

THE NIBELUNGS

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a slightly modified interpretation of the origin of the historic Nibelung family and discusses relationships of members of the family between about 690 and 890. The branch which held Amiens, Vexin and Valois is postulated as ancestral to the counts who held these counties until the 11th century. Grierson's postulate that the later Counts are male line descendants of Hugbald of Ostrevant is rejected.

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Introduction

My interest in the Nibelungs started with the Counts of Amiens, Vexin and Valois, attested as members of the Nibelung family in the ninth and early tenth century. It has been widely accepted that the later family which held these three counties was not descended from the earlier family. No one seems to doubt that the Sudeley and Tracy families descend in the male line from Walter, Count of Amiens (d.992/998), son of Count Ralph of Valois². Grierson (1939) concluded that the later family descended from Hucbald, Count of Ostrevant, of unknown origin. I found onomastic and historical evidence that the later family had, instead, a male line descent from the earlier Nibelungs. There are major problems in our interpretation of the scanty data on the Nibelungs, exacerbated by the general absence of chronological control. My present interpretation differs from my earlier attempts and from all previous studies.

There is some dispute about the parentage of the ancestor of the Nibelung family, Childebrand, a bastard brother of Karl Martel. I shall give my reasons for thinking that they were full brothers, descendants of St. Arnulf, Bishop of Metz. The pedigree of St. Arnulf depends heavily on a single source, a life of Saint Gundulf, Bishop of Maestricht-Tongres. If the testimony of the source is accepted, then, with one doubtful generation, the pedigree is established back to Sigebert, King of Cologne, murdered by his son c.509. This Sigebert was alleged to be a Merovingian in the work of Gregory, of Tours, but we have no convincing details of his ancestry, then or later, and the early pedigrees of the Merovingians are remarkably discrepant.

Merovingians

The Roman historians make occasional passing mention of Frankish kings, but no early source gives an extended pedigree. Gregory of Tours (Thorpe, 1974; Heinzelman, 2001) describes the deeds of many contemporary Frankish rulers and their families, often giving their relationships, but often omitting them. Other important sources are Fredegar (Krusch, 1888a), the early poetic versions assembled by Kurth (1893) and the *Liber Historiae Francorum* (Krusch, 1888b).

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² Some of the details are disputable and may be considered in a later article.

All of these sources later than Gregory maintain that the Frankish kings derive from Antenor, Priam, and the kings of Troy, whose names often appear shortly before the historically known kings³. Clovis encouraged Chloderic to murder his father, Sigebert the Lambe, King of Cologne, then sent envoys to Chloderic, one of whom murdered Chloderic. Clovis referred to Sigebert as his 'brother', but there is no reason to think that the term should be taken literally. In the *Vita Gundulfi*, to be discussed shortly, there is mention of '*Chloderic, the Parricide*'. The context strongly suggests that this is the same individual, with a minor copying error. The error is more likely to be in the passing mention in the *Vita Gundulfi* rather than in the fuller context of Gregory, with repetition of the name.

The Ancestry of Saint Arnulf

By the time of Charlemagne, confusion was already dominant in his pedigree. The pedigree from Saint Arnulf to Charlemagne was well attested, but there was disagreement about Arnulf's father. It was frequently said that he was a son of Arnoald (Arnwald), who had also been Bishop of Metz. The most recent review of this pedigree is the work of Christian Settapani (2000b). This study is by far the most comprehensive and sophisticated consideration of Carolingian origins which has yet appeared. He emphasizes that the sources fall into two groups. The Ansbertian account, which ultimately became dominant, originated in the ninth century CE. It made the Carolingians of Gallo-Roman descent. A series of documents associated with Fontanelles and Saint Arnulf's relative, Saint Wandregisl, derive Arnulf from Frankish nobility. In this, they are in accord with a biography of Arnulf written during his lifetime. Both groups emphasize certain names and onomastic patterns. The most important of the Fontanelles group is the fragmentary Life of Saint Gundulf, Bishop of Maestricht (earlier Tongres). The genealogical information in this account⁴ is an essential part of a dramatic story of an ancestor who was a parricide, of God's punishments for such a crime, which might continue 'unto the third and fourth generations', but also how Christ's mercy might avert this just wrath. The genealogical information may be tabulated as in figure 1.

The author of the closing statement to this life assumed the identity of Gundulf's brother, Bodogisel, with Arnulf's father, making Arnulf a nephew of Gundulf, and that is how Settapani diagrams this account. However nothing in the account itself precludes interpreting *nepos* as 'grandson', in which case Gundulf would have named a son Bodogisel, after his brother. Chronologically, Arnulf is much more likely to have been either a grandson or a great-nephew, not a nephew. The repeated occurrence of such administrative titles as *dux* among the major administrative families is entirely expectable. The statement that the boys were raised in the court of Clotaire (Chlotachar) leads Settapani (pp.218-219), for once following Depoin to associate the boys with Soissons, but Clotaire also had a court at Tours.

³ See also Pender (1951, p.1) - a pedigree of King Philip of Spain. The early section incorporates a pedigree of the Merovingians which does not correspond with others known to me. The Merovingian eponym, Merovech, is the 20th generation of purely Germanic names, following an imaginary Antenor V of the contrived 'complete' Trojan pedigree.

⁴ Settapani (2000b, pp.203-4) assigns this to the twelfth century. The author claimed to be a younger contemporary of Saint Arnulf.

