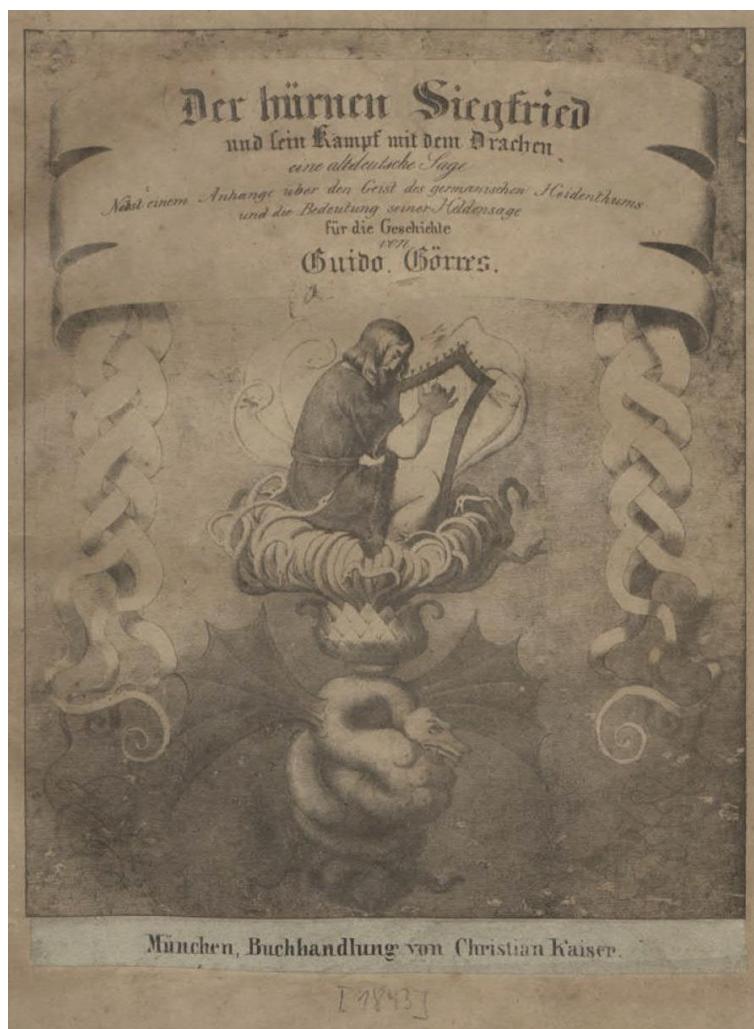


Guido Görres

Der härnen Siegfried und sein Kampf mit dem Drachen. Eine altdeutsche Sage nebst einem Anhang über den Geist des germanischen Heidenthums und die Bedeutung seiner Helden sage für die Geschichte. München 1843. Zweite Auflage Regensburg 1883.

Zu Guido Görres (1805-1852) vgl. den wikipedia-Artikel:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guido_Görres



Siegfried der Drachentödter.



O Herr der Nibelungen! vom grümmen Drach bewacht,
Wann Helden vielbesungen hast du in Not gebracht.
Den Drachen auf dem Steine Siegfriedes Hand erschlug,
Nun liegt der Hirt im Rheine, ihn trug der alte Finn.

Erste Aventüre.

Von König Siegmund und den alten heidnischen Zeiten; von Helden, Zwergen, Riesen und Drachen.

In den Niederlanden da herrschte vor Zeiten ein König, Siegmund geheißen, der war groß an Macht und reich an Ehren. Seine Burgen waren stark und tapfer seine Dienstmänner; er hatte Schwerter, blitzend wie die Sonne, und silberne Schilder, weiß wie der Mond, goldgewirkte Festgewänder, kunstreiches Geschmeide, schöne Rose und fette Heerden.

