A HISTORY OF
TRISTAN SCHOLARSHIP

by

ROSEMARY PICOZZI

B.A., University of Reading, 1964

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department
of
German

We accept this thesis as conforming to the
required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1969
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of German

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date 28th April 1969
ABSTRACT

Although a few summaries of the results gained in certain limited areas of Tristan scholarship have appeared, a comprehensive historical study of its development has not yet been made. In this dissertation the ideas and achievements of successive generations of critics are presented and conclusions drawn as to the trends in intellectual history which account for the distinct changes in methods, attitudes and interests.

The opening chapter discusses the theories on the origins of the medieval Tristan romances in oral and literary tradition. After examining the earliest speculations about the geographical birthplace of romance it then presents the views of the Romantics concerning the historical and mythological sources of the legend and the language of the first Tristan poem. As shown in the review of subsequent origin research, opinions about the oral diffusion became sharply divided; when this, the "insular-continental debate," subsided, scholars turned their attention first to reconstructing the archetypal poem and later to interpretation of the extant material.

The first of three chapters dealing with Gottfried's Tristan describes the recovery of manuscripts, studies of the transmission, and preparation of editions. The second surveys the changing patterns in Gottfried criticism up to the beginning of the twentieth century: after an enthusiastic reception among the early Romantics Gottfried's poem, though still admired by the minority which posited mythological origins, was condemned by most literary historians on grounds of immorality and blasphemy. Later critics were preoccupied with eliciting the poet's biography from his work and assessing the extent of his dependence on Thomas of Brittany. The question of Gottfried's
originality maintained its prominent position in twentieth-century interpretations, examined in the next chapter. To most critics the novelty in his treatment lay in the association of Tristan-love with religion, and the problems arising from this relationship were frequently discussed in terms of the medieval "Zeitgeist."

Implicit throughout this study and elaborated in the conclusion are the links between Tristan scholarship and intellectual history. For example, the eighteenth-century idea of human nature influenced the early theories of origins; when the Enlightenment aversion to the medieval period had been overcome, the new interest in history, mythology and the age of chivalry among the Romantics accounted for some approaches to the material, but other attitudes (e.g., denigrations of Gottfried's poem and the lack of interest in producing a reliable edition) reflected current nationalistic tendencies and hostility towards the French—from whom Gottfried borrowed the theme. Later developments (source studies, genealogical research into manuscripts and extant versions, quasi-mechanical reconstructions, biographies) typified the scientific outlook of positivism. Gottfried's independence of Thomas, at first underplayed for political reasons, finally attracted attention in the twentieth century when interpretation became the primary concern among scholars. Both the general interest in finding an adequate definition of Tristan-love and the methods adopted in interpretations of Gottfried's amatory doctrine showed the marked impact exerted by "Geistesgeschichte" on literary criticism. Depth psychology and modern political ideologies (National Socialism and Marxism) have also determined the approach taken by some scholars. It appears that Tristan scholarship is now moving in new directions, for in recent research into the structure and symbolism of Gottfried's poem hypotheses about the metaphysical background have been displaced by intrinsic study of the work itself.
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>THE STUDY OF ORIGINS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>I: The Early Theories on the Origin of Medieval Romance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II: The Studies during the Early Nineteenth Century</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Historical and Mythological Origins of the Legend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) Historical Origins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Mythological Origins</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Language of the First Romance</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III: The Influence of Positivism on Origin Research</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. The Insular-Continental Debate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. The Archetypal Tristan Romance</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV: The Influence of Geistesgeschichte on Origin Research</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V: Conclusion</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>EDITIONS AND MANUSCRIPT CRITICISM OF THE TRISTAN ROMANCE</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BY GOTTFRIED VON STRASSBURG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: 1777 - 1850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II: 1850 to the Present</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III: Conclusion</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>GOTTFRIED CRITICISM IN THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Admiration and Denigration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Early Romantics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. &quot;Lachmann School&quot;</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Mythological School</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II: Positivistic Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Biographical Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Source Studies: The Gottfried-Thomas Relationship</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>III: Conclusion</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>TWENTIETH-CENTURY INTERPRETATIONS OF GOTTFRIED’S TRISTAN</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I: Survey of Interpretations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II: Conclusion</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NOTES</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>A. Location of Complete Manuscripts of Gottfried’s Tristan</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Comparison of the Editions of Gottfried’s Tristan</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

THE STUDY OF ORIGINS

I The Early Theories on the Origin of Medieval Romance

Prior to the appearance in 1785 of the first edition of the Tristan poem by Gottfried von Strassburg¹ familiarity with the story of Tristan and Isolde was gained—directly or indirectly—from German and French prose romances, for the MSS of the medieval metrical romances on the theme had long since fallen into oblivion. The fifteenth-century German Prosaroman,² which was based on the Tristrant of Eilhart von Oberge,³ was first printed in 1484 in Augsburg; it continued to be printed into the seventeenth century, the last known edition appearing in Nuremberg in 1664. In 1578 the romance was included in the Buch der Liebe,⁴ but this collection of prose romances had become so rare by the end of the eighteenth century that, when a new edition of the anthology was being prepared in 1809,⁵ only five copies were known to exist. The French roman en prose,⁶ a vast work composed ca. 1215-35, proved to be much more influential in spreading and perpetuating the story. It became so popular that numerous hand-written and printed reproductions were made into the sixteenth century. In 1479 Sir Thomas Malory drew on and greatly reduced this version of the story for part of his Morte d'Arthur,⁷ which was first printed by William Caxton in Westminster in 1485, and later became one of the main sources for English scholars and poets who took an interest in romance and chivalry. In addition, an abridged form of a sixteenth-century reworking of the roman en prose was given in 1776 by the Comte de Tressan in the Bibliothèque
Universelle des Romans, and again in the first volume of his Corps d'Extraits de Romans de Chevalerie, published in Paris in 1782.

When academic interest in the origins of romantic fiction first arose in the late seventeenth century, it was held that all romance originated in the same geographical area. The problem lay in deciding upon the correct location. The belief in a single point of radiation, which corresponded to the common assumption that climate influenced society and thus also the type of literature produced by that society, steadily gained strength during the eighteenth century. The ideas expressed by the pioneers in this area of research were usually included in discussions on the rise and customs of chivalry, because romance was considered to be the child of chivalry and also because the phenomenon of chivalry as a social institution aroused more interest than did the literary merits of the individual romances. Consequently, among the earliest scholars to foster the antiquarian spirit—men like Thomas Warton in England and La Curne de Sainte-Palaye in France—romances were regarded largely as social documents and pictures of manners. Moreover, by stressing the historico-social values of chivalric romances, such scholars could excuse their preoccupation with the medieval period.

In the Age of Reason, the Middle Ages were commonly held in contempt as barbarous and primitive; as to medieval literature, "men of cold Fancies, and Philosophical Dispositions, object to this kind of Poetry, that it has not Probability enough to affect the Imagination." In Germany disdain for things medieval lasted until the late eighteenth century; indeed, since the Age of Humanism the term Mittelalter had implied "das, was zwischen der bewunderten Antike und der selbstgewissen Gegenwart als eine 'dunkle,' 'barbarische,' 'gotische' Zwischenzeit übrig blieb." It is therefore
necessary to turn to England and France in order to discover early academic discussion of medieval literature and to find the first theories on the origins of romance.

Three different theories on the geographical origins of romantic fiction became popular during this period: the Northern, the Eastern (or Arabian), and the Celtic. An early promoter of the Northern theory was William Temple, who was interested in medieval romance as a phenomenon deriving from the Gothic temperament. In his two essays "Of heroic virtue" and "Of poetry" (1690) he traced the spirit of chivalry and romantic honour, as well as the enchantments and the supernatural in medieval romance, to Gothic manners. In the French scholar La Curne de Sainte-Palaye we find another sponsor of this theory. His Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie, considérée comme un établissement politique et militaire, which he began to write in 1746, include the following statement:

Je n'ai point parlé jusqu'ici des Chevaliers errans, tels que ceux de la Table Ronde & autres, que les fictions romanesques ont rendu si fameux. Les récits que nous lisons de leurs aventures merveilleuses, sont vraisemblablement fondés sur de vieilles traditions, qui étaient elles-mêmes empruntées des origines encore plus fabuleuses des peuples venus du Nord.

Meanwhile the Eastern theory had been proposed by William Warburton, who in 1742 stated that the origin of romance lay in the Orient. In his view, crusaders, pilgrims and the Moorish invaders of Spain had brought Eastern tales from Arabia to the West, where Turpin and Geoffrey of Monmouth then became the fountainheads of romance in Europe. Both the Northern and the Eastern theories were then presented by Thomas Warton in his Observations on the "Fairy Queen" of Spenser (1754). In this study Warton did not indicate which of the two theories he favoured, and con-
centrated instead on his defence of Spenser, chivalry, and especially medieval romances, "for however monstrous and unnatural these compositions may appear to this age of reason and refinement, they merit more attention than the world is willing to bestow" (II, 322-23). Inspired by Warton’s Observations and also by the antiquarian interest of the poet Thomas Gray (who had recovered a large number of Middle English poems), Richard Hurd composed in 1762 his Letters on Chivalry and Romance. Hurd, who held that "the ages, we call barbarous, present us with many a subject of curious speculation," had no first-hand knowledge of the romances and therefore relied heavily on the work of La Curne de Sainte-Palaye. However, he did not share the latter’s views on the origins, subscribing instead to the Eastern theory as outlined by Warburton and Warton.

Unlike Hurd, Bishop Thomas Percy voiced strong objections to Warburton’s ideas, and favoured instead the Northern theory. Percy was the first English critic actually to inspect medieval romances, which attracted his attention because they represented to him one example of primitive poetry; although he planned their publication he failed to accomplish this project. In the "Essay on the Ancient Metrical Romances" published in his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (1765) he wrote:

The opinion . . . seems very untenable, which some learned and ingenious men have entertained, that the turn for Chivalry, and the taste for that species of romantic fiction were caught by the Spaniards from the Arabians . . . and from the Spaniards transmitted to the bards of Armorica, and thus diffused through Britain, France, Italy, Germany and the North. For it seems utterly incredible, that one rude people should adopt a peculiar taste and manner of writing or thinking from another, without borrowing at the same time any of their particular stories or fables, without appearing to know anything of their heroes, history, laws and religion. . . . All the old writers of chivalry . . . appear utterly unacquainted with whatever relates to the Mahometan nations."
Percy pointed out that others who had written on the origins of the "Romances of Chivalry" were seemingly unaware that the first compositions of this kind were in verse, and usually sung to the harp. In his view the romances were lineally descended from the ancient historical songs of the Gothic bards and scalds, and the Normans brought the romances from the North to France. Most of the English metrical romances were translations from the French, but the English did have some original romances of their own. When discussing the sources of the Arthuriad he wrote: "The stories of King Arthur and his Round Table, may be reasonably supposed of the growth of this island; both the French and the Armoricans probably had them from Britain" (p. xviii).

The Welsh antiquarian Evan Evans, one of the leaders of the Celtic Revival which took place during the latter half of the eighteenth century, suggested during his long correspondence with Percy that the Arthurian romances originated specifically in Wales. This, the Celtic theory, was rejected outright by Thomas Warton when he readdressed himself to the question of origins. Taking up certain ideas already expressed in his study of Spenser he now attempted in his History of English Poetry (1774-81) to reconcile the Eastern theory with the Northern. In this literary history—a work of vast erudition, and the fruit of much patient research among old MSS (including those in Paris of the roman en prose)—he maintained that Western romance originated as Eastern fable, for the scalds originally obtained their material from the Arabians. Concordant with these views was his statement that Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle (the Historia Regum Britanniae, composed ca. 1130-36), "supposed to contain the ideas of the Welsh bards, entirely consists of Arabian inventions" (I,102). The climate theory influenced Warton when he formed these ideas:
he claimed that the fertility of fiction and the exotic imagery in romances could not have originated in the cold and barren conceptions of a Western climate.