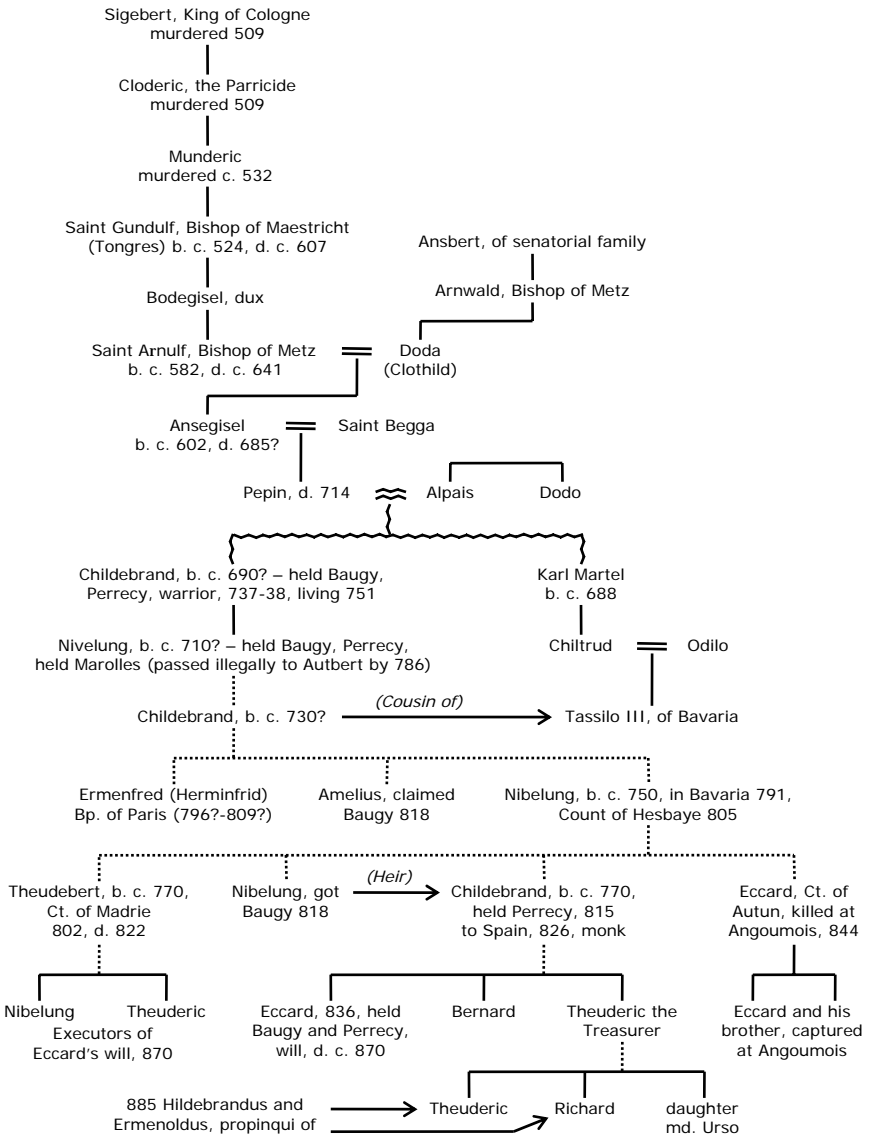


Fig 1. Merovingians and Arnulfings, and the Nibelungs to Theudebert

In the *Liber Vitae Patrum*, Gregory of Tours mentions a boy, Gundulf, who was raised with Guntram at King Clotaire's court; he fell from a tree, and was lamed but was miraculously healed. This Gundulf was, for a time, a citizen of Tours, and I have little doubt that he was the son of Munderic, and that he was raised in the court at Tours, not at Soissons. The fact that there is verification for such a minor point helps to support the general reliability of the *Vita Gundulfi*.

Settipani (1989)⁵ attempted to identify Arnulf's father among the persons named Bodogisel in other sources, two of whom had the title *dux*. All of them were probably members of the same family group. He eventually decided that Bodogisel, a *dux*, son of Mummolinus of Soissons, was the most likely, and he continues of that opinion. Since he accepts that Saint Arnulf was a Frank, he also has to argue that Mummolinus was a Frank. He points out three arguments against his view, but none of them are decisive. The first is that Mummolinus is a Latin derivative of Mummolus, and one would think that a Gallo-Roman name formation would indicate a Gallo-Roman individual. Indeed, although Frankish names were fairly common in patrilineal Gallo-Roman families, it was very rare for Gallo-Roman names to appear in families which had a male line Frankish descent. I am not fully convinced by any of the examples proposed. With respect to Mummolinus, the element *-in-* normally indicates either an adoptive child, or a sister's child, often an heiress (in this case of someone named Mummolus). If the name were associated with property inheritance, it might even appear in an otherwise unexpected context. This argument against Mummolinus in a Frankish pedigree is not as strong as it once seemed to me. The second argument is that Gregory of Tours seems to use the naming pattern, 'x son of y' for Gallo-Romans, using only their personal names for Franks. The third is that Gregory's reference to 'Bodogisel son of Mummolinus' and 'Evanthius son of Dynamius' of Arles is followed by a reference to their companion Gripho, a Frank, as if this was a deliberate contrast with his comrades, who are therefore implicitly Gallo-Romans.

In contrast to these weaknesses in his evidence, Settipani has a new interpretation of the false genealogies of the Fontanelles group, which supports his views. He now thinks that the pedigrees were originally lists of family members who should be commemorated together, which were ignorantly re-interpreted as pedigrees. Recognizing this postulated original function helps to reconstruct the families correctly. One of them has a sequence Haldgislus, Momulinus, Batgislus, Aodulf (error for Arnulf) and Ansgislus. Haldgislus might easily be copying error for Baldgislus, who appears in a parallel text, or it may be correct, since there is an Aldgisl attested as a relative of unknown affiliation. In any case, Momulinus is in close association with Batgislus (a form of Bodogisel) and with Ansgislus, the ancestor of the Carolingians. This is good support for Settipani's views.

There are however two arguments which support the view that Saint Arnulf was a grandson of Saint Gundulf. The entire argument of the *Vita Gundulfi* rests on the genealogical relationships of the people concerned and on their derivation from 'Childeric'/Cloderic, the Parricide. One would not expect the omission of any of the people in the direct genealogy of Arnulf, and if *nepos* is interpreted as 'grandson', then there are no omissions.

The second factor is that Bodogisel, son of Mummolinus, was murdered by a mob. This fits in so appropriately with the entire theme of Gundulf's address that I can't believe that it would have been omitted if that Bodogisel was actually Saint Arnulf's father. If Arnulf's father were actually a son of Gundulf, he is not attested elsewhere, but our sources are so scanty that that seems entirely natural. I therefore accept Arnulf's father, Bodogisel, as the son of St. Gundulf. Settipani and I both accept the usefulness of the *Vita Gundulfi* source and we both use onomastic evidence in similar ways. Our conclusions differ as to the identity of Arnulf's father and grandfather, but we agree about his derivation from the Merovingian kinglets of Cologne, and I am prepared to accept many of his conclusions about related families.