Sein größter und herrlichster Schag aber war ein hoher und königlicher Heldenstamm, denn weise war König Siegmund im Rath und kühn in der Schlacht und gerecht im Gerichte. Gern hörte er auf den Rath der Alten und Weisen seines Volkes und zürnte nicht ihren ernsten und strengen Reden wegen. Sein Herz hieng auch nicht an dem Golde und den Schätzen. Wie die königliche Sonne Berg und Thal mit warmem Lichte erfüllt, wie der fröhliche Mai Feld und Wald mit Blumen schmücket, also floßen aus seiner milden Hand reichlich die Gnaden und Gaben, treu Dienst zu lohnen, die Thaten der Väter zu ehren und den Heldenmuth der Söhne zu wecken. Jedem Wandler aber stand seine Königshalle offen, und reichte ihm beim Abschied ein Geschenk dar, seiner zu gedenken.

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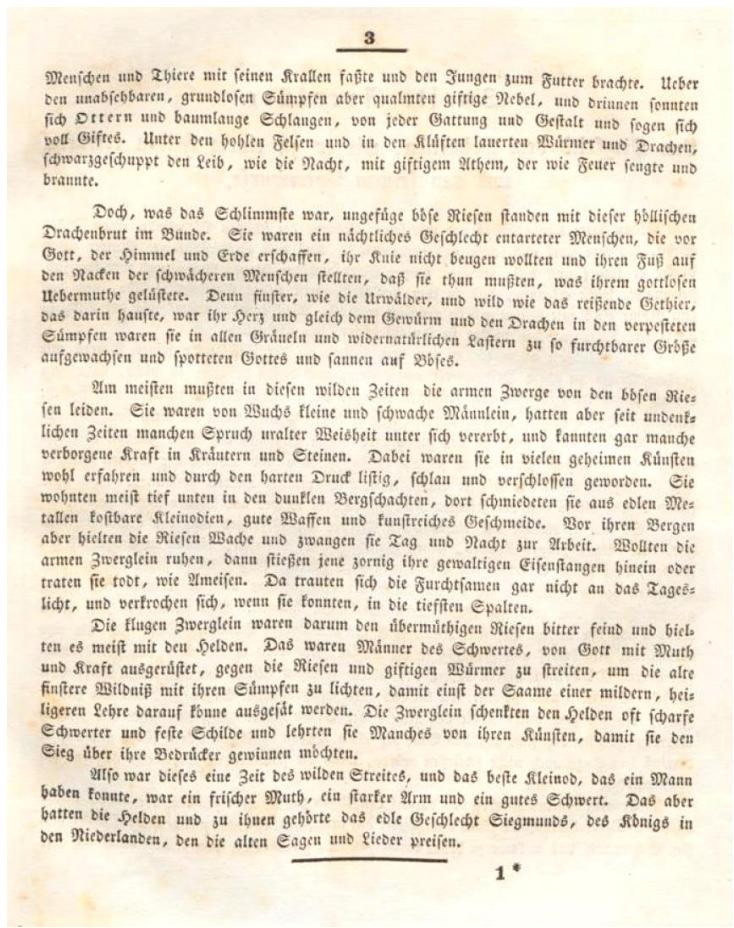
Da wurde König Siegmund berühmt in allen deutschen Landen, und den Rheinstrom auf und ab, im Nord und Süd priesen die Heldenlieder die Schärfe seines Schwertes und den Glanz seines goldbeschlagenen Schildes.

Und weit und breit, wer über Unrecht des Mächtigen und über Unterdrückung zu klagen hatte, wer Ruhm und Helden ehre gewinnen wollte, der ritt nach Xanthen auf die Königsburg am Rheine, wo Siegmund unter seinen Helden an der eisernen Tafel saß. Neben ihm zu Rechten aber saß Siegelinde, seine Hausfrau, die ihn im Glück erfreute und in den Tagen des Unglücks tröstete und seiner Wunden mit milden Händen pflegte. Alles Volk aber ehrt und liebt den weisen und kühnen König Siegmund und die milde und schöne Siegelinde.