Warton's theories were vehemently repudiated by Joseph Ritson, who strongly favoured the Celtic theory as proposed by Evans. Included in his initial critique of Warton (1782) was the brief comment that the origin of romantic fiction was entirely due to the Celtic nations, which "had doubtless a very sufficient stock of lies of their own growth," without being beholden to Asiatic adventurers" (p. 4). Ritson's Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy (1802) contained both another outspoken criticism of Warton and also further discussion of the Celtic origins, and on this latter topic he now wrote: "There is no vestige or shadow of any ancient authority that this pitiful nation [Armorica], a small colony from South Wales, or Cornwall in Britain, had any other fiction than such as they had carried over with them" (p. 15).

The growth of the antiquarian spirit and the awakening of interest in the medieval period and its literature took place later in Germany than in Britain or France; Germany was slower in developing the historical sense, in which it was recognized that earlier literatures should be judged from the historical point of view, and with relative standards constantly borne in mind. One of the first in Germany to display this historical sense was Johann Gottfried Herder, and the Romantic movement then brought about a deepening of this sense, and thus also the development of scientific history. Herder felt, for example, that literary history should trace the origins, growth, flowering and decay of literature
according to the different styles of regions, times and poets. From Herder's pen came therefore the first significant German contribution to the study of origins of romance, namely in the fourth part of his Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1791).²³

In this work he discussed the origins and diffusion of the oral Arthurian legends, and also the literary origins of Arthurian romance. He traced the oral traditions to their birth in Wales and Cornwall, and showed how they were further developed in Armorica, whence they then spread over the whole of Europe. The literary origins of the Arthuriad, on the other hand, were French. Combining features of the Northern and the Eastern theories Herder claimed that when the French cultivated the art of romantic fiction they were fed by the twin impulses of the Northern love of adventure and deference for women, and the Eastern interest in chivalry and love. The poets drew on three sources for their literary products: heroic tales of Charlemagne, stories from classical antiquity, and legends of the Round Table, and these last were made available to the poets by the oral legends being circulated in Armorica. In short, Herder discussed three main topics: the first location of the oral legends, their diffusion in oral tradition, and the nationality of the poets in whose hands the legends finally crystallized into written romances.

As Tristan scholarship developed, these topics became the key issues in the discussion of origins. The term "origin research" comprehends all the attempts to elucidate the preliminary forms and development of the legend of Tristan and Isolde in oral tradition, up to its first appearance as a medieval literary romance. There were basically two reasons why this area of research could potentially give rise to a considerable divergence of opinion. On the
one hand the oral traditions were of a fluid and largely indeterminable nature, unsupported as they were by any direct documentary evidence. On the other hand the original Tristan romance was not extant. Critics therefore had to deduce the origins from secondary or derivative material such as Welsh triads, troubadour lyrics, lais, and extant romances.

Herder was familiar with the work of scholars such as Warton, La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, and Percy, and like these precursors in England and France he now introduced into Germany an imaginative interest in the rich cultural heritage of the Middle Ages. Prior to this time the results of the medieval studies of isolated pioneers such as Bodmer, Breitinger and Christoph Heinrich Myller had met with a poor reception, as exemplified by the well-known reaction of Frederick the Great to the first volume of Myller's Samlung deutscher Gedichte aus dem XII. XIII. und XIV. Jahrhundert—a collection which in its second volume contained the first edition of Gottfried's Tristan.

At the turn of the century, however, medievalism became the current coin among the German Romantics. Of the rapid transformation in the German attitude Ludwig Tieck gave an eloquent and apt description in the introduction to his Minnelieder aus dem schwäbischen Zeitalter (1803):

Sehn wir auf eine unlängst verflossene Zeit zurück, die sich durch Gleichgültigkeit, Missverständnisse oder das Nichtbeachten der Werke der schönen Künste auszeichnet, so müssen wir über die schnelle Wandlung erstaunen, die in einem so kurzen Zeitraum bewirkt hat, dass man sich nicht nur für die Denkmäler verflossener Zeitalter interessiert, sondern sie würdigt, und nicht nur mit einseitigem verbildenden Eifer bewundert, sondern durch ein höheres Streben sich bemüht, jeden Geist auf seine eigene Art zu verstehen und zu fassen. . . . So wie jetzt wurden die Alten noch nie gelesen und übersetzt. . . . Man ist in Grundsätzen einig, die man noch vor wenigen Jahren Torheit gescholten hätte, und dabei sind die Fortschritte der Erkenntnis nicht von mehr Widersprüchen und Verwirrungen begleitet und gestört, als jede grosse menschliche Bestrebung notwendig immer herbeiziehen wird.
The awakening of interest in the Middle Ages found expression not only in poetry but also in philology. The recovery of MSS, the preparation of editions, discussions of sources and evaluations of literary products of the past rapidly gained prominence, and these philological pursuits were popular in England, France and Germany concurrently. As a result, this period witnessed the emergence of Tristan scholarship proper. Whether the advances in knowledge were indeed to be accompanied and disturbed by the "contradictions" and "confusions" referred to by Tieck will become clear in the following survey.
II The Studies during the Early Nineteenth Century

A. Historical and Mythological Origins of the Legend

(i) Historical Origins

That Tristan was a figure drawn from ancient British history was accepted as dogma by the early scholars. The idea was first put forward in works compiled during the Celtic Revival, such as the *Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* (1784), the *Myvyrian Archaiology* (1801), and the *Cambrian Biography* (1803), which listed all the known appearances of Tristan (spelt Trystan or Drystan) in extant Welsh medieval MSS. These books were edited by Welsh antiquarians who firmly believed in the high antiquity of the traditions in the Welsh remnants—despite the fact that the MSS did not themselves antedate the thirteenth century. The editors drew a verbal picture of Tristan in whom they found a sixth-century British chieftain and contemporary of King Arthur. Of the many epithets applied to him in these texts, one described him as the mighty swineherd, another named him the lover of Isolde, while Isolde was described as one of the three unchaste women. The triad of the *tri gwrdveichyat* (the three mighty swineherds) in the MS. Peniarth 16 gave evidence of a triangular relationship between Drystan, his uncle March and the latter's wife Essyllt, and as a result the notion held sway for some time that the entire story of the love between Tristan and Isolde as related in the extant romances—in which the most significant features were the love-drink and the tragic conflict with the law—was, like the hero, of insular Celtic origin.

Sir Walter Scott, one of the eminent founders of Tristan scholarship, gave voice in 1804 to his conviction that the legend was based on British history when discussing the origins in the preface to his edition of the
English medieval romance Sir Tristrem. The sources of that version of the legend had already been discussed by John Pinkerton, who in his "Essay on the origin of Scotish Poetry" (1786) had written: "The very first important piece of Scotish poetry we hear of, namely, the Romance of Sir Tristram by the celebrated Thomas Lermont the rimer of Ercildon, was founded on British poetry; Tristram being one of Arthur's knights. This poem, so highly celebrated at the time, was written about 1270, but seems now to be unfortunately lost" (p.lix). The idea that Tristan was indeed one of Arthur's knights was not accepted without demur by Scott. He believed Tristan to be an historical figure, "a celebrated chieftain, who flourished in the sixth century" (p.xxvi) but "whether he really was a contemporary of Arthur, or whether that honour was ascribed to him on account of his high renown and interesting adventures, it is now difficult to determine. . . . That Tristrem actually flourished during the stormy independence of Cornwall . . . may, I think, be admitted, without incurring the charge of credulity" (pp.xxix-xxx). According to Scott, the legend of Tristan and Isolde, "if we may trust the Welch [sic] authorities, is founded upon authentic history" (p.xxvi), and the high antiquity claimed for the Welsh triads was probably justified.

Scott knew that other poems on the Tristan theme had existed in France well before the composition of Sir Tristrem, but he asserted that the story as told in any of these earlier French versions would have been altered and perverted by the diseurs of Normandy. We can understand why Scott then drew a false conclusion concerning the relationship of Sir Tristrem to the continental romances. He erroneously suggested that the author of Sir Tristrem, having direct access to the insular Celtic traditions, brought back to its original simplicity the story which had undergone such a radical alteration
on the continent. As yet it was not known to Tristan scholars that the English romance, like Gottfried's, was based on the work of Thomas of Brittany, and therefore not taken directly from Celtic tradition. Like many later scholars, he considered the possibility that the great French poet, Chrétien de Troyes, wrote a Tristan romance, and referred to an allusion in Chrétien's work to the love-potion. Scott was uncertain as to whether Chrétien actually wrote a romance on this theme, but concluded that, had he done so, "it certainly was in verse, like all his other compositions" (p.xxvi).

Scott anticipated the difficulties that scholars would later face in their attempts to discover the ways in which the Tristan material had been diffused. Indicating that there were two possible routes by which the Arthurian legends might have reached the French poets, he posited the Armoricans and also the Anglo-Normans as the intermediaries: "It is difficult to ascertain whence Chrestien de Troyes procured his subjects. The tales may have passed to him from Armorica: but, as the union between Britain and Normandy was, in his days, most intimate, it seems fully as probable that he himself collected in England, or from English authority, the ancient British traditions which he framed into Romances" (pp.xxxv-xxxvi).

Like Scott, August Wilhelm Schlegel—who in the first years of the nineteenth century succeeded in interesting many of the Romantic poets in Middle High German literature—also held the view that the roots of the legend lay in British history, a conclusion arrived at after he had compared the story with actual historical events. Schlegel's absorbing interest in medieval literature animated the lectures he delivered in Berlin from 1803 to 1804 on the history of Romantic literature, and it was here that he discussed Tristan in the context of the "Brittanische und Nordfranzösische
Rittermythologie." In his view, Arthurian romances originated in the British Isles, and the admixture of insular and continental elements in the Arthuriad was readily explicable if the romances were seen in the light of British history:

In his later essays "Observations sur la langue et la litterature provençale" (1818) and "De l'origine des romans de chevalerie" (1833-34) Schlegel established a more precise historical basis for the Tristan legend. He wrote:

Un trait du roman s'accorde avec des probabilités historiques: Tristan délivre la Cornouaille d'un tribut qu'elle était forcée de payer au roi d'Irlande. Les Danois établis sur la côte orientale de cette île y formèrent un royaume assez puissant pour infester la Grande-Bretagne par leurs expéditions maritimes. Dans le roman, le roi d'Irlande Gormon (Gorm) porte un nom vraiment scandinave. La trop séduisante Yseult, quoique née en Irlande, aurait donc été une princesse danoise. Aussi fut-elle surnommée la blonde. ("De l'origine," pp. 294-95)

He differed from Scott in that he denounced the Welsh texts as being, historically speaking, forgeries: in his opinion the triads had no connection whatsoever with sixth-century British history, nor had their authors been true bards. Rather, the triads were the work of patriotic Welshmen writing in the fourteenth century, "antiquaires passionnés et ignorants; c'étaient enfin des celtomanes, dont les préjugés avaient étrangement effusqué les facultés intellectuelles" ("De l'origine," p.284).
Indeed, Schlegel’s determined scepticism was akin to that of David W. Nash, whose book on *Taliesin* brought Matthew Arnold, the apologist of Welsh literature and the Celtic heritage, to the defence of the ancient traditions which he believed to be preserved in the Welsh texts.\(^{33}\)

Schlegel wrote in these later essays that the Anglo-Normans were the main channel of transmission through which the insular legends had passed to France, where the first *Tristan* romance had then been composed by a North French poet who, as certain geographical features in the extant romances made clear, was well acquainted with the British scene. He held that this romance had at an early date been translated into Provençal, for such a translation would account for the many references to the *Tristan* theme in troubadour poetry. But that a Provençal romance might have antedated the French *Tristan*, as had been suggested by certain French scholars (see below, p. 20) was in his opinion neither probable nor possible.