⁵ see especially pp. 63-64, 79.

The Childebrand problem

Childebrand, Seigneur of Perreçy, is styled *avunculus* (uncle) of Pepin, le Bref and *germanus* (brother) of Karl Martel. The term *germanus* precludes the possibility that Childebrand was a maternal brother of Karl Martel. *Avunculus* therefore had shifted meaning by this date to include the brother of the father, in the area of the writer. The linguistically naïve postulate that this would necessarily have implied half-brothers is unsupported by case examples, lexicons, or comparative kinship studies, where such changes are frequent. Childebrand was the patron of the Continuator of Fredegarius, and it is this author who gives us these relationships, as well as a description of the 'noble and charming' Alpais, the mother of Karl Martel.

Settipani (1989, pp.9-10) discussed these relationships. He rightly concluded that the terminology means that Childebrand had the same father as Karl Martel and permits that they also had the same mother. He argues that a writer whose patron was Childebrand would hardly emphasize the nobility of Karl's mother and make no mention of his patron's mother, so Karl and Childebrand were probably full brothers. I entirely agree. I may add that the name Chiltrud, given to Karl Martel's daughter, probably came from the same source as the name Childebrand and supports the view that Childebrand was a full brother of Karl. Moreover Ricfrid Dodo was probably a male line descendant of Childebrand, as I shall argue, and his by-name, Dodo, was also the name of a brother of Alpais.

Hence Childebrand was son of Alpais and Pepin (d.714), son of Ansegisel and Begga. Ansegisel was the son of Saint Arnulf, Bishop of Metz and his wife, Doda (who became a nun at Treves by 612). Settipani thinks, as I do, that the purported descent of the Arnulfings from Arnoald, Bishop of Metz, has a basis in reality, but was not the male line. He argues that Arnulf's wife, Doda, was the daughter of Arnoald. This seems to me a solution which is decidedly preferable to the one which I proposed earlier (Kelley, 1947⁶).

The primary lineage of the Nibelungs

The most important studies of the Nibelungs are those of Chaume⁷ (1925-1931), Levillain (1937) and Settipani⁸ (1993). Grierson (1939) worked particularly on the family members of the Counts of Vexin, Valois and Amiens. Our knowledge of the Nibelung family is based on a small number of documents, property inheritance (particularly Baugy and Perreçy), onomastic patterns, and the tendency towards inheritance of offices, both secular and religious. There were only two characteristic names in the early family, Childebrand and Nibelung. Later the names Eccard and Theuderic became typical of the family (see figure 1). Of these Nibelung is the rarest. I know of only seven individuals named Nibelung in my interpretation, one of whom is doubtfully attested. Some interpretations would reduce the remaining six to five or four. All of these men were apparently closely related.

The name Childebrand is attested somewhat more widely and includes individuals who seem to be members of other families. This is even truer of people named Eccard and Theuderic. Childebrand, the brother of Karl Martel, was given Baugy and Perreçy, which were later held by his son, Nibelung. This Nibelung also held Marolles, which

⁶ mistakenly cited by Settipani as 1949.

⁷ Vol.1, p.541.

⁸ I, fn, p.326.

had passed illegally to Autbert by 786. It is probable that Autbert was a close relative of Nibelung but I know of no other evidence on this. One would normally assume that Nibelung was dead by this time, but a number of scholars have assumed that he was the same Nibelung who was a Count of Hesbaye in 805, when he gave property to Saint Denis and even the man who claimed Baugy in 818 against a certain Amelius.

A Childebrand held Perrecy in 815, and is identified by Settipani (1993) as a Count of Autun, attested from 796 to 821. It is Eccard, the son of this Childebrand, who held both Perrecy and Baugy from 836 until shortly before his death in 876. Childebrand was closely contemporary with Theudebert (Thibert), Count of Madrie, whose father is given in a forged document as a man named Nibelung. Settipani (1993, p.353) accepts the probability that the eleventh century forger knew of a document making Theudebert of Madrie son of a Nibelung. Chaume cites this with no indication that the document is a forgery and Levillain accepted the relationship in spite of deriving from a forgery. Settipani points out that the later Nibelungs had relatives named Theudebert and that an earlier member of the family had property in Madrie. He therefore accepts the relationship as probable. I take the same position. The forger mistakenly gave Pepin's wife as Ingeltrud, and her mother, wife of Theudebert, as Ermengard. The two names are often associated onomastically and Ingeltrudis would, as I shall show, be particularly appropriate. It is possible that the forger had access to a genuine source which he misunderstood.

Settipani (1993) mentions a Bavarian Childebrand who was a cousin of Tassilo, *dux* in Bavaria. Tassilo's mother Chiltrud was a daughter of Karl Martel. If Childebrand was of the same generation as Tassilo, they would be second cousins, and Childebrand would be the grandson of Karl Martel's brother, Childebrand. This was the commonest type of name repetition and he could be placed as a son or nephew of the first Nibelung of the family. Settipani seems to regard him as heading a separate Bavarian branch, but I see no reason not to associate him with the main line of the family. I think that this Childebrand was the immediate predecessor and probable father of the Nibelung who was Count of Hesbaye in 805 and think that the latter was the father of Nibelung, Childebrand, Theudebert and Eccard. The Count of Hesbaye may or may not be the Nipulunc attested in a Bavarian document in 791 (Settipani, 1993; Störmer, 1972, pp.34-35). The late eighth century was the time when it became fairly common for men of Germanic origin to have sons with the same name, so there is no problem in attributing a son, Nibelung, to Nibelung of Hesbaye. Settipani points out that Childebrand's son Eccard, a cousin of Eccard son of Eccard, Count of Autun, was killed in 844 and the latter must have been either a brother or brother-in-law but I prefer brother. That is because I suggest that Eccard, the ninth-century Count of Amiens, was a grandson of Theudebert, Count of Madrie, and hence that the name was in the Nibelung family at least a generation earlier than Settipani proposes. I think that Angilwin and Erminfrid, Counts of Amiens, were Nibelungs. Given the tendency to inherit offices, Eccard, Count of Amiens, was probably either a son or nephew of Angilwin, Count of Amiens. Erminfrid, Count of Amiens, was probably the heir of Eccard, and connected with the family of the Counts of Vexin and Valois, descended from Nibelung, Count of Vexin, postulated as a brother of Angilwin, Count of Amiens. Like Settipani, I believe that Nibelung, Count of Vexin, was identical with Nibelung, who was, with his brother, Theuderic, one of the executors of the will of his cousin, Eccard, who died in 876. However, Settipani thinks that the brothers Theuderic and Nibelung, executors in 876, were sons of the Nibelung who held Baugy in 818. In that case, I would have expected that Baugy would have passed to one or the other of them, rather than to Childebrand and his son Eccard. The Nibelung attested in 818 must have died young and without issue. The brothers Nibelung and

Theuderic were probably nephews of Childebrand, as Settipani suggested, but I think that they were sons of Theudebert, the Count of Madrie. There is, however, another possibility with respect to the Counts of Amiens. Angilwin, the Count of Amiens, was captured at the battle of Angoumois where Eccard, Count of Autun, was killed in 844. We know that Eccard of Autun had two sons captured at Angoumois: apparently Eccard and an unnamed brother. It is possible that the latter was Angilwin of Amiens. In that case, the relationship to the family of the Counts of Vexin and Valois would have been more remote.

The chronology is reasonable. We know that Karl Martel was born about 688. If we put the birth of his brother Childebrand about 690, the next firm date is the marriage of Ringard, daughter of Theudebert, to Pepin (Peppin, Pippin), King of Aquitaine, in 822. Pepin was born about 797. This would suggest a generation length of about 20 years, which could easily be adjusted a few years in either direction. Contrary to previous opinions, I now think that the most likely ancestor of the later counts of Vexin, Valois and Amiens, was Theudebert of Madrie. The Nibelung family which held Vexin, Valois and Amiens were partisans of Eudes (Odo, Otto), the Robertin. Theudebert is known to have had a son, Robert, which suggests that Theudebert's wife was related to the Robertins.

Nibelungs, bishops of Paris, and Thuringians

At this point it is desirable to introduce some complicated inter-locking details linking the Nibelungs to the Bishops of Paris⁹ and the Counts of Amiens. The most direct connection of the Counts of Amiens and the Bishops of Paris is between Angilwin, Count of Amiens (847, 853) and his son Angilwin, who has been identified as the Bishop of Paris (c.871-c.883). Onomastically, the most compelling is Ermenfrid (Herminfrid), borne by three individuals. The first was the Bishop of Paris about 796, who died about 809. Another Erminfrid, possibly Count of Loos, perhaps born about 885, was the younger brother of a Count Nibelung. By 894, another man named Erminfrid was Count of Amiens, and still living in 919. The later Counts of Amiens, Vexin and Valois were recognized as his heirs. Erminfrid, of Amiens, had a brother, Gausbert, a name also borne by a brother of Gauzelin, the Bishop of Paris (884-886). Anscheric, Bishop of Paris c.886 to c.911, had a brother Count Thibert (Theudebert), whose name recalls that of the Count of Madrie.

For the earlier background, both Settipani and I reached the conclusion that the Thuringian princess, Saint Ingeltrud, was a daughter of King Baderic (Baldric), brother of King Hermanfrid. I believe that Saint Ingeltrud was the wife of Amelius, Bishop of Paris (533-541). The son of Amelius was Leontius, Bishop of Bordeaux, who was followed by Bertchramn, Bishop of Bordeaux, known to be a son of Ingeltrude. This Bertchramn, Bishop of Bordeaux, was the uncle of Bertchramn who was Archdeacon of Paris and then became Bishop of Le Mans (587, d.623). There is an abundance of indirect onomastic relationships supporting the marriage of Amelius and Ingeltrude, but the evidence is too complex for consideration here and might be explained by cousin marriages.

I have already pointed out that a later Amelius claimed Baugy against Nibelung in 818. Under these circumstances, it is very interesting that Baldric, Bishop of Utrecht (917-976) (probably born about 887) was a younger brother of Erminfrid, and of Count Nibelung. We started with Angilwin, Count of Amiens. The component Angil-

⁹ Mas Latrie (1889) is a convenient, although not always critical, source for the Bishopricks including Paris and Bordeaux.

may be a dialect variant of Ingel- in Ingeltrud. Thus the Bishops of Paris are linked onomastically and by known family connections to the Thuringians, to the Nibelungs, and to the Counts of Amiens. These items, taken together, suggest that the name Amelius and a set of Thuringian names, along with a claim to the Bishopric of Paris, came to the Nibelung family in the mid-eighth century, perhaps with the wife of the second Childebrand (about 750). Since Amelius had a name associated with the Bishops of Paris and had some sort of claim to Baugy, we must presume that the marriage of one of the Nibelung family with a relative of the Bishops of Paris had occurred earlier. We must also assume that Baugy and Perrecy were being held separately, since Childebrand had Perrecy and Nibelung was disputing with Amelius in 818. If Amelius was a younger brother of Nibelung, the Count of Hesbaye in 805, and Nibelung, who disputed Baugy with Amelius was the son and heir of the Count of Hesbaye, that would account for the known facts. This would suggest that their approximate contemporary, Ermenfried, Bishop of Paris, was also of the Nibelung family, but, alternatively, he could be a maternal uncle of Amelius.

A Bishop of Paris named Deodefred, which could be a dialect form of Theudefrid, died about 775. If this derivation is correct, the related names Theudebert (Thibert) and Theuderic (Thierry) might also have arrived with the same marriage. That is certainly not demonstrable at this time.

Ricfrid Dodo

According to the *Life of Radbod*, Bishop of Utrecht, (Holder-Egger, 1887, p.571a) Radbod prophesied that his successor would be Baldric, son of Count Ricfrid. Holder-Egger gives the epitaph of this Count Ricfrid in a footnote. He was a member of the Nibelung family of substantial importance onomastically, politically and in documentation of relationships. Ricfrid Dodo has received remarkably little attention. Chaume summarized his immediate family, but did not attempt to trace him in relationship to other members of the family, and he is not mentioned by Levillain, Grierson or Settapani. The family of Count Ricfrid Dodo is attested in an epitaph¹⁰.

Ricfrid emphasized his ancestry by giving his eldest son the name Nibelung, and his own by-name Dodo, recalls that of the brother of Alpais, the ancestress of the Nibelungs. Ricfrid's sons, Count Erminfrid and Baldric, Bishop of Utrecht, repeat the names of the Thuringian kings, Hermanfrid and Baderic. Ricfrid's wife was Hersent. All of this is attested in Ricfrid's previously cited epitaph. Ricfrid's son Baldric, Bishop of Utrecht, is called a brother of Rainier of Hainault (Waitz, 1841)¹¹. The most likely explanation is that Hersent married second, as his first wife, Rainier I of Hainault and

¹⁰ *Nomine Ricfridus, cognomine Dodo vocatus,
Nam comes eximius extitit atque pius.
Foverat hic gentem Christi sub pace difelem,
Paganos stravit, hinc et eos pepullit.
Namque loci istius mansit defensor amandus,
Germine de cuius crevit et ipse locus.
Victor Yrimfridus pariterque comes Nevelongus,
Hic modo qui pausaat: his pater extiterat.
Corpus Herinsindae quorum matris generosae
Confovet hoc antrum, huic simul appositum.*

*Hunc tulit October, vocat hanc ex carne November.
Nempe sub undenis hominem exit ille Kalendis,
Idibus octonis sidus et illa subit.*

¹¹ p.262, fn.11, which seems somewhat confused.

was the mother of Rainier II. This was Chaume's explanation. According to Chaume, Hersent was a daughter of Charles the Bald and his second wife Richild, but he did not give his source for her identity. Her son, Balderic, became Bishop of Utrecht in 917. Since Bishops were not supposed to assume that office unless they were at least 30, he should have been born about 887, with two older brothers. Since Richild was married about 870, Hersent would probably have been about 14 at the oldest. However, it is possible that a king's grandson might have become a bishop even if he had not reached the canonical age. It is equally possible that Chaume was simply mistaken. Werner confused Ricfrid Dodo's son Baldric, Bishop of Utrecht (917-976) with Ricfrid's grandson, Baldric, Bishop of Liège (956-959). Werner's apparent ignorance of the Ricfrid epitaph led him to construct an erroneous pedigree of this family.

It has been suggested that Ricfrid was a Count of Betuwe or of Loos. Loos is on the Maas River, north of Liège and later accounts derived the Counts of Loos either from Nibelung (son of Ricfrid Dodo) or from his brother, Erminfrid. Although earlier accounts had suggested that Erminfrid might have been identical with Immo, 'Count of Loos', Dierkens (1988) has shown that Immo was said to have been raised at the court of Gislebert of Lorraine, a younger half-brother of Renier of Hainault, himself probably a younger half-brother of Count Erminfrid, son of Ricfrid Dodo. Clearly Immo was at least one generation younger than Erminfrid and might well have been still younger. However, he was adult in 939. Dierkens says that Immo was not a hypocoristic of Erminfrid, which should appear as Ezzo. All the evidence I have seen supports the opposing view. Dierkens points out that a late source identifies Immo as a *propinquus* (relative) of the Bishop of Liège. This seems virtually certain. Ricfrid's predecessor as Count of Betuwe was Ansfrid, known as Count in 855. Ricfrid's son Baldric was Bishop of Utrecht from 917-976 and was succeeded as Bishop by a certain Count Ansfrid, son of Count Ansfrid, (of Huy, according to Dierkens) brother of Robert, Archbishop of Treves (928-956). The father of Robert and Ansfrid was named Lambert. The names of Robert and Lambert are in the Robertin family. The name Ansfrid, the possible title of Count of Betuwe, and the title of Bishop of Utrecht tie together Lambert and Ricfrid Dodo. The Robertin names link to Robert, son of Theudebert, son of Nibelung and the element -frid links together Ansfrid and Ricfrid. One other minor onomastic element may be mentioned. A later 'Count of Los' was Arnulf, son of Godefrid and Alpaid. The latter is a form of Alpais, name of the mother of Karl Martel and Childebrand. In the Los context, Alpais seems likely to be a daughter of Erminfrid, son of Ricfrid Dodo, her name re-enforcing the onomastic import of Dodo, earlier the name of Alpais' brother. Given Ricfrid's geographical position in the northeast, the connections of his family with the Counts of Hainault, the names of his sons, and his date, it seems that he was probably a grandson of Nibelung, the Count of Vexin in the 840s.

The known sons of the Count of Vexin are Theuderic and Adhemar. I see nothing specifically indicating that Ricfrid was a son of either Theuderic, Count of Vexin, or of Adhemar, while there are indications that his father may have been Ansfrid, I therefore postulate that Ansfrid was another son of Nibelung and that Ansfrid was the father of both Ricfrid Dodo and Lambert.

Other Nibelungs and possible relatives

The first 'sire de Bourbon' of the first house was Adhemar, attested in 913 and 925. The traditional pedigree of the family makes this Adhemar the son of a Nibelung. The existence of the legatee, Adhemar son of Nibelung, with a brother, Theuderic, in the will of Eccard, son of Childebrand of about 870, gives onomastic support to the

Bourbon claim. The chronological evidence on the early Bourbons suggests that Adhemar, the first lord of Bourbon of this house, was a fairly young man. Given normal onomastic patterns, he may well have been a grandson of Adhemar, son of Nibelung, of the 870s.

There is another family whose names suggest relationship with Erminfrid of Amiens and the Nibelungs. Settapani (2004)¹² discusses the Counts of Cahors and their relatives and descendants. I have mentioned Gauslin, Bishop of Paris (d.886), one of the so-called Rorgonid family. His relationships are discussed by Settapani (2000a, c). He is described by Settapani (2000a, pp.99, 103) as Abbot of St. Denis and as Abbot of St. Germain. Gauslin was a son of Rorico, Count of Rennes (b.c.720/5; d.c.841) by his wife Bilichild, and a full brother of Gausbert, Count of Maine and of Gausfred, Count of Maine, who married, according to Settapani's interpretation (2000c, p.249), a sister of Walthar, Bishop of Orleans. Gauslin was a half-brother of Ludovic (Louis), Abbot of St. Denis, son of Rorico and his first wife Rotrudis, daughter of Charlemagne. The fact that Gauslin and Ludovic were both Abbots of St. Denis suggests that a claim to St. Denis (and perhaps to the Bishopric of Paris) came through Rorico rather than through either of his wives (*cf* Amalbert, Abbot of St. Denis, died 749). I suspect that Aldrich (from *Childeric), Bishop of LeMans 832-857, a descendant of Charlemagne, may have been another son of Rorico and Rotrudis. He was the uncle of Franco, Bishop of Liège. Gauzlin, Bishop of Le Mans (*ante* 762; d.c.771) was a son of Count Chrotgar (Roger), 723, and perhaps an uncle of Gauzlin, father of Rorico. Franco, of Hesbaye, Bishop of LeMans 793-816 and his nephew and successor, Franco, Bishop of Le Mans 816-822 were probably also members of the family. Rotrudis, wife of Rodbert, son of Radulf, Count of Cahors, is thought by Settapani to be a daughter of Rorico and Rotrudis. The brother of this Rodbert was Godefroy, Count of Cahors 843-852, whose son Godefroy married Godolinda or Godila. Settapani (2004, p.186) suggests that Godefroy and Godila were the parents of Robert, b.c.865, with six children; Ademar, Viscount of Turenne, b.c.885/90, d.c.941; Boson, Abbot of Beaulieu, 937, Bishop of Cahors, 904; Gausbert, 937; Deda; Robert; and Farilde, who married Odalric, Viscount of St. Cirq. Erminfrid, of Amiens, had brothers Franco and Gozbert, tying in with this Gausbert. The name Farilde is very rare. I know of Pharahild, daughter of Erminfrid, wife of Wandregisl, Abbot of Fontanelles (St. Wandregisl, 22 July) and Pharahild (4 January; Patron of Ghent), dubiously alleged daughter of St. Amalaberga (10 July) and King Theuderic (possibly a granddaughter of Pharahild, daughter of Erminfrid). The wife of the Thuringian king Hermanfrid was named Amalaberga. Hence the name Farilde ties closely to Ermanfrid. It seems highly probable that the name Farilde came through the family of her postulated grandmother, Godila. The element God- is also found in the dialect form Gud- and St. Gudula, of Brussels, seems to have an assimilated form of the name Godila. St. Gudula was a daughter of St. Amalaberga and her second husband, Count Witger. She would have been a half-sister of the alleged Saint Pharailldis. Ademar of Turenne has the same name as Adhemar, brother of Theuderic, postulated father of Erminfrid, Count of Amiens. The two Roberts tie in to Robert, son of Theudebert, and to the family of Count Ansfrid. I would not be surprised if there were a connection between this family and the Sires de Bourbon.

Although I know of no suggested identities for them, two noblemen are mentioned in 885 as *propinqui* of Theuderic and Richard, sons of Theuderic the Treasurer, son of Childebrand who held Perrecy in 815. They are Hildebrandus and Ermenoldus

¹² p.186, footnote 7.

(Settipani, 2004)¹³. The element Ermen- is further support for regarding Ermenfrid of Amiens as a Nibelung.

A document from the time of King Hugh (Capet) (987-996) mentions Nevelon, son of Renier de Mons (Holder-Egger, 1881, pp.634-635). I have no additional information on him and no suggestion as to his relationships to other Nibelungs.

Chaume¹⁴ mentions a number of the partisans of Eudes, nearly all relatives, including Anseri, Bishop of Paris, and his brother Thibert (Theudebert), Count of Meaux. Although I know nothing else of these individuals, the Bishopric of Paris connects Anseri with Hermanfrid, Angilwin, and Goslin. Theudebert of Meaux actually has the same name as the Count of Madrie, and these brothers might well be among the grandchildren of Theudebert of Madrie.

The name Anseri (Ancseric) combines -ric of Theuderic, Baldric and Ricfrid with Ans-, found in Ansfrid and Ansgisel, an ancestor of the Nibelungs.

Grierson (1939) demonstrated that there were three attested counts of Amiens in the ninth century, Angilwin, Eccard and Ermanfrid. Settipani and Chaume identify a Richard, Count of Amiens (801-825) but do not cite a primary source. Grierson does not mention this Count of Amiens. I see no basis to propose a relationship to later Counts of Amiens. I have argued that Angilwin and Ermanfrid were of the Nibelung family. Grierson regarded only Eccard as this Nibelung family. Grierson attempted to identify Eccard, of Amiens, with one of the other Eccards in the Nibelung family, but was unable to do so. I see no reason in our very scanty documents to think that any of them might be the Count of Amiens. Since I agree with most earlier scholars that Eccard was a member of the family which already held Amiens and, since there was already a tendency for offices to be inherited, I think that his father was probably Angilwin, Count of Amiens.

Erminfrid, Count of Amiens

We must now turn to the central problem of this paper as originally conceptualized, the ancestry of Erminfrid, Count of Amiens, and the nature of his relationship to the later Counts of Amiens, Vexin and Valois. Grierson maintained that "*it is manifest that the house of Walter of Amiens did not descend from the Nibelungs*"¹⁵, justified in a footnote, "*one does not find in the family of Walter I any of the characteristic names of the Nibelung family*"¹⁶. Although I have argued for the great importance of onomastics, such evidence is only useful in a positive sense. The absence of a particular name or set of names is very weak evidence, particularly given the scanty nature of our data on family units and relationships. In this case, we know that the name Erminfrid was in the Nibelung family about a generation later than the time of Erminfrid of Amiens and we know that it is reasonable to think that both Angilwin and Eccard, who previously held Amiens, were of the Nibelung family. We also know that there is a reasonable probability that the Thuringian names including Erminfrid came into the Nibelung family through the grandmother of Theudebert of Madrie. This leads to the tentative conclusion that Erminfrid, Count of Amiens, whose heir was Walter of Amiens was a

¹³ pp. 348-349, footnotes 1066 & 1067.

¹⁴ Vol.1, p.327

¹⁵ p.7: *il est manifest que la maison de Gautier d'Amiens ne descend pas des Nibelungen.*

¹⁶ *on ne trouve dans la famille de Gautier I aucun des noms caracteristiques de la famille des Nibelungen.*

member of the Nibelung family, which directly contradicts Grierson's widely accepted conclusions about the ancestry of Walter of Amiens.

Within the Nibelung family, it seems that Erminfrid of Amiens is likely to be of the branch which held Vexin and Valois; chronologically, he would fit nicely as a son of Theuderic, Count of Valois, son in turn of Nibelung, Count of Vexin. This would make Erminfrid a brother of Rodulph (Rolph, Ralph) at Saint-Quentin, 895. Grierson distinguishes this Ralph from Rodulph, Count of Amiens and Ostrevant (Raoul de Gouy) who died in 926, whose mother was named Heiliwich. Grierson identifies this Heiliwich with Heiliwich of Friul, daughter of Eberhard, and with the wife of Hugbald, Count of Ostrevant.

Grierson maintained that the Nibelung family held Amiens, Vexin and Valois as a unity under King Eudes (Odo). After the coronation of Louis the Simple they fell into disgrace with Eudes, who confiscated and gave their counties to Ermenfrid, who managed to retain them under Charles the Simple. From Ermenfrid, they passed to Eldegard and to her husband, Raoul de Gouy, d.926, son of Heiliwich, postulated wife of Hugbald, Count of Ostrevant, thence to his son Raoul, Count of Valois, d.943, and finally to Eldegard's son Walter, Count of Amiens, Vexin and Valois, attested heir of Erminfrid who died after 992 (66 years after the death of his postulated father). The property transaction which attests that Walter was the heir of Erminfrid makes no mention of the nature of their relationship and hence can provide no help in interpreting the pedigree (Grierson, 1939¹⁷; Levillain, 1902¹⁸).

I accept Grierson's arguments that Raoul de Gouy was Count of Amiens and Ostrevant, probably also of Vexin and Valois. I also accept his position that titles were still not fully hereditary at this time and that if Raoul inherited Ostrevant as heir of Hugbald, then it is unlikely that he also inherited Vexin, Valois, and Amiens unless Ostrevant came from one parent (presumably Heilwig) and Vexin, Valois and Amiens from the other. Conversely, if Raoul de Gouy inherited Vexin, Valois and Amiens, there is no evidence that he would also have inherited Ostrevant. A necessary part of Grierson's position is to dissociate Raoul de Gouy from Raoul son of Theuderic, attested somewhat earlier, since Grierson accepts the arguments identifying this Theuderic as a member of the Nibelung family.

The confiscation of the counties is not attested; Eldegard as heiress of the counties is not attested. Eldegard as the wife of a Count Ralph is attested, but nothing proves whether this was the Ralph who died in 945 or the Ralph who died in 926. Raoul de Gouy was the son of a Heiliwich, but nothing attests that she was Heiliwich of Friul and nothing attests that Raoul's father was Hugbald of Ostrevant. To be sure, Heiliwich, mother of Ralph, married second Roger of Laon and had a son, Hugh, who could have been named for Hugbald, although the name does not appear in the family of Walter of Amiens, Vexin and Valois. Hugh was a very common name, and was present in the Laon family.

These elaborate and interdependent hypotheses are unnecessary if Erminfrid was of the Nibelung family. If he were a son of Theuderic, Count of Valois, then his countship passed to Ralph of San Quentin, his brother, son of a Heiliwich who may have been a relative of Heiliwich of Friul, but is still unidentified. Even if I have wrongly determined the position of Theuderic, Count of Vexin, in the Nibelung family, he is the count who had an attested son Ralph at San Quentin. This in itself invalidates

¹⁷ pp.7, 15, 16, 26.

¹⁸ pp.305-306.

Grierson's contention that the name Ralph was absent from the Nibelung family. This Ralph in fact is the person most likely to have inherited Vexin and Valois. When we next find a Ralph holding Vexin and Valois, I see no good reason to deny their identity.

Hugbald and Heilwig

Settipani (2000a) shows that Heilwig of Friul (granddaughter of King Louis, son of Charlemagne) b.c.840-845, married Hugbald, Count of Senlis (and Ostrevant). Later (2000c) he shows Heilwig, of Senlis, b.c.865, as the mother of Raoul de Gouy. For the father, he has returned to a suggestion of Depoin, followed by Chaume, that he was Waldgar (Waltgarius, Walkerus, Gaucher), Count of Laon, son of Adalhelm, the *avunculus* (uncle) of King Odo (Eudes), from which the name Walter came to the Counts of Amiens. Grierson denied the identity of the names Waldgar (Gaucher) and Walterius (Gautier). Unfortunately, they could arise from separate roots, but could also be dialect variations of a single name and accepted as equivalents. Settipani's solution is chronologically far better than Grierson's and it would mean that children of Heilwig, by either of her husbands might have a hereditary claim on Ostrevant, which would not have been true in Grierson's interpretation. This identification of Heilwig can be adapted to my ideas with little difficulty. I cannot accept the identification of her first husband as Waltgar of Laon, even though this might supply a source for the name Walter in the later Amiens-Vexin-Valois family, since these Counts of Laon had no known or likely claim to Amiens-Vexin-Valois, and the family of the Counts of Laon were out of favour with King Odo at the crucial period in the late ninth century when the Nibelungs are last attested holding Amiens-Vexin-Valois. It is surprising that none of Settipani's colleagues at the two conferences seem to have been aware of his reinterpretation of the Heilwig identification.

Chronologically, Raoul, son of Raoul de Gouy, is more likely to have married Eldegard and to have been the father of Walter of Amiens. Supposed constraints coming from her position as heiress may be ignored, as may any constraints derived from the family of Hucbald of Ostrevant, unless Settipani's view is accepted. Constraints derived from the identification of Heilwich as a daughter of Eberhard of Friul should also be ignored. Interestingly, the family of Hugbald of Ostrevant is discussed not only by Settipani but, in the same volume (Keats-Rohan & Settipani, 2000) by Keats-Rohan, Jackman, and Saint-Phalle. All accept Heilwig of Friul as the wife, first of Hugbald (Hucbald) and then of Hrothgar (Roger) of Laon. Jackman (2000, p.131) attempts to reconstruct the family of the Counts of Eberhard and Bishops of Augsburg, making Hugbald a brother of Adalbero, Bishop of Augsburg, 887-909, and father of a second Count Hugbald, father of Udalrich, Bishop of Augsburg (929-977). If of canonical age, this Udalrich would have been born by 899, probably shortly before his postulated half-nephews of Laon. Jackman does not point out that Decker-Hauff (1955, p.310) (whom he cites) puts Hucbald's marriage to Heilwig about 853 and suggests that Hugbald was identical with the Alsatian Count Hugh, b.c.800-805, d.884, ignoring Hugbald's attested dates in the 890s. The second Count Hugbald was of Dillingen, and a Heilwig, of this family, b.c.940, married Count Ehrenfried. Jackman also makes Heilwig of Friul the mother of Ingelmut (whose name is related to Heilwig's sister Ingeltrud), who married Margrave Ratold and had a son Eberhard, named presumably for Heilwig's father, Eberhard of Friul. None of this proves that the wife of Hugbald of Ostrevant was Heilwig rather than another of Eberhard's daughters, but it strongly supports the identity of Hugbald, of Ostrevant as the ancestor of the family of the Counts of Dillingen. None of this suggests any connection with Walter of Amiens.

Keats-Rohan (2000, p.150) says that Hucbald was certainly Count of Senlis and mentions in passing that he was an uncle of Herve, Bishop of Reims, 900-. She thinks that Hucbald was the father of (the inadequately attested) Wido (Guy), Count of Senlis, and, more certainly, the grandfather of Bernard, Count of Senlis, c.945.

Saint-Phalle deals directly with the family of Ralph, Count of Amiens, Valois and Vexin. He says that Liegard, widow in 947 of a Count Ralph, must be the widow of Raoul II of Amiens, Vexin and Valois, who had been killed by members of the family of the Counts of Vermandois in 943. His sole reason for this identification is apparently that we don't know of any other Count Ralph who died before 947. I see nothing in the available evidence to indicate that this Liegard was the widow of either Ralph de Gouy or his son. Saint Phalle (2000, p.234) cites Feuchere as suggesting that Eldegard was the widow of Raoul, son of Raoul de Gouy. Since I identify Raoul de Gouy as the Raoul who was adult at San Quentin in 895, he would not have been a young man when he died in 926, and his son Ralph may have been already adult. There is no reason therefore why Walter I of Amiens might not have been a son of Ralph II. There are far too many uncertain dates, uncertain relationships and uncertain identifications to be dogmatic, but I share Feuchere's opinion and I have seen no data which creates an impossibility or even a major improbability for my interpretation.

The identification of Raoul de Gouy as a brother of Erminfrid, Count of Amiens, is strongly supported by emerging inheritance patterns, by onomastic evidence, and by the political context, none of which support any other presently suggested solution.

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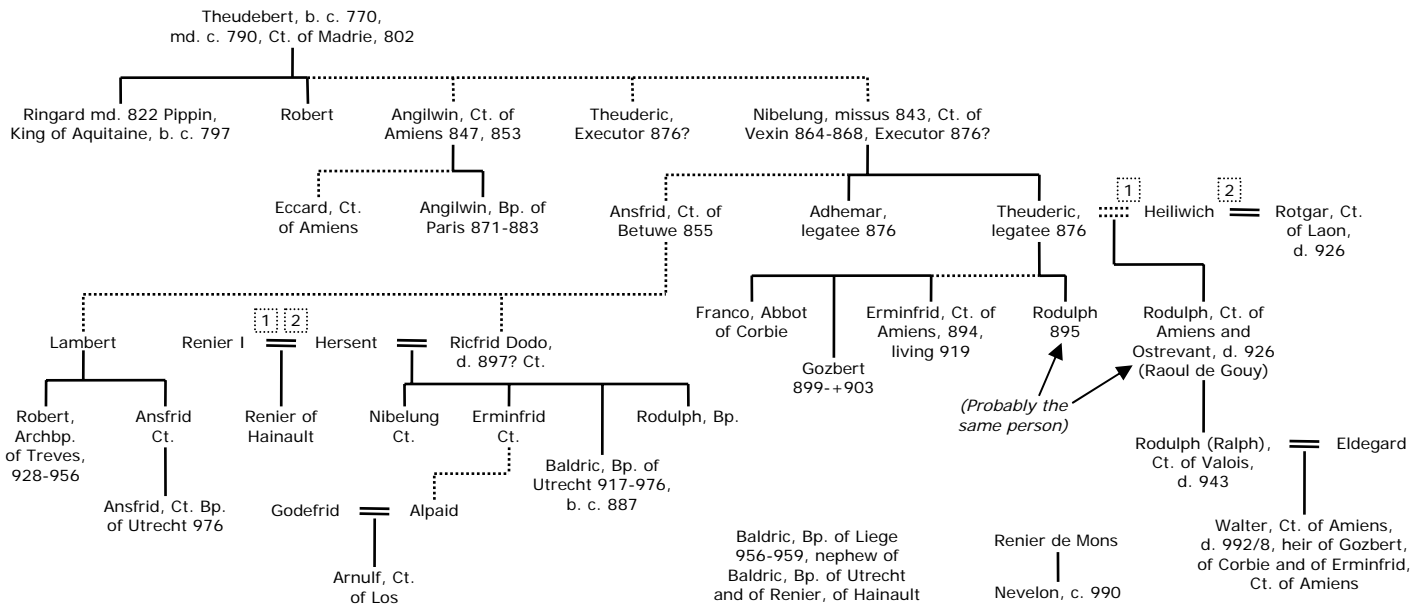


Fig 2. Nibelung descendants of Theudebert, Count of Madrie