Es sind nun aber, seit die beiden dort unten am Rheine in Ehre und Herrlichkeit auf dem Königsstuhle gesessen, viele Geschlechter der Menschen in das sille Haus hingestiegen, woraus keiner wiederkehrt. Und in allen Landen, wo deutsche Lieder gesungen werden, steht keine Eiche so alt, die da sagen könnte: „als ich noch jung war und zum ersten Male grünte, da ritt vor vielen hundert Jahren der edle König Siegmund mit seinen Getreuen zur Jagd und zum Kampfe an mir vorüber.“ Denn zu den Zeiten Königs Siegmunds standen noch in den dunklen Urwäldern breit und hoch die alten heidnischen Donneräichen, die viel später erst Bonifatius, der hochverehrte Gottesmann und seine heiligen Gefährten niederheben, da sie unseren Vorfahren in ihrer Waldnacht das Licht des christlichen Glaubens brachten und dafür den Martyrtod mit furchtbarem Muthe erlitten, was ihnen Gott in Ewigkeit vergelten wolle.

Es war aber, wie uns die guten alten Sagen berichten, gar finster und schauerlich in den alten Urwäldern, da noch die heidnischen Eichen und die blutigen Altäre der falschen Götter standen, zu Zeiten des Königs Siegmund. Da mochte Niemand lustwandeln gehen, der nicht das Schwert an der Seite und den Speer in der Hand führte. Viel Tagreisen konnte der Jäger durch die einsamen Thäler und Wälder das flüchtige Wild verfolgen und er traf keinen Menschen und keinen betretenen Pfad. Die Sterne des Himmels und der Lauf der Wasser waren seine einzigen Führer in der ungewohnten Wildnis. Neisende Thiere von gewaltiger Stärke und entsetzlichem Grimme, wie sie nun nimmer gesehen werden: Auerschädel und Bären; Wissende und Wölfe ließen in dem dichten Gebüsch umher und brüllten mit heiserer Stimme hungrig in die einsame menschenleere Dede. Und wenn dann plötzlich die hohen Eichen mächtig zu rauschen begannen und die alten morschen Äste krächzten und die Winde aus Felsen und Schluchten stöhnten, pfiffen und bellten, dann war es gerade, als sey der Sturm leibhaftig gekommen mit Rosen und Hunden dort das reißende Gewild zu jagen.

Auch in den Lüften häufte ein wilderes Raubvogelgeschlecht, das hoch in den Felsen nistete und von dort die Wälder überschwebend, mit den Wölfen sich um die Beute stritt,



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Vgl. auch den interessanten Link auf die englische Ausgabe:

The Heroic Life and Exploits of SIEGFRIED the Dragon Slayer. AN OLD GERMAN STORY. With Eight Illustrations designed by Wilhelm Kaulbach. LONDON: Joseph Cundall, Art-publisher, 12, Old Bond Street; and David Bogue, 86, Fleet Street. 1848.

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Siegfried the Dragon-flayer.

FIRST ADVENTURE.

Of King Siegmund, and of Heroes, Dwarfs, Giants, and Dragons of ancient Times.

N times of old there lived, in the Low Countries, a King named Siegmund, who was mighty in power and rich in honour. His castles were strong, and his men-at-arms were brave; he had swords glancing as the sun, and shields of silver white as the moon, festal robes embroidered with gold, precious jewels, noble steeds, and herds of fat cattle. But his greatest and noblest treasure was a lofty and truly royal mind, for King Siegmund was wife in counsel, brave in battle, and upright in judgement. He listened willingly to the advice of the wife and aged among his people, and was never disengaged even if they spoke with rudeness and reproach. His heart was not set upon wealth or treasures: as the majestic sun fills hill

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Siegfried the Dragon-flayer. 3

hundred years ago, the noble King Siegmund and his faithful train of followers rode past me to the chase and the battle." For in the time of King Siegmund there still stood in the old primeval forests, broad and high, the ancient "thunder-oaks" of heathen times, which at a much later period were cut down by Bonifacius, that highly favoured man of God, and his holy companions, when they brought to our forefathers in their dark forests the light of the Christian faith, and suffered for this with joyful courage the death of martyrs.

