austrasian noblemen forced Brunichildis to flee from Theudebert's kingdom. She was deprived of her power and went to Burgundy to her second grandson Theuderich. There, now, reigned Brunichildis, just like Brünhild in Burgundy. In 602 Theuderich, barely fourteen years old, fathered a son who was named Sigibert. The following years are again marked by wars between the Frankish kingdoms. In the year 610 Theudebert wrested Alsace from his brother. The brothers thereupon called a meeting near Seltz to settle their dispute. When Theuderich arrived together with the noblemen of his kingdom, Theudebert suddenly appeared with an army primed for battle. Theuderich was forced to cede Alsace to Theudebert. At the same time the Alemanni crushed one of Theuderich's armies near Wangen. An all-out war between the brothers ensued. Theuderich started preparations for war and in 612 entered Theudebert's domain with a big army. In the plain of Toul the armies met. Both brothers ravaged each other to the point of absolute annihilation. Ultimately Theudebert had to surrender and escaped to Cologne. There he managed to mobilise troops from the tribes on the Western side of the Rhine. Near Zülpich Theudebert engaged his brother. Again, the battle was terrible. On both sides there were so many casualties that dead bodies did not fall to the ground but remained upright next to the living. Theudebert again escaped. In Cologne Theudebert's treasure fell into Theuderich's hands. Ultimately Theudebert was captured. Theuderich had a servant grab Theudebert's son Meroveus by the ankle and dash him against a rock until his head burst. Brunichildis demanded after that, that Theudebert become a monk. Later on, though, Theudebert was killed on Theuderich's instigation.

In this context the *Liber historiae francorum* conveys a saga. Brunichildis is said to have given Theuderich provocative words on a daily basis and is reputed to have said, "Why do you neglect it and fail to demand from Theudebert the treasure and the kingdom of your father, though you know that he is in truth not your brother, but that he has resulted from adultery of your father with a concubine?". After Theuderich had vanquished his brother he pillaged his way to Cologne. The inhabitants of the city pleaded him to spare them. Quoth Theuderich, "If you want me to spare you, get me Theudebert, either alive or his severed head."

Thereupon some men went to Theudebert and said to him, "Return the treasure of your father, which you keep in your possession, and he will withdraw together with his army!". Theudebert took the men into the treasury. After he had opened the coffers to take out the treasure one of the men unsheathed his sword and thrust it into Theudebert's neck. Theudebert's head was taken to Theuderich.

Here again we find motifs from the *Song of the Nibelungs*. Kriemhild demands the treasure of Hagen. Hagen, though, responds that he does not intend to disclose the secret of the treasure as long as his liege was alive. Thereupon Kriemhild has her brother killed and takes Gunther's severed head to Hagen. It stands out that this saga in the *Liber historiae francorum* does not really fit the story, but feels like foreign matter. Furthermore, the saga is remarkably similar the assassination of Chloderich, son of Sigibert the Limping, on Clovis's instigation. The sagas are almost identical. Beyond that, the place of the killing in the treasury is in both instances Cologne, so that it can be assumed that the saga of Chloderich's death was transferred onto Theudebert's death. Thus we can witness in the *Liber historiae francorum* how re-narration and transfer of motifs happened.

Theuderich, now in possession of Theudebert's kingdom, felt strong enough to become king of the whole Frankish kingdom. He prepared a gigantic army to absorb the kingdom of Chlothachar, too. During the campaign, though, Theuderich died in Metz on the river Ruhr. Theuderich's army dissolved.

Brunichildis tried to bridge the power vacuum by declaring Theuderich's eleven-year-old son, Sigibert II., sole heir. A major part of the Frankish noblemen, though, abandoned Brunichildis and started to make pacts with Chlothachar, among them the ancestors of Charlemagne. For this time Brunichildis stay in Worms is attested. Now Chlothachar wanted to decide the matter. When Chlothachar's and Brunechildis's armies met near Chalon-sur-Marne, Brunechildis army defected to Chlothachar on a previously agreed sign. Brunechildis and Theuderich's sister Theudila were arrested in the court of Euba. The old queen was brought before Chlothachar. The king accused Brunichildis of having had ten Frankish kings killed. Then the sixty-five-year-old queen was brutally tortured for three days. After that she was put on a camel and led through the entire army. Ultimately Brunichildis was bound by her hair, a foot and an arm to the tail of an extremely vicious horse. By the hoofbeats and the swift run of the animal Brunichildis was torn limb from limb. Finally the remains of the body were burnt. All this happened in the year 613.

Brunichildis's death also forms the conclusion of the Song of the Nibelungs. After the fights Kriemhild is accused of having caused the deaths of many noble warriors and kings. Hildebrand, therefore, hacks her to pieces.

The Song of the Nibelungs mirrors the incidents in Europe when the Western Roman empire collapsed and new times dawned with the start of the Middle Ages. Discrete and incoherent sagas became an integrated whole with the passage of time, which only dimly revealed its' origin. In the 13th century a major part of the sagas was treated in a literary manner and recorded in the well-known Epics. The Song of the Nibelungs was not put together from two distinct parts and rearranged by the poet. Rather the Saga existed in oral tradition in the same shape that the author of the Song of the Nibelungs recorded.