In 1809 the friends and collaborators Johann Gustav Büsching and Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen together edited a re-issue of the anthology entitled the *Buch der Liebe* which, as was mentioned earlier, included the *Prosaroman* of *Tristan*.\(^{34}\) In the editorial preface the sources were not discussed; nor did Schlegel’s review in 1810 deal with the question of origins, beyond a fleeting reference to the extreme age of the legend.\(^{35}\) However, when Jacob Grimm reviewed the book in 1812 this topic came to the very forefront of discussion.\(^{36}\) Grimm, who regarded the earliest stages in a legend’s development as *Naturpoesie*, the embodiment of an innocence which was later lost in the *Kunstpoesie* (such as courtly romance), dwelt in particular on the origins of the *Tristan* legend. He also discussed the relationships between the extant romances, giving far more accurate information on
the textual relationships than Walter Scott had done eight years previously. He severely criticized Büsching and von der Hagen for having omitted all mention of the appearances of Tristan and Isolde in the ancient Welsh texts for he, like Scott, evidently believed in the authenticity of the Welsh tradition. For Grimm, the geographical location of the episodes in the story furnished additional proof that it originated in the British Isles: "Nur in dem boden des lebens selbst kann die bald in soviel ßste ausgehende sage gekeimt haben, und musz mit der geschichte des landes, wo sie spielt, jedesmal zusammenhängen, in England, Irland und Wales haben wir auch die wiege der unsrigen aufzusuchen" (p. 88). Commenting on the importance of Celtic tradition for the modern student of Arthurian romance he wrote: "Insgemein sollten celtische sprache und tradition . . . bei den romanen von der t.r. [Tafelrunde] nicht vernachlässigt werden" (p. 88). Although he indicated that the legend had spread to the rest of Europe at a very early date, he did not specify the means by which the material was transmitted, nor whether it was in oral or written form, but simply wrote: "Die Normänner scheinen dabei zugetragen zu haben" (p. 88).

(ii) Mythological Origins

While the theory that the Tristan legend derived from British history was steadily gaining ground, other critics were beginning to strike out in new directions in the study of origins. Jacob Bryant's book on the arkite idolatry in Greek mythology was much in vogue at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the influence exerted on Tristan scholarship by this work first became evident in 1809, when Edward Davies, the rector of Bishopston
(Glamorgan), claimed that the legend derived from ancient religions. His book *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*—another product of the Celtic Revival—marked the beginning of the mythological interpretation of the sources of the *Tristan* story. However strong or weak, direct or indirect the link between the Celtic peoples and the fable was generally considered to be, the connection was indisputable. The Mythological School, as we may call this group of scholars, strained this fact to support several literally far-fetched hypotheses concerning extremely remote origins of the legend, and the reasons for its subsequent appearance among the Celts in Europe.

In the Welsh texts Tristan appeared as the third swineherd, and this led Davies to conclude that the legend allegorized that period in British history when the Phoenician rites of the sow were introduced into Cornish religions. These foreign mysteries were regarded as being unlawful and depraved; similarly, "the intercourse of Trystan with his mistress Essyllt, was both adulterous and incestuous" (p. 440). The blonde-haired Essyllt, wife of March, represented the white-maned mare, while March's name derived from the word for horse—the animal symbolizing the sacred ship or ark. Trystan moreover was the son of Tallwch, the deluge, and therefore "a legitimate son of the Arkite religion" (p. 448). Davies concluded that "the notices which the triads have preserved, upon the subject of the celebrated Trystan, are undoubtedly, abstracts of some old mystical tales, which were current among the early Britons. And although the tales . . . have disappeared in the Welsh language, it is evident that they must have existed, and that they formed the basis of certain romantic histories, of the famous knight, Sir Tristram, which are still extant in French and English" (p. 446).
Robert Southey, one of the first to criticize and mock this method of interpreting the origins of the legend, wrote of Davies' study in 1817:

"But this is the utmost wildness of hypothesis." Nevertheless, a number of other critics adopted a viewpoint similar to that of Davies.

The second contribution to the Mythological School was the essay "Über die Bedeutung der Sage vom Tristan" by Franz J. Mone, which appeared in 1821 in the preface to the second edition to be made of Gottfried's romance. Unlike Scott and Schlegel, who maintained that the legend rested upon a firm historical basis, Mone wrote that Tristan was "kein geschichtlicher Mensch, sondern ein verkörpeter Gedanken" (p.XXII), and as such embodied a dualistic principle. Tristan manifested his being in a multitude of different forms, but his one constant attribute was the exposure to a life of suffering. Mone interpreted the fable as having originated as a solar myth, and Tristan, accordingly, was the "Sonnenheld" (p. XXXII).

The next scholar to discuss the legend in terms of mythology was von der Hagen, who in his Minnesinger made ample compensation for his earlier disregard of the sources in his and Büsching's edition of the Buch der Liebe by compiling an extensive list of the basic elements of the legend as they occurred in ancient literatures and mythologies—which he termed "urverwandte ähnliche Sagen" (p. 563)—and by noting in particular the significance of the Welsh traditions: "Überhaupt steht nun in der Walisischen Sage alles ganz mythisch da; und so getrübt und gedrückt auch ihre Überlieferungen erscheinen, so muss man ihnen doch ein höheres Alter, als den Übrigen einräumen" (p. 566). He cited all the appearances of Tristan's name in the Welsh texts, and was of the opinion that these texts were independent of later literary traditions: "So sieht es doch nicht aus wie ein Nachhall
der späteren Englischen und Französischen Dichtung" (p. 567). To Davies' mythological interpretation of the legend, which he summarized, von der Hagen was apparently sympathetic:

So unsicher solche Deutungen sind, besonders wegen ihrer späten Urkunden, und so mancherlei willkürlich und spielend, ohne solche Absichtlichkeit, sich entwickelt, auswächst und ansetzt: so kann man sie doch nicht ganzlich ablängen. Und zumal zeigt sich in diesen auffallenden, unpoetischen Darstellungen und Ausdrücken Zusammenstimmung mit der alten Priestersymbolik des Morgenlandes, auf welches diese Keltischen Überbleibsel einer früheren Bevölkerung Europa's auch bekanntlich in der Sprache so manche nähere Beziehung bewahren. (p. 567)

Remote mythological origins of the Tristan theme were posited also by Hermann Kurtz in 1847. Following von der Hagen and Wilhelm Müller (whose Versuch einer mythologischen Erklärung der Nibelungensage had appeared in Berlin in 1841) he drew a parallel between Tristan and Siegfried, and derived both legendary heroes from the Osiris myth. He held the view that the Phoenicians brought about the spread of this myth: when they left Egypt to settle in areas known to have been inhabited by the Celts, they brought with them their tales of gods and heroes. He refrained from speculation upon the problem of determining the particular branch of Celts which first developed the Tristan legend in oral tradition.

Finally, Edward Tyrell Leith, similarly acquainted with the ideas of the previous mythologists, addressed the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1868 on this subject. Leith traced the legend to an ancient deification of the powers of nature; it was, he thought, an ancient Aryan myth. His interpretation of the fable can serve as an illustration of the extremes to which the Mythological School went in its equations of the story of Tristan and Isolde with primeval mythology. He wrote:
The antagonism between the aged monarch and his youthful heir would be that between the stormy Winter and the golden Spring-tide. Isolde, retaining the character of Earth-goddess ... gives herself up joyously to the embraces of the youthful Sun-god who woos her. The Magic Draught, brought down by the mythic cloud-bird [Brangaene], becomes the welcome vernal shower, through whose life-giving influence the Earth is rendered fruitful. At length bleak Winter returns, and, like Mark, re-asserts his power over the hapless Queen; while the stricken Sun-god dies, or wanders to other lands and seeks another bride. (p. 132)

Leith concluded that the legend had been received more recently from the Celts, and he supplied the missing links between the myth of the ancient world and its "first undeniable traces ... in ancient British lore" (p. 118) by suggesting that the myth "was carried westwards into Britain with the wave of Celtic migration; that it passed at a very early period from thence into Brittany; and that it owed its preservation there mainly to the fact of that province being the last resting-place of the Celtic language in France" (p. 133).

B. Language of the First Romance

Thus far in the nineteenth century the first appearance of a Tristan romance had not given rise to as much speculation as had the genesis of the legend. That the original romance was written in French most scholars accepted without demur. Schlegel, who recognized and condemned this uncritical attitude, gave an explanation for the prevalence of the French theory: "Cette opinion, en effet, avait été adoptée sans un examen approfondi: elle était fondée sur une circonstance accidentelle. Il existe un nombre prodigieux de romans de chevalerie en vieux français, en partie dans des manuscrits d'une date assez ancienne" ("De l'origine," p. 257). A new development came about when certain French scholars put forward fresh ideas
which ran counter to the current opinion. In 1824 La Poix de Fréminville wrote that the Arthurian romances all had a basis in the history of Armorica; the first Tristan romance was composed in "bas-breton" and all the characters in the Tristan story were not invented by a poetic imagination, but drawn from national history by the Armorican Celts: "On ne peut douter que les personnages qui figurent dans ces chroniques, tels que le roi Marc . . . Tristan . . . la belle Yseult . . . n'aient aussi véritablement existé, puisque ces personnages célèbrés par les anciens bardes du pays, se trouvent aussi cités dans les titres authentiques, et dans les anciennes légendes des saints de la Bretagne,"\(^44\) The ideas put forward by this critic were not taken up by any other scholars.

At this time two other French critics were fostering the notion that an early Tristan romance had been composed in the Provençal language, basing this theory on the allusions to certain parts of the story in troubadour poetry of the twelfth century.\(^45\) François Juste-Marie Raynouard did not claim that the lost Provençal romance was the original Tristan, but Claude-Charles Fauriel, on the other hand, did propose that the very first Tristan romance had been composed in the Provençal tongue and that the French versions were translations of this original. He listed the two prose and five metrical versions of Tristan known to him, and suggested that all seven were based on one primitive source. In his search for "le texte primitif" (II, 426) he turned to Provençal literature, "une littérature dans laquelle personne n'a eu l'idée de chercher l'origine, la rédaction première de la fable dont il s'agit, littérature dans laquelle pourtant il est certain que cette même fable fit plus de bruit et plus tôt que dans aucune autre" (II, 432) where the allusions by twenty-five troubadours testified to the fame of the romance
which, he claimed, had been composed in the langue d'oc by 1150. Accordingly, any of the extant versions were translations or imitations of the lost original. This belief in a common source very much anticipated later developments in Tristan scholarship, but at this time passed unnoticed.

Fauriel again foreshadowed later developments by minimizing the significance of Celtic oral traditions for the subsequent literary appearance of the Tristan story: like several of his successors, he paid homage to the creativity and originality of the continental poets:

... cette connaissance des traditions bretonnes se réduisait, pour les romanciers provençaux, à celle de quelques noms propres, dépouillées de toute vie, de toute réalité historique. Les idées, les sentiments, les actes qu'ils ont prêtés aux personnages désignés par ces noms, tout ce qu'il y a de caractéristique dans les compositions romanesques où ils ont mis ces personnages en action ... est méridional et provençal. (II, 447-48)

The ideas of Raynouard and Scott influenced David Irving, who wrote about the Tristan romances in 1829. Like Scott he relied on the "authority of the Welsh annals" (p. 156) as an indication of the extreme age of the fable, and believed that Tristan belonged to "authentic history" (p. 156). Well aware of the difficulties to be encountered when seeking to establish the exact origins of the romance, Irving showed some support of the Provençal theory, writing: "In what language the story was first exhibited, it is not so easy to ascertain; but we learn from competent authority [Raynouard] that a romance of Tristram and Yseult must once have existed in the language of the troubadours" (p. 154). Irving claimed that he had made extensive studies of the relationships between the various Tristan romances, but hesitated to supply his readers with the full fruits of his knowledge, for he despaired of finding "any very considerable number of readers of a taste sufficiently antiquarian" (p. 159).
Fortunately Irving's fears were not shared by his contemporaries. Francisque Michel, for instance, in the introduction to his *Tristan*, recueil de ce qui reste des poèmes (1835-39)—an important addition to the material now being printed—listed a large number of allusions to the theme in extant literature, discussed the extant romances at some length, and traced certain developments in *Tristan* scholarship (in particular the varied receptions and corrections of Scott's theories). However, Michel made only scant reference to the origins of the story at the base of this extensive tradition; in his opinion, the Tristan-Isolde legend formed the subject of songs in Wales and Cornwall: "En Grande-Bretagne, les aventure de Tristan furent d'abord chantées en gallois dans les pays de Cornouailles et de Galles dès les temps les plus reculés; mais il ne paroît point qu'elles aient jamais été écrites en cette langue" (I, xx). When discussing the language of the first romance he (like Irving) followed Raynouard: although an early romance had existed in Provençal one could not ascertain whether or not this was the original *Tristan*. 
III The Influence of Positivism on Origin Research

(A) The Insular-Continental Debate

The theories concerning the insular Celtic genesis of the pre-literary legend (the "first insular theory") and the composition in France of the first romance (the "first continental theory") were of more lasting interest in later Tristan scholarship than was the mythological theory which, despite its great popularity in the early nineteenth century, soon became outmoded. Because the two "first theories" each dealt with a different type of origin (oral and literary) they could be harmoniously reconciled, and the early Tristan scholars were therefore able to subscribe to both insular and continental ideas. In short, it was widely believed that an originally insular Celtic legend of the love-story of Tristan and Isolde had first been transformed into a literary romance in France. But it cannot be said that genuine harmony reigned among the early scholars investigating the origins of the Tristan material. Marked differences of opinion had been voiced among those inquiring into the genesis of romance in general, and of the Tristan romances in particular. The disagreements which bore most significance for future developments involved varying views on the validity of the Welsh traditions in the triads, the occasional questioning of the generally accepted theory of French literary origins, and the dissimilarity of the paths traced for the diffusion of the fable. This last topic, although it failed to arouse much interest during the early period, grew before long into one of the major problems confronting the students of origins.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century positivism dominated intellectual life and thus also medieval scholarship. The combined influences
of nineteenth-century science, the evolutionary theories of Darwin, and the realistic politics of the Bismarckian Empire served to encourage more practical and materialistic trends in art, literature, education, scholarship. Moreover, the idea of development, continuing on from the traditions of Herder and Hegel, converted many domains of thought and research into a study of the history or historical evolution of the particular area of interest. The epoch was oversaturated with history, and source studies ranked high on the academic agenda. It is not surprising that the desire of the positivistic origin researchers was to calculate every single stage in the early history of the Tristan legend. An increasing number of critics commenced work on the origins and were aided in their work by the philological endeavours of their colleagues who were now eagerly editing the extant romances (see below, p. 46).

With so much attention riveted on this branch of research, it was inevitable that new problems would present themselves. At the same time, certain issues unresolved by earlier scholars continued as matters for debate. It was soon realized that no conclusive evidence as to the birthplace of the legend of tragic love could be drawn from Welsh literature. The antiquity of the Welsh tradition was not verified by the literary remains, because these texts might easily have absorbed non-Welsh oral and written traditions. The Welsh tradition was not necessarily older than the texts, Trystan the lover of Essyllt not necessarily a native of Wales. Moreover, even if he were a figure in ancient British history, there was apparently no way of disproving that the few references to his love for Essyllt might derive from foreign sources. Any scholar who still insisted on the authority of the Welsh texts soon faced a further difficulty: the
MSS not only lacked any references to a tragic outcome to the affair, they did not even include the central motif in the romances, namely the love-potion, and thus the story in its primary insular form might possibly have had a plot differing in many essentials from that usually associated with the Tristan-Isolde theme. Tristan scholarship therefore underwent a new development, for the majority of critics, although still considering Tristan to be a native of Britain, now began to seek clues as to the place and period in which the love-theme had been attached to this personage. They attempted also to identify those responsible for the incorporation, and in so doing to discover the true creators of the love-legend.

The locale of the story was found to be no more reliable a prop to support the theory of insular origins than were the triads, as the background was by no means confined to insular Celtic terrain—Cornwall, Ireland and Wales—but included also Brittany or Armorica, the region inhabited by the continental or Armorican Celts. The question now arose as to the respective roles played by the insular Celts and the Armoricans during the legend's early formation. Paramount importance was ascribed by scholars henceforth to the transmission and diffusion of the legend.

The transmission involved a number of debatable issues. Previously it had been assumed that the matièvre de Bretagne (comprising Arthurian romance, Tristan, and lais) had been transmitted from its birthplace in Wales to the French poets chiefly by the Anglo-Normans or the Welsh. However, it now appeared to some critics that the Armoricans formed the most important link in the chain between legend and romance. The Armoricans who accompanied the Normans to England in 1066 could, it was suggested, have there acted as an intermediary between the Welsh and the Anglo-Normans before
later diffusing the legend in France. But when the itinerant Armorican
jongleurs spread the legend in England and France, did they rely entirely
on their own recollection of ancient native Welsh traditions, which had
perhaps been refreshed more recently by renewed contact with their insular
confrères? If this were the case, then the legend was still essentially
insular. But, on the other hand, could it not also be assumed that the
jongleurs made substantial additions, and drew on continental folklore to
embellish the tale? In addition, if the Armoricans were much influenced
by their audience—composed of French and Anglo-Normans—they perhaps
introduced the love-theme into a rudimentary tale of a Welsh swineherd,
knowing that in this way they would better please their audience. It was
of course also possible that the French poets themselves introduced the
love-theme into the older legend. However, if the Armoricans were indeed
the strongest of the missing links between oral tradition and literary ro-
mance, the original material might have undergone considerable development
during its oral dissemination. Thus Tristan—and the whole matière de
Bretagne—was potentially not the Matter of Britain, but the Matter of
Brittany.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the early development of
the matière de Bretagne was one of the most controversial topics under dis-
cussion by Romanists and Germanists alike. Two schools of thought
emerged, each entertaining radically different ideas: one supported the
theory of insular origins, the other that of continental (Armorican and
French) origins. The proponents of the conflicting theories rallied
behind two leaders, and the controversy soon took on the appearance of a
personal feud. Pitted against each other were the French scholar Gaston
Paris (Insular School) and the German Wendelin Foerster (Continental School). The former, who at times combined poetic feeling and imagination with philology, was on the whole less of a positivist than Foerster. The latter felt insecure when not treating concrete facts. As he himself commented on the difference in their attitudes:

Der ganze Gegensatz zwischen uns beiden erklärt sich aus unserer Eigennatur. G. Paris ziehen die dunkeln Periode mit wenig oder keinem Material an und er liebt es, den verschiedenen Möglichkeiten liebevoll nachzugehen und sich auf die unscheinbarsten Dinge stützend Wege zu ersetzen, die in jenes Dunkel Licht bringen sollen; er kann nicht anders, als jeder Schwierigkeit sofort mit einer geistreichen Hypothese zu begegnen und sein Stolz ist es, all dies zu vereinigen zu einem stolzen hoch in die Lüfte ragenden Gebäude, ohne Rücksicht auf die Fundamente und das Material der Bausteine. Für mich ist ein derartiges Arbeitsgebiet ein Greuel, ich verlange festen Boden und stehe jeder Hypothese, mag sie noch so glänzend sein, skeptisch gegenüber—so lange etwas nicht bewiesen ist, muss ich (ich kann nicht anders) es zurückweisen.\textsuperscript{49}

The paper war between Paris and Foerster took place during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, although the general inter-school argument continued into the twentieth. The opposing theories, when reduced to their simplest terms, were as follows. The Celtophile Paris, equating Bretagne with Britain, maintained that the \textit{matière de Bretagne} had originated among the insular Celts. While allowing that some of the material might possibly have reached the French poets by way of Welsh minstrels and Anglo-Saxon conteurs, Paris asserted nonetheless that the romances had been composed in accordance with the \textit{Liedertheorie}\textsuperscript{50} by the Anglo-Normans in England before any were written in France. To Paris, the literary form given to the material by the Anglo-Normans provided the chief means by which it had reached the continent, and French poets such as Chrétien de Troyes were merely translators of the insular romances. Foerster, on the other hand, considered the \textit{matière de Bretagne} to be of continental origin; by Bretagne
he understood Brittany. He regarded the insular Celtic contribution to medieval romance as minimal; he decried the Liedertheorie and also the theory concerning the priority of Anglo-Norman over French literature, became convinced of the creative and transmissive function of the Armoricans, and above all championed the cause of the originality and independence of Chrétien de Troyes.

It is of interest to note the position occupied by Tristan material in this, an argument which actually embraced the whole of the Arthurian material. Paris set up most of his hypotheses on the matière de Bretagne by referring to the oral and literary development of the Tristan story. Foerster, on the contrary, deliberately excluded Tristan from the main body of his argument, and not infrequently his comments were relegated to the footnotes in the introductions to the works of Chrétien, which he was in the process of editing. The reasons for the different emphasis allotted to Tristan by the two critics lay in the first place in Foerster's strict adherence to his dictum of discussing only extant literature ("festen Boden"). To discuss the pre-literary formation and Chrétien's lost romance would mean going against his academic principles. In the second place Foerster's main concern was with the Arthurian romances proper, while Paris bore a wider interest in the entire matière de Bretagne.

Paris' views on the origins of Tristan appeared in a number of articles in French literary journals from 1879 onwards, and were given also in Vol. 30 of the Histoire Littéraire de la France. For the sake of clarity we have grouped his arguments under five main headings: (1) Insular origins of the legend; (2) Oral diffusion by Welsh and Anglo-Saxons; (3) Liedertheorie; (4) Anglo-Norman romance; (5) French romance.
It would be unreasonable to doubt the insular Celtic origins of the story, since it contained numerous elements testifying to its birthplace. Among those easily singled out were the Celtic locale and the names of Morolt and Marke: Morolt was originally a marine monster, and his present name retained the Celtic word for sea, mor, while "le roi Marc, avec ses oreilles de cheval, suffirait par son nom à l'attester (marc en celtique signifie 'cheval')."\(^{52}\) Such onomastic evidence helped to prove that the singular story of love was created solely by the Celtic imagination: "Il faut donc laisser aux Celtes la gloire d'avoir créé . . . l'incomparable épopée de l'amour."\(^{53}\) Furthermore, the source used by Thomas of Brittany was Welsh, not Armorican, because the Breri whom he invoked in his romance was clearly the Welsh bard Bledhericus.\(^{54}\)

The oral diffusion was accomplished not only by the Welsh but also by the Anglo-Saxons, both of whom spread the legend in lais and contes among the Anglo-Normans and also on the continent. Two facts gleaned from extant Tristan material served to show that the Anglo-Saxon hypothesis was correct: the co-existence of the English word gotelef with its French translation chièvrefoil in the one lai by Marie de France which was an episode from the Welsh Tristan cycle, and also the use by the Tristan poet Béroul of English words for the love-potion, namely lovendrins and lovendrant.\(^{55}\) This notion of an English intermediary was further bolstered by the research undertaken by two other Insularists, Léopold Sudre and Werner Süderhjelm.\(^{56}\) Little reference to the legend remained in Welsh literature, because the fable had circulated among the Anglo-Saxons at a very early date, and after 1066 among the Anglo-Normans, was then almost forgotten in its native Wales, and might have perished without the Norman
invasion of England.

(3) Paris applied the Liedertheorie to Tristan in 1881, and remained convinced of its validity for over twenty years. The jongleurs circulated the matièrde Bretagne in their lais, and "plusieurs de ces lais, rapportés au même personnage, finissent par lui faire une sorte de biographie poétique: telle paraît être l'origine des romans consacrés à Tristran." We assume that Paris' fervent Celtophilia was largely responsible for his thinking of the original romance in terms of the Liedertheorie, since he set a far higher value upon the Celtic oral traditions stemming from Wales than upon the romances, and the theory that the first Tristan was simply an aggregate of songs clearly implied that the Celtic imagination was supremely creative and original, and that from it alone sprang the love-story later pieced together by the poets.

(4) A unique literary value was attached to the fragments of the Tristan redactions by Béroul and Thomas, because these were extant MSS of Anglo-Norman romances composed in England. Both poets were writing there during the twelfth century, Béroul ca. 1150, Thomas ca. 1170. Apart from these MSS, Paris had no other evidence to support his Anglo-Norman hypothesis.

(5) All the other Anglo-Norman romances had disappeared without trace, and had been replaced by French translations such as those made by Chrétien. However, in the case of Tristan, the reverse process had occurred: "Chrétien avait composé un poème sur Tristan qui est complètement perdu, tandis que celui de Béroul, qui lui avait peut-être servi de source, nous est arrivé au moins en partie... C'est encore un fait assez rare dans l'histoire de la littérature anglo-normande. Il faut attribuer cette exception à la beauté et à l'incomparable attrait des récits qui en forment le sujet."
It was difficult to determine from the third-hand redactions (for example, Chrétien's works) just what belonged to the original Celtic traditions and what had been added in the Anglo-Norman compilations and in the French translations.

As we now turn our attention to Foerster's arguments it is evident that already in 1884, in his introduction to Chrétien's Cligés, the German scholar was displaying the attitude which coloured his whole view of the origins of Tristan. He there repeatedly emphasized the originality of Chrétien, and lamented the loss of the latter's romance on the Tristan theme "nicht der Fabel wegen... Allein man kann dem Verfasser des Cligés und des Löwenritters es zutrauen, dass er den Stoff ebenso originell modificirt und vertieft haben mag" (pp.xviii-xix). Then in the Löwenritter introduction (which was written in 1887 immediately following the appearance of Paris' contribution to the Histoire Littéraire de la France) he began his counter-attack on the main hypotheses put-forward by the French scholar, and continued it in his prefaces to other works by Chrétien. The five points of Paris were refuted as follows:

(1) In his discussion of the assumed Celtic origins of the legend Foerster stressed the basic difference between the episodes and features in the extant romances on the one hand and the Welsh Trystan tradition on the other. His aim was to demonstrate how far removed from the primitive legend were the French renderings, which were "hundert Himmel weit entfernt... von dem keltischen Stier und seinen Kalbinen" (Erec, p. xxiv,n.*). The essential theme--namely the love between hero and heroine--was not Celtic: "Es kann nichts französisches geben als die Tristan-Ysoltzsche Minne" (Erec, p. xxiv).
(2) He refuted the Anglo-Norman hypothesis, but admitted that he understood the need which had driven his adversary to seek some form of intermediary between Celtic traditions and French romance. Neither critic believed "dass die Franzosen die Artusromanen mit Haut und Haaren von den Kelten übernommen haben" (Löwenritter, p. xxix). At first Foerster stressed the role of Geoffrey of Monmouth as the main channel through which the matière de Bretagne had become known to the French poets; however, because Geoffrey's chronicle did not contain any mention of Tristan, it was of no value in supporting his theory of continental origins of the love-theme. Following the publication of the onomastic researches by Heinrich Zimmer (whose work we shall consider below) Foerster changed his mind on this point and found also a solution to the Tristan problem, for Zimmer (also a Continentalist) laid particular weight on the role played by the Armoricans.

By analogy with the provenance of the strictly Arthurian material, Foerster now concluded that the Celtic traditions in Armorica had provided one of the chief sources for the Tristan romance.

(3) Paris' notion concerning the formation of romances according to the Liedertheorie came under heavy fire. Why Foerster could not tolerate this idea is clear: he always stressed the genius of the individual poet in the act of literary creation; the Liedertheorie, however, could not be reconciled with individual genius. Foerster therefore wrote scornfully: "Man sieht hier nicht ohne Verwunderung die für das Volksepos glücklich abgekannte Theorie Gautiers von dem Aneinanderreihen der cantilènes wie bei einem Rosenkranz wieder aufleben" (Löwenritter, p. xxix).

(4 & 5) Foerster could not second Paris' proposal that the Anglo-Normans composed romances during the twelfth century, after which they were trans-
lated by Chrétien and other French poets, for it threatened to minimize Chrétien's poetic originality: "Christian's Thätigkeit [wird] völlig herabgesetzt, und er zu einem nur in Kleinigkeiten ausschmückenden und völlig beziehungslose Episoden einschiebenden Übersetzer gestempelt" (Löwenritter, p. xxiv). However, although firmly convinced that the Arthurian romances proper had not been given any literary form by the Anglo-Normans, Foerster did point out that due to its exceptional nature the Tristan fable might possibly have formed the subject of an Anglo-Norman romance. He based this idea on the situation in England following the Norman conquest: "Denn der Tristan ist ein den Engländern politisch und national indifferenter Stoff, der sie also durch seinen Gehalt fesseln konnte, ohne sie, wie der schattenhafte, stets siegende König [Artus] der stets geschlagenen und geknechteten Kelten, abzustossen" (Erec, p. xxiv). Reversing the theories of the French scholar he stated that Chrétien wrote his Tristan romance before either Béroul or Thomas of Brittany had treated the subject, and he added that Thomas was an Armorican, who perhaps wrote in England, while Béroul was a French Norman. Foerster therefore concluded: "Also sicher ist nur, dass Kristians Tristan der älteste von allen ist" (Erec, p. xxiv).

We mentioned above that the work of Heinrich Zimmer exerted a strong influence on Foerster. In his onomastic study of the Tristan story published in 1891 Zimmer traced the hero's name to a Pictish source. In the annals recording the Pictish kings he had discovered the name Drest, filius Talorgan which was undeniably related to the Trystan (Drystan) mab Tallwch of the Welsh triads; this etymology, together with the insular Celtic names present in the fable, served as proof of the genesis and early development of the legend among those Celts who were living on the Scottish
border and later in Cornwall. Of the other names in the story he wrote that, while Isolde’s name was of Germanic origin (French *Iseut* < Anglo-Saxon *Ethylida*, pronounced by the Welsh as *Essyllt*), Marke and Rivalin were both Celtic names. Finally, by combining onomatechny, history and imagination, he reconstructed what he assumed to be the original North British version of the *Tristan* fable. The Armorican Celts occupied a place of central importance in Zimmer’s total scheme, both for their share in developing the legend from its rudimentary insular form and also for their having spread it among the French poets. The bilingual Armoricans (or Bretons) who arrived in England in 1066 became familiar with the North British fable; as they spread it further afield, they added their own embellishments to suit their French audience. No diffusive function was ascribed by Zimmer to the Anglo-Normans or the Anglo-Saxons, and in this, of course, he contradicted Gaston Paris. In conclusion, Zimmer wrote: "Die französische Form der Tristan-Sage ist also von Bretonen geschaffen" (p. 83).

Paris, who dealt with Zimmer’s ideas in 1894 in his article "Tristan et Iseut," did not agree with the thesis concerning the possible North British legend, as he felt that the Pictish name alone did not provide a sufficiently strong premise for that argument:

Quant au berceau particulier de notre épopee, il est difficile à déterminer. Le nom de Tristan parait être picte d’origine. Il y aurait quelque chose de séduisant et presque de touchant à croire que l’âme de ce peuple disparu... survivrait jusque dans notre âme, grâce à une des plus belles créations poétiques de l’humanité. Mais la base de l’hypothèse est trop peu solide: peut-être picte d’origine, le nom de Tristan était usité au moins dès le XIe siècle chez les Kymri, et rien ne nous empêche de croire qu’il l’était déjà quand on le donna au héros de notre légende. (p. 155)
This article was Paris' most eloquent contribution to the whole debate, for in presenting his fundamental belief in the Celtic origins of the legend he waxed poetic in his eulogy of these inventors of the love-story: "C'est à la race celtique que revient l'honneur de l'avoir créée. Dans le concert à mille voix de la poésie des races humaines, c'est la harpe bretonne qui donne la note passionnée de l'amour illégitime et fatal, et cette note se propage de siècle en siècle, enchantant et troublant les coeurs des hommes de sa vibration profonde et mélancolique" (p. 141).

Apart from mentioning externals such as the Celtic locale and names, he treated also the legend's "strange barbarity" which was far removed from the Christian, courtly, twelfth-century civilisation as depicted in the French romances:

Les hommes qui ont conçu cette étonnante histoire d'amour menaient une vie presque sauvage. . . . Les moeurs des personnages sont encore plus incultes que leur façon de vivre; leurs âmes, tout impulsives, passent d'un excès à l'autre avec la soudaineté des barbares. . . . Il n'y a pas dans ces âmes violentes la moindre pénétration de la morale chrétienne (sauf dans des épisodes visiblement postiches). (pp. 145-48)

The veneer of alterations, additions and refinements in the French versions could therefore be stripped off to reveal the Celtic savagery and also the pre-Celtic substrata in the story, namely the realm of myth—a title under which Paris bracketed many features in the fable, for instance the solar hero, the Theseus parallel, magic and marvels, though he dismissed as false the theory of earlier mythologists that the legend could be derived from an Indo-European myth anterior to the racial separation of the Greeks and Celts, and wrote that "aujourd'hui on n'oserait émettre une telle hypothèse" (p. 153). The Celts integrated certain oriental and classical motifs into the legend, but its essential theme, namely the story of love and death, was the more recent creation of the Celtic soul and formed "une des gloires de leur race" (p. 154).
This article by Paris met with a hostile reception in the opposite
camp; in the year that it appeared (1894) it was strongly criticized by
d'Arbois de Jubainville, whose comments, together with Paris' reaction to
them, will serve to exemplify further the inter-school argument. He
refused to accept one single word of Paris' claim that the love of Tristan
and Isolde was Celtic, maintaining that "le type de l'amour illégitime,
tout-puissant... est une création française du XIIe siècle" (p. 407),
and that the social situation in twelfth-century France easily explained the
nature of the Tristan story, for at that time women acceded to fiefs and
therefore had the means to reward imaginative poets who attuned their tales
to their tender taste: "On parlait d'amour à la femme, à la riche héritière,
et on lui faisait croire qu'on éprouvait ce sentiment d'une façon irresistible.
Si elle doutait, on lui faisait lire Tristan et Iseut" (p. 408). Refusing
to be dissuaded by such arguments Paris countered in 1895:

Le rôle des femmes, comme protectrices des poètes... est incontestable; mais le désir de leur plaire aurait-il suffi à faire
inventer la merveilleuse histoire dont il s'agit... à des gens
chez lesquels on constate une stérilité d'invention (sauf dans le
détail) aussi complète que chez les contemporains de Wace et de
Chrétien de Troyes? Si l'amour de Tristan et d'Iseut n'est pas
celtique,—et je crois qu'on peut soutenir qu'il l'est avec une
grande vraisemblance,—il faut qu'il soit germanique, car il
n'est certainement pas français.

The argument with Zimmer which initiated these polemics between Paris
and d'Arbois de Jubainville was continued shortly afterwards by Ferdinand
Lot, who had espoused Paris' cause. Writing in 1896 Lot rejected Zimmer's
theory that the Armoricans were chiefly responsible for the formation and
dissemination of the matière de Bretagne, for "l'influence des Celtes
insulaires a été beaucoup plus considérable, et même vraiment prépondérante,
dans la transmission des éléments du cycle arthurien."" L'Armorique... est
loin d'avoir la part prépondérante que lui accorde M. Zimmer. . . .

Ce n'est pas sur le continent, c'est dans l'île qu'il faut chercher les traits essentiels et primitifs" (p. 28). In contrast to Zimmer he rendered probable the insular Celtic origin of names and saga-material contained in the matièr% de Bretagne, and replaced the derivation of the heroine's name from Anglo-Saxon Ethylda by a Welsh etymology proposed by Joseph Loth, also a member of the Insular School, namely Isolde < Welsh Essyllt. The legend truly originated only with the introduction of the Cornish king, Marke (who already was a legendary figure) into the Pictish story of Tristan and Isolde, and the Welsh were responsible for the welding together of Pictish and Cornish legends. He dismissed the possibility that the amalgamation had taken place already among the Scots (they were too distant) or the Cornish (Marke, the Cornish king, played far too odious a role in the story), and concluded: "C'est donc à [les Gallois], jusqu'à preuve du contraire, que nous persistérons à attribuer la création de la grande épopée d'amour du moyen âge" (p. 28). However, because Lot did not exclude entirely the integration of Armorican elements, he opened a way for agreement between the two schools of thought. For example, he wrote that Thomas of Brittany utilized both Welsh and Armorican sources; the name Rivalin in his version offered evidence of the Armorican influence. In discussing the diffusion Lot attempted to reconcile Paris' Anglo-Norman romances with Foerster's Armorican jongleurs and French poets—an attempt which was immediately denounced by Foerster. 69

Lot's basic ideas were adopted by Eduard Wechssler, but he went so far as to posit the former existence of a series of Arthurian romances written in Welsh—an idea which, according to Foerster, was instigated by Joseph Loth. 70 As proof of the insular literary sources Loth had singled
out the use by Chrétien and other poets of certain geographical and personal names which betrayed that influence. He cited, for instance, the occurrence in French of the name *Iseut aux blanches mains*, and explained that this was a faulty translation by the French poet of the Welsh name *Esselt minwen*, meaning the white-lipped. Although in his view the insular traditions provided the main sources for the poets, Loth did not exclude the possible influence of Armorican traditions on the development of the material. But, like Ferdinand Lot, he ascribed far less importance to the Armorican contribution than did Zimmer. Thus, despite the uncontested existence of Armorican saga-elements in the story, he endeavoured above all to show the significance of the insular Celtic elements for establishing the origins of the *Tristan* legend.

Another scholar making frequent contributions to the study of origins at this time was Wolfgang Golther, who at first seemed to be a staunch ally of Foerster and the Continentalists. When evaluating the Celtic element in his earliest studies of the legend he completely rejected all possibilities of a primary insular Celtic form, because in his view names and semi-historical references gave inadequate and unconvincing testimony to Welsh origins, and he therefore concluded: "Die Tristansage [ist] als eine französische Schöpfung aufzufassen." He held that the story derived from widely divergent oral traditions and literatures, but felt that access to many of these would not have been available to the Celts; the French, however, were far more advanced in intellectual and literary concerns, and thus more receptive to these foreign traditions. They alone possessed the ability to join and weld together the many disparate elements of international folkloric traditions: "Germanen, Nordleute und Angelsachsen und Kelten haben Sitten und Sagen hergegeben, aber der Schöpfer und Dichter bleibt der französische Normanne" (p. 350).
Golther’s negative evaluation of the Celtic element naturally caused other scholars to rush to the defence of the insular Tristan tradition; the comments of Ernest Muret, Karl Bartsch, Gaston Paris and Wilhelm Röttiger typify this reaction. Muret, though he shared Golther’s views on other topics relating to Tristan—for example, both held that Eilhart did not translate Béroul—avowed that "en dépit de l’habile argumentation de M. Golther, je demeure persuadé que le fond principal en est emprunté à une légende bretonne." Bartsch wrote: "Und da will es mir scheinen, als wenn der Verf. dem ursprünglichen keltischen Elemente zu wenig Spielraum eingeräumt hätte. Denn so viel auch das 12. Jahrh. von französischer Anschatung in die Sage hineingetragen hat, so bleibt das doch nur ein Außerer Firmaiss, der über den alten Stoff von ganz anderem Charakter gezogen ist." Paris stated: "Il [Golther] persiste à restreindre autant que possible la part de l’élément celtique dans la légende de Tristan, et je persiste ... à trouver qu’il la restreint trop." Röttiger raised objections to the generalizations and contradictions which resulted from Golther’s prejudiced attitude, and from his insistence on apportioning at all costs the lion’s share to the French.

That his argument concerning the origins had not been expressed with sufficient clarity and persuasive power in the early discussions was a fact which Golther was swift to recognize, and from now on he constructed his arguments more methodically. In 1890, in the article "Zur Frage nach der Entstehung der bretonischen oder Artus-Epen," he distinguished between three different stages in the historical development of the material: "1. Die Sagenbestandteile, 2. die Sagendichtung, 3. die vorhandenen alt-französischen Epen aller Art" (p. 212). The insular Celts now had a certain limited value within his scheme: "Die Kelten-Briten kommen nur für Punkt 1
in Betracht, insofern sie sehr viel Einzelstoff, aber durchaus nicht allen von ihrer Seite aus beitrugen. An eine zusammenfassende Bearbeitung haben sie nie gedacht, das bleib den französischen Dichtern des 12. Jahrhunderts vorbehalten" (p. 213). The disparate elements of the first stage were woven together to form stage two (Sagendichtung) at the moment when they were seen in the light of a single unifying theme, such as the biography of a central character like Tristan. Golther believed the producers of this second stage to be the true creators of romance: these were the Armorican jongleurs. Both the insular Celts and the French were responsible for collecting and transmitting the various elements of the primary stages to these anonymous, bilingual, eminently creative continental jongleurs in England, who then informed them with the unifying idea. The versions produced in stage two were soon afterwards adopted and adapted by the French court poets: "Die gereifte Frucht ihrer Bemühungen erntete der ritterliche Kunstdichter" (p. 216).

Golther's theories can be reduced to the following schema:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>RACE</th>
<th>LOCALITY</th>
<th>ACCOMPLISHMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Sagenbestandteile</td>
<td>Celts &amp; French</td>
<td>England &amp; France</td>
<td>Acquisition &amp; Transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sagendichtung</td>
<td>Armoricans</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>Unification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Epen</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Romances for Courtly Audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Golther, when considering the formation of Tristan in the framework of this tripartite system, now no longer apportioned the lion's share to the continental Armoricans and the French; rather, as he wrote in 1900, "insbesondere die kymrischen Zeugnisse und alle Gründe, die für Wales sprechen, sollen nicht mehr übersehen bleiben." This more tolerant outlook can be attributed to the results gathered in the interim by other researchers such as Röttiger, Paris, Zimmer and Lot. His argument now rested on the novel theory that the Tristan legend was essentially double-textured: it was a compound of two originally distinct stories, an historical tale (in which the main event was Tristan's "Holmgang mit Morolt" [p. 12] in the Scilly Isles) and a fairy-tale love-story. If the first component, history, were considered separately from the second component, romance, then on the one hand the Celtic origins and on the other the French additions would become clearly visible: "Im ersten Teile finden wir keltische Namen und Örtlichkeit, woraus eine gewisse zeitliche Begrenzung für die Entstehung sich ergiebt, im zweiten Teil tritt uns die aus einem Märchen entwickelte Liebessage mit dem Minnetrank entgegen" (p. 2). An historically attested Pictish prince had been assimilated into Cornish history and legend; the insular Celtic story, in which the love-theme played no part, existed in Wales already in the ninth century. The fusion of the love-story with that historical tale was accomplished by the Armoricans, who learned of the story of Tristan, Marke and Morolt from their insular confrères, translated it into French, and supplemented it with the love-story with their French audience in mind. They also introduced Brittany as the background to certain events, and this move caused the geography of the legend to become extremely confused. Both versions, the Welsh
and the Armorican, were known to French writers such as Marie de France, Béroul and Thomas. According to this theory the Armorican jongleurs were more than mere oral diffusors of a legend to which they made little in the way of original contribution, for the part they played was essentially creative and of paramount importance for the development of the material: "Im gegeben Falle dürfte die Liebessage ihr Beitrag sein, den sie mit dem rein wälischen Tristanstoff verschmolzen" (p. 6).

As becomes clear in a review of Golther's research into the origins, he was very flexible in his opinions, being easily influenced by the conclusions reached at that time by other scholars. His views on the identity of the first Tristan poet also underwent considerable modification. Originally he accorded the laurels to Chrétien de Troyes: "Die Vermutung Foersters... Christiens Tristan sei der älteste von allen und er habe den Sagenstoff aus der Bretagne erhalten, gewinnt hohe Wahrscheinlichkeit" ("Bemerkungen," p. 7). However, he later found that this had been an over-hasty decision on his part, and in 1907 admitted: "Der Name des Tristan-dichters wird wohl immer im Dunkel bleiben."\(^7^9\)

By the end of the nineteenth century the Insular-Continental argument was threatening to stagnate. Its prejudiced practitioners were engrossed in an intellectual war-game, for which both sides employed similar tactics, and constantly obtained widely differing results—results determined of course by the affiliations of the individual scholar. We need only recall in this context the onomastic studies which had been pursued \textit{ad infinitum}. Elaborately constructed hypotheses tottered upon the slimmest of evidence, and neither victory nor truce seemed forthcoming. Students of origins had arrived at an impasse. Clearly, if scholarship were to progress, there was
a pressing need for a fresh, more productive and uniform method of studying
the early history of the material. But this new approach could be inaugurated
only if some form of solid structure were introduced, upon which future
research could then rest. A solution was found when, in the opening years
of the twentieth century, there emerged the practice of constructive—or
rather reconstructive—research into the origins of Tristan.

One final word must be said before turning to this new development.
The actual results gathered from the vast amount of research made during
the inter-school argument, though conflicting in many particulars, had
nevertheless made a positive contribution to Tristan scholarship. Advances
had been made in the fields of onomastic and toponymic research, and light
had been shed on the numerous possible sources for the features and episodes
in the fable. The words of Foerster therefore form a fitting conclusion to
this résumé of his feud with Paris:

.... verdankt man nicht gerade diesem Widerstreit die meisten
Entdeckungen? Man vergleiche dasjenige, was man vor meinen
anfänglichen Negazionen (Cliges 1884) Über die Artuslitteratur
wusste, mit demjenigen, was jetzt, durch meine Gegengründe
veranlasst, von so vielen Seiten (auch ich glaube pro virile
parte beigesteuert zu haben) schon an Sicherem beigebracht
worden ist. (Karrenritter, p. XC)

(B) The Archetypal Tristan Romance

By the turn of the century the idea had begun to win the favour of
several scholars that, as had been suggested at various times previously,
and as textual comparisons of the extant romances seemed to show, an
"archetypal" Tristan had been the common literary source for most, if not
all, of the extant versions. Scholars now employed in philology a method
typical of this scientific, positivistic epoch and attempted to deduce the contents of the original Tristan (which was variously called the archétype, poème primitif, Ur-Tristan, and estoire, and to which we shall refer as the archetype) by analytical work upon the extant versions.

Golther indicated how great was the importance attached to such work when he wrote in 1907: "Das nächste Ziel aller Tristanforschung muss also jenes verlorene Urgedicht sein, weil nur dadurch die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Sage und nach ihrer literarischen Entwicklung entschieden werden kann" (pp. 38-9). This development in scholarship brought about a partial improvement in the situation about which George Saintsbury had made a justifiable and timely complaint in 1897 when he wrote the following:

> But of the originals, and of the legend as a whole, the knowledge is too much limited to those who see in that legend only an opportunity for discussing texts and dates, origins and national claims. Its extraordinary beauty, and the genius which at some time or other, in one brain or in many, developed it from the extremely meagre materials which are all that can be certainly traced, too often escape attention altogether, and have hardly, I think, in a single instance obtained full recognition.80

Although affiliations to the Insular or Continental School were still reflected in Tristan scholarship, "national claims" now began to be tempered with a feeling of respect for the poet of the archetype, regardless of his identity, who had created this romance in a conscious, artistic act. This feeling was intensified and became more widespread due to the fact that critics in this, as in other fields of medieval study, were abandoning the Liedertheorie.

Of the chief failings in this kind of research one lay in the blinkered approach to the extant romances (or the "originals" to which Saintsbury referred). Because attention was concentrated upon the conjectural archetype, these originals claimed attention not on account of their literary
merits but instead as instruments useful for ascertaining the contents of
the first romance. Furthermore, the basic assumption that the contents
of the archetype could be deduced by means of textual comparisons of the
works assumed to have derived from it was highly questionable. Even
Golther, who in 1907 gave a plot summary of the Ur-Tristan, recognized
that such an undertaking was not without its faults and therefore wrote:
"Da keine einzige ungetrübte und unmittelbare Quelle vorliegt, gelingt der
Versuch natürlich nur im allgemeinen und ist für Einzelheiten bei weitem
nicht so zuverlässig, wie die Wiederherstellung des Thomasgedichtes aus
der deutschen, englischen und norwegischen Bearbeitung" (p. 39).

Beginning with Joseph Bédier the discussion of "texts and dates,
origins and national claims" was combined with a positive appreciation of the
fable's beauty and the recognition of the accomplishment of the first poet
who transformed the legend of oral tradition into a literary romance. The
attempts of Bédier (1905)81 and Golther (1904, published 1907)82 to repro-
duce the story as it might have appeared in the common source were the
first significant products of the new approach to the question of origins.

The work of Bédier typifies the period of transition at the beginning
of the century: he profited from the recent developments in related areas
of Tristan scholarship and made a notable contribution to its future. He showed
a great interest in restoring the medieval versions of the legend. In
1900 there appeared his version of the Tristan story in modern French
prose based on the version by Béroul.83 The point of departure for his
second undertaking was provided by the theory proposed in 1878 by Eugen
Kölbing84 that Gottfried's poem, the English Sir Tristrem and the Norwegian
Tristramssaga were based on the work of Thomas of Brittany: in 1902 he
reconstructed in modern prose the missing parts of the romance by Thomas of Brittany and combined this reconstruction with an edition of the extant fragments of Thomas’ version. Finally he determined the plot of each episode in the archetypal romance or poème primitif (1905), and it is this last accomplishment which deserves most consideration in this context. Textual comparisons formed an essential part of the preliminary research for these reconstructions, and Bédier was therefore much indebted to the recent editors of Tristan material. In 1877 Franz Lichtenstein edited Eilhart’s Tristrant; the following year there appeared Kulbing’s edition of Tristrams Saga ok Ísondar, and the same scholar’s edition of Sir Tristrem was published in 1882. In 1886 Henri Morf’s edition of the Berne Folie Tristan was printed, and Muret’s edition of Béroul’s work appeared in 1903. Eilert Løsseth wrote in 1890 a critical summary of the contents of the vast roman en prose, based on his research into the numerous MSS and printed versions. No critical edition of the entire French prose romance was available, nor has any yet been made. Bédier, however, published "Les parties anciennes du roman en prose française" in the second volume to his Thomas edition (1905). The edition of the remnants of Thomas' romance in Francisque Michel’s collection (1835-39) was superseded by Bédier’s own work of 1902. Only as these editions of the primary versions became available could a serious study be made of the relationships between the various redactions. For example, owing to the lack of a reliable edition of the roman en prose, the importance of that romance for a study of the origins had long been overlooked; one of the few who recognized the value of that version for a clarification of the early history of the material was Wilhelm Röttiger, who compared it in 1897 with the poems of Eilhart and Thomas.
As early as 1886 Bédier had stated that a single literary source was used by the French writers of Tristan romances, and had suggested also that one could reconstruct that common source by comparing the versions of Béroul, Eilhart, Thomas and the roman en prose (as preserved in MS. 103). He drew up a simple chart showing the relationships between these versions:

```
common source
   /\          /
  /  \        /  \\
Béroul  Thomas
       /\      /\
  /  \  /  \\
Eilhart Roman en prose (MS. 103)
```

This genealogical table was reproduced in a somewhat modified form in 1905 (p. 192) to serve as an illustration of his theory that the five primary versions proceeded--directly or indirectly, but independently of each other—from the lost archetypal romance, x.

```
x
   /\          /
  /  \        /  \\
Folie Tristan  Thomas  Roman en prose
       /\      /\
  /  \  /  \\
Y
    /\      /\
  /  \  /  \\
Béroul Eilhart
```

He also supplied a genealogical table in this volume to illustrate a more complex set of relationships which existed between the common source, the primary versions, and subsequent redactions (p. 309).
His theory that the French poetical tradition was founded not upon a compilation of loosely related *lais* or *contes* but upon one regular poem resulted from his comparison of the five primary versions: he had selected those features which, as determined by reasons of taste, feeling and logic, appeared to be primitive, and had made the following discovery:

... toutes les fois que la comparaison pouvait porter sur trois textes au moins, les traits que, pour motifs de goût, de sentiment, de logique, nous estimions primitifs, étaient des traits attestés par les trois versions ou par deux au moins d'entre elles. Inversement, les traits que, pour des motifs de goût, de sentiment, de logique, nous estimions remaniés et récents, apparaissaient isolés dans une seule des versions comparées. (p. 192)

He then determined the contents of each episode in the common source in a mechanical reconstruction "où jamais n'intervient notre choix" (p. 193):

Par suite, notre entreprise changeait de face. Il ne s'agissait plus, pour des raisons logiques ou des impressions de goût, toujours suspectes, de choisir entre les diverses versions de chaque épisode les traits qui nous semblaient primitifs. Il suffisait de dresser, mécaniquement, une Table des concordances et une Table des variantes. A la table des concordances, nous mettons tout ce qui est donné par deux versions au moins. A la table des variantes, nous reléguons tout ce qui est isolé dans une seule version. (p. 193)

Although Bédier was the first to make such a reconstruction the idea of a lost, archetypal Tristan romance was no innovation. His immediate precursors in this line of research, Muret and Golther, had in 1898 and 1900 respectively set down their ideas on the common source both verbally and graphically. Bédier, unlike these two scholars, deliberately excluded the hypothetical versions of Chrétien and Robert (Le Chèvre) from his scheme. "Ces deux romans ... sont perdus: qu'y pouvons-nous?" (p. 308, n. 2). He accorded to these two lost romances only the same value as the x and y in his table. He rejected also Muret's thesis that Chrétien's Tristan was the model for Eilhart and the roman en prose, arguing instead that the intrinsic courtly manner of style
and conduct in the extant works of Chrétien would belie his ever having written in the necessarily crude and primitive fashion of the first romance.

Bédier claimed that the archetype was composed prior to 1154, by which date the troubadours were well acquainted with the story, and he suggested moreover that a much earlier date of composition was possible. "Les traits archaïques et cette rudesse des moeurs si souvent remarquée dans les aventures centrales de la légende permettent de le faire remonter plus haut, et jusqu'aux premiers temps de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands" (p. 314). He did not feel that the language of the first romance could be ascertained, and wrote: "Que le poème primitif ait été anglais, anglo-normand, ou français, il nous suffit d'avoir établi qu'il a réellement existé et d'en avoir à peu près retrouvé le canevas" (p. 317). In this way he shifted the emphasis from the national claims, and put more weight on the actual existence, no matter in what language, of the archetypal romance.

By producing his "canevas" or outline-sketch of the lost work Bédier hoped to restore the legend in its original beauty, in its "archaic grace, more beautiful than all the romances derived from it,"95 and thereby to demonstrate the genius of its creator, whose work surpassed undeniably that of all the later redactors. "The primitive poet alone was the sovereign poet" (p. 127). Bédier's sympathetic approach to the archetype, his appreciation of its ancient grace, was representative of his whole attitude to the development of the Arthurian romances. In 1891 he had voiced a similar opinion when he wrote: "Les romans de la Table-Ronde sont aux lais primitifs et aux anciens poèmes sur Tristan ce que le style flamboyant est au gothique pur: la substance manque."96 To Bédier there could ensue after the creation of the first romance only a pitiful deformation; later poets tried without
success to preserve parts of the primitive story (such as the betrayal by the dwarf and the life in the forest) and their failure was both "lamentable and ridiculous" (p. 126). He did recognize a certain beauty in the versions by Thomas and Gottfried, but these last were even so essentially remouldings, "the reduction to the tone of court poetry, the transposition into the 'precieux' [sic] manner, of a poem originally foreign to the 'precieux' and courtly mind. Charming and exquisite as they are when they embellish and soften the inventions of the primitive poet, these remoulders are great only when they preserve [these inventions] without daring to touch them" (p. 127). This attitude marks Bédier as a neo-Romantic; indeed, a direct line can be traced from Jacob Grimm's comments of 1812 (above, p. 14 and below, p. 90) to those of Bédier nearly one century later: both discovered more genuine poetry (Naturpoesie) in the earlier form of the fable than in the Kunstpoesie with its polished, courtly elegance.

Beside working on the archetype Bédier did study the pre-literary history of the material. He reiterated the thesis that the first stage was Pictish and the second Welsh, and rejected the idea that the story was a survival of ancient myths. Of the later history he admitted his uncertainty, but following previous scholars he postulated a transmission during which "la légende a passé directement ... à ces jongleurs armoricains qui chantaient et contouraient dans les châteaux normands d'Angleterre" (p. 129). Bédier also repeated the well-worn theory that the Norman conquest was directly responsible for bringing the Armorican jongleurs into contact with the Welsh, thereby bringing about the further spread of the legend. One of the most demanding tasks facing Bédier was the attempt to determine the actual content of the Welsh legend before and during the
period of transmission to the French, for upon this depended his thesis
that the fable in the archetype and later redactions was in essence a
non-Celtic creation. It was in the discussion of this topic that Bédier
displayed most clearly his strong continental leanings. Subjecting to
a careful scrutiny all those elements which Gaston Paris had singled out
as being authentically Celtic (in his "Tristan et Iseut" of 1894) he concluded
that any elements which withstood his scrutiny were indisputably Celtic,
but nonetheless free from all traces of the central theme of the story now
associated with the names Tristan and Isolde, namely the conflict of love
and law. The primitive Celtic legend could have told only of a "dissem­
bling woman and her lover, famous for his mastery in all the primitive
arts, duping a jealous and powerful husband" (p. 110), a theme typical of
the Celts' "brutal, half barbaric stories" and of their "violent tales
stained with blood," a story in which Tristan appeared "like the hero of
a sort of barbaric 'Decameron'" (p. 110).

He proposed that the Celts could not have invented the central theme--
the permanent and fatal conflict of love and law--for it relied upon the
existence of a social law, a moral code foreign to the Celts, namely the
indissolubility of the marriage bond. The story could not have been con­
ceived by a people who, as documentary evidence (e.g. Howel the Good's
Laws and Institutions of Wales) proved, looked upon marriage as the most
easily broken of ties. Because the central characters could not have
thought or felt as their congeners had never thought or felt, neither the
insular nor the Armorican Celts had ever possessed a great romance of love
about Tristan and Isolde. The Welsh and the Irish transmitted lais con­
cerning Tristan, but these were, he presumed, simple stories of adultery.
Only when the story of their love and its conflict with the law was given form in a biographical romance was the real Tristan legend called into life—and this was the achievement of the poet who composed the archetype.

Wolfgang Golther prepared his reconstruction of the story told in the archetypal romance (which he named the Ur-Tristan) in 1904, one year before Bédier's was published; however, Golther's work was printed only in 1907, in his book Tristan und Isolde in den Dichtungen des Mittelalters und der neuen Zeit. Golther's aim, as the title suggested, was to furnish "eine Betrachtung sämtlicher mir bekannten und erreichbaren Tristandichtungen bis auf die Gegenwart herunter. . . . Es sollte gezeigt werden, was unter den Händen guter und schlechter Dichter jeweils aus dem Stoffe ward" (pp. 11-12). This marked a new departure in Tristan scholarship, and involved considerable research into the history of the material in medi­eval and modern times. It was at the same time an endeavour typical of the "positivistische Sammelwut" which Golther displayed again in his contribution, in 1929, to the Stoff- und Motivgeschichte.

Because Bédier and Golther had been working independently on identical projects, the latter felt that the overall similarities between their results vouched for the correctness of their basic assumptions and recon­structive methods. In certain respects his outline of the plot differed from that given by Bédier, and while in some cases Golther amended his work in order to tally with Bédier's archetype, on other points he pre­ferred to differ. There is, however, one striking difference between their works. Bédier named five primary versions upon which he drew for the contents of the lost romance, namely Béroul, Eilhart, Thomas, roman en prose, and the Folie-Tristan. Golther used only the first four of these; he wrote:
"Die erhaltenen Tristangedichte setzen ein Urgedicht voraus, dessen Inhalt durch Vergleichung von vier untereinander unabhängigen Zeugen--Eilhart, Berol, Thomas, Prosaroman--gewonnen werden kann, das aufgeschrieben wurde und in Bearbeitungen handschriftlich sich fortpflanzte, das also ein literarisches Denkmal war" (p. 67). He omitted the Folie Tristan, and gave the following reason for this decision: "Da Thomas von Tristans Narrheit nichts weiss, ist zu vermuten, dass sie in seiner Vorlage, dem Urgedicht gar nicht vorkam. Mithin halte ich Tristans Narrheit nicht für einen Bestandteil des ursprünglichen Tristanromans. Bédiers Ausführungen (II, 287ff.) haben mich nicht überzeugt. Ich glaube, wir müssen die Folie ausschalten, um den ursprünglichen Schluss wiederzugewinnen, der viel kürzer war, als Bédier annimmt" (p. 66).

It is not necessary to discuss here the views expressed in this book concerning the pre-literary formation of the legend, as they were in essence a repetition of those outlined above (p. 41). At this point it must be stressed only that Golther believed in the continental origins of the love-theme, for within the next six years of Tristan scholarship two critics in the Insular School were to further their claim to the origins. These two scholars were Joseph Loth and Gertrude Schoepperle.

As became clear in the discussion of the studies of Loth (p. 37) his allegiance lay with Gaston Paris and the Insular School. Now, after applying himself to a further study of the medieval romances, he published his results in a series of articles in the Revue Celtique from 1909 to 1912, which were then collected and reprinted. In the chapter entitled "Le drame moral de Tristan et d’Iseut est-il d’origine celtique?" he opposed Bédier’s theory that the moral conflict was a French innovation, supporting
his arguments by referring to Celtic (Welsh) legal and literary documents. Loth had also made fresh discoveries concerning the significance of the Cornish elements in the fable, and these discoveries shed light on the origins of the legend and of the romance. Prior to this time the possibility that the legend might have originated among the Celts living in Cornwall had escaped the attention of scholars; the Pictish name of the hero had led to the assumption that the fable, of North British origin, had only at a later date become localized in the more southern areas of the British Isles. Loth now wrote that the fable was indeed known to all the insular Celts, but that the particular version propagated in Cornwall some time before the Norman conquest was the original legend at the base of the literary tradition. He arrived at this conclusion after identifying proper names (especially place names) in the redactions by Béroul and Thomas with Cornish names and localities, and also by pointing out that the unique trilingualism in Cornwall—French, Cornish (Celtic) and English were all three spoken there—made of that locality the ideal cradle for the fostering of the fable. To Loth, the Cornish theory established beyond doubt that Gaston Paris had not been mistaken when, in 1902, he had proposed that the first romance had been written in English. Even Bédier had not excluded this possibility, but of the three who suggested it—Paris, Bédier and Loth—only the latter further elaborated upon the idea. He concluded: "Il est impossible de chercher au roman de Tristan une autre patrie que l'Angleterre." Loth believed that the insular origins had now been established once and for all:
Il faut renoncer à Tristan Picte, à Iseut, fille de Viking etc. Pour la première fois le lieu d'origine d'un roman de la Table Ronde et du plus important de tous, est fixé avec précision. C'est la ruine de la théorie non-celtique, je serais presque tenté de dire anti-celtique, de l'origine de la matière de Bretagne. (p. 309)

Meanwhile the idea of a common literary source had undergone a new development in the hands of Rudolf Zenker. Already in 1872 Hermann Ethé had called attention to a parallel between the eleventh-century Persian epic \\textit{Wis} and \\textit{Râmîn} and the \textit{Tristan} legend.\textsuperscript{102} More critics had discussed the similarity, and in the year 1911 Zenker, acknowledging with Bédier the necessity of postulating some kind of archetype, asserted that either this source could be identified as the Persian romance, or alternatively, that the archetypal \textit{Tristan} romance and \textit{Wis} and \textit{Râmîn} both derived from an earlier common source.\textsuperscript{103} Zenker's theories have recently been revived by Franz R. Schröder.\textsuperscript{104} When first expounded, however, they met with some severe criticism, particularly from Gertrude Schoepperle, who shortly after put forward a quite different theory of her own.\textsuperscript{105} Schoepperle, who traced the fable's development up to its first literary appearance, fostered the notion that a Celtic aithed or elopement-story, similar to that of the Irish tale of \textit{Diarmaid} and \textit{Grainne}--a saga mentioned as early as the tenth century--formed the nucleus of the legend. She furnished proof for her well-documented argument by culling an array of analogues from Irish literature, and laid special emphasis on Irish motifs in \textit{Tristan} such as the imram or voyage. In her view "the story of Tristan as it was first conceived, and conceived in no less of tragic beauty than in the forms in which we now have it, was Celtic" (p. 469). Carrying further the ideas already propounded by other critics about the common source she wrote that a lost French poem (which she named the estoire)
was the source of some, but not all, of the romances. She claimed that Béroul, Eilhart, Thomas and the author of the Berne Folie Tristan depended on the estoire. Her thoughts on the subject contrasted with those of Bédier and Golther, for, unlike the other two, she did not feel that the roman en prose and the continuation of Béroul derived directly or exclusively from this common source, because, in her estimation, parts of these seemed to preserve traces of a version anterior to the estoire.

Schoepperle's most radical departure from Bédier and Golther came when she stated that she did not consider it possible to make an adequate or accurate reconstruction of a common literary source from its extant derivatives. Furthermore, she criticized the method employed by Bédier, who frequently included details from Eilhart "in violation of the conditions of the method which he had set for himself... At other times he had disregarded both his method and the more primitive character of the Eilhart version to include an especially charming trait from Thomas. M. Bédier's reconstruction is not based entirely, as it purports to be, upon a mechanical comparison of the traits of the different versions and a preference for those which are supported by two or more redactions. It is constructed in accordance with the considerations of taste, sentiment, and logic which appear in his discussions" (pp. 7-8). She felt moreover that the lost poem had not been as artistically perfect as Bédier supposed. In her view Eilhart's version, along with the fragments of Béroul, best represented the lost source. (Bédier interposed a redaction \_ between the archetype X and the Béroul-Eilhart tradition; see above, p. 47). Schoepperle therefore retold Eilhart's version, using simple English prose. She excluded from her study any discussion of the transmission of the material from the Celts to the French:
"On the question of the channel of transmission . . . it seems to us premature, in our present knowledge of the history and literature of the Celtic countries in the Middle Ages, to pronounce" (p. 475). Nor did she try to determine the additions made by the poet of the estoire when he appropriated the Celtic material.

Jacob Kelemina, another staunch member of the Insular School, published the results of his investigations in his Geschichte der Tristansage nach den Dichtungen des Mittelalters (Vienna, 1923), a review of the material's history which resembled that given by Golther in 1907, but which did not contain the post-medieval versions of the legend. To Kelemina, the Irish sagas to which Schoepperle drew attention furnished the most reliable evidence for the Celtic genesis of the legend, because these antedated both the Welsh triads and the Persian epic. He openly defended also Gaston Paris by writing: "Auf den keltischen Ursprung des Liebesromans hat z. B. G. Paris . . . hingewiesen; die spätere Forschung hätte diesen richtigen gewiesenen Weg nicht mehr verlassen sollen" (p. 199). Thus, while the bias of Golther's collective summary was continental, that of Kelemina's work was decidedly insular. Kelemina thought that it was evident that an archetypal romance had actually existed, but he—like Schoepperle—doubted whether a restoration was possible or even advisable as a scholarly undertaking (p. 220). However, if any such reconstructive attempts were to be made in the future more attention should be paid to the roman en prose, which in his opinion preserved much of the original romance.
IV The Influence of Geistesgeschichte on Origin Research

In Friedrich Ranke, one of the eminent Tristan scholars of this century, Schoepperle found a sympathetic disciple who openly acknowledged his indebtedness to her Celtic researches. Ranke's aim in his Tristan und Isold (1925) was to retell the story as it appeared at every period in its development from the oral through the literary tradition of the Middle Ages, and he based the first three chapters of his book on Schoepperle's comparisons of the extant material with Irish literature. Schoepperle had furnished the Celtic motifs without forming them into a coherent legend, and Ranke now linked all these motifs together in an attempt to reconstruct the oral tradition. The great weakness of such an undertaking, as Ranke himself admitted, lay in the assumption that "Motivvergleichung" (p. 1) could restore a fluid oral legend. But, undaunted, he challenged other scholars to produce a more adequate rendering of the original fable. His markedly insular affinities led him to claim that the triangular relationship (Tristan-Isolde-Marke) existed already "in der Dämmerung alter keltischer Sage und Dichtung" (p. 3). Describing the fable's early development among the Celts he showed by what means the imram and aithed had been joined together. The imram (Tristan's voyage to an island where his wound, recently inflicted by Morolt, is healed by the latter's sister, who then falls in love with him, and Tristan's solitary return to Cornwall) and the aithed (the flight of Tristan and his uncle's wife to the forest after the enamoured Queen Isolde has cast a spell on the warrior Tristan; their Waldleben, and their death, when the dying hero kills Isolde and thus avenges the loss of his honour) at one time formed two separate and distinct
stories, their only connection being that Tristan appeared in each. However, when an unknown poet who probably was living in Cornwall introduced in the first half of the twelfth century the motif of the love-potion into the legend of Tristan and Isolde, these two disparate episodes were artistically blended to form a tightly-knit whole, and the relationship between hero and heroine was set on an entirely different basis: "Der Sinn der neuen Erfundung ist klar: durch den unwissend getrunkenen Liebestrank ist beiden Liebenden in gleicher Weise jede sittliche Verantwortung für ihr Handeln abgenommen; schuldlös werden sie durch den Zaubertrank immer tiefer in Schuld verstrickt" (p. 15); "jetzt erst konnten die ursprünglich ohne innere Verbindung einander folgenden beiden Handlungen, die Fahrt zur heilenden Fee und der Fluchtmarsch, zur geschlossenen Einheit, konnte die heilende Jungfrau, die Todfeindin des Morholdtöters, zur Heldin des Liebesromans werden" (p. 16). The name and nationality of the creator of this, "das älteste Tristan-Epos" (p. 8), would remain a riddle:

War der Dichter Franzose... Oder war es ein keltischer Erzähler, dem durch die Berührung mit der romanischen Welt der Sinn für die strengere Form und die klareren Linien geweckt war, und wurde sein keltischer Prosaroman erst später in französische Verse umgegossen?--Doch wie es sich damit auch verhalten mag: fragen wir nach dem eigentlichen