Dark and fearful were those ancient forests, as tradition tells, where stood the oaks and the blood-stained altars of the Pagan gods in the days of King Siegmund. None dared wander there without his sword at his side and his spear in his hand. The hunter might pursue the beasts of prey through the lonely woods and vales for many a day and neither meet a human being nor find a path. The stars of heaven and the course of the waters were his only guides in the vast wilderness. Ravenous wild beasts of enormous strength and fearful nature, such as are now no longer seen, the urochs and the bear, the lion and the wolf, prowled through the woods, and filled the air with their fierce and hungry cries, making the forests re-echo with their sounds. And when the lofty oaks rustled, and the branches cracked and snapped asunder, and the winds moaned and whistled in angry sounds from the rocks and caves, it seemed as if the spirit of the storm had come with horse and hound, to chase the wild inhabitants of the forests.

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2 Siegfried the Dragon-flayer.

and vale with warmth and light, as the cheerful May decks the fields and woods with flowers, so from his gentle hand flowed gifts and favours in rich abundance to reward true merit, to honour the deeds of fathers or kindle the heroism of their sons. To every wanderer his kingly hall stood open, to every one he proffered the hand of welcome; he entertained all as became his royal dignity, and at parting he offered to every one a gift in token of remembrance.

Thus King Siegmund was famed throughout all Germany, and along the Rhine, from north to south, the keen edge of his sword and the glitter of his gold-wrought shield were the theme of heroic song. Far and wide, too, whoever had complaint to make against injustice or oppression, whoever desired to acquire honour and renown, repaired to Xanthe at Königburg on the Rhine, where Siegmund sat amid his heroes at an iron table. On his right hand was Siegelinde, his beauteous queen and his companion, who shared his happiness, consoled him in adversity, and tended his wounds with her gentle hand. All the people honoured and loved the wife and brave King Siegmund and the gentle and fair Siegelinde.

But since the day when they both sat upon the royal throne in honour and splendour on the banks of the Rhine, many generations have descended to that silent and narrow house whence none return. Nor in any of the lands where German songs are sung, does there stand any oak so old that it might say, "When I was young and in my early vigour, many

4 Siegfried the Dragon-flayer.

In the air there dwelt a yet more savage race of birds, who built their nests high upon the rocks, and thence descending upon the woods contested with the wolves their prey, and carried off men and beasts in their talons as food for their young. Poisonous vapours brooded over the vast and bottomless marshes, in which basked serpents and adders, as long as trees, of every kind and form. In the hollow rocks and caves lurked snakes and dragons, their bodies clad in scales black as night, whose pestilential breath finged and burned like fire. But worst of all, fierce and evil Giants were in alliance with this hellish dragon brood. They were a dark and wicked race, who, created before heaven or earth, refused to bow the knee, and set their foot on the necks of weaker mortals, compelling them to do what their impious arrogance required. For their hearts were dark as the woods of old, and wild as the savage animals that dwelt therein; and, like the snakes and dragons in the poisonous swamps, they had grown amid all horrible vices to a fearful size, and mocked at heaven, and thought only of evil.

In those sad times the poor Dwarfs were compelled to suffer most from the wicked Giants. These were a people weak and small of stature, but who from time immemorial had handed down among themselves many a tradition of old; and possessed much secret knowledge of the powers of plants and stones. Thus they had become experienced in many mysterious arts, and were rendered cunning, sly, and resourceful by the

Siegfried the Dragon-slayer. 5

severe oppression they endured. They dwelt chiefly in the deep shafts of mines, and there wrought trusty weapons and rich ornaments from the precious metals and brilliant jewels. The Giants, however, kept watch over their abodes, and forced them to work night and day. If the poor little Dwarfs wifhed to repose, they angrily thrust down their large stakes of iron, or trod them to death like rats. Then the affrighted Dwarfs dared no longer venture into the light of day, but hid themselves in the deepest recesses.

The cunning Dwarfs were therefore bitter foes of the arrogant Giants and warm friends to the Heroes. These were men of the sword, and endowed by heaven with courage and strength to fight against the Giants and poisonous serpents, to clear the forests and swamps, so that the seed of a milder and more holy doctrine might be sown there. The Dwarfs often furnished the Heroes with sharp swords and stout shields, and taught them many of their arts, that they might gain the victory over their oppreftors.

This was therefore a time of wild strife and combat, and the best treasure which a man could have was an active courage, a stout heart, and a trusty sword. All these the Heroes pos- fessed, and to them belonged the noble race of Siegmund, the King of the Low Countries, famed in ancient song and story.