



A Companion to the Nibelungenlied (Studies in German Literature Linguistics and Culture)

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Few works of the middle ages can boast the `staying power' of the 'heroic' Nibelungenlied and few have generated more controversy both among scholars and the educated public. The Nibelung theme has been ubiquitous over the past 150 years in a wide spectrum of literary and as well as non-literary endeavors. It was used by Friedrich Hebbel as the basis for one of his best psychological dramas, by Wagner, along with the Old Norse analogues, for Die Ring des Nibelungen, and by the film maker Fritz Lang for his 1920s Expressionist masterpiece, Die Nibelungen. Its heroes provided suitable models for German troops who marched against Napoleon, while by the end of World War II, the Nibelung tradition had provided material for a speech by Göring, the name for Germany's western line of defense, and significantly, the cuffband designation of the last 'division' formed in the elite Combat SS. This Companion to the Nibelungenlied draws on the expertise of scholars from German, Britain, and the United States to offer the reader fresh perspectives on a wide variety of topics regarding the epic: the latest theories regarding manuscript tradition, authorship, conflict, combat, and politics, the Otherworld and its inhabitants, eroticism (in both the Nibelungenlied and Wagner's Ring), the reception both of the Nibelungenlied in the twentieth century and of its most intriguing protagonist, Kriemhild, key concepts used by the poet, the heroic, feudal, and courtly elements in the work, and an analysis of archetypal elements from the perspective of Jungian psychology. BR> Winder McConnell is Professor of German at the University of California, Davis.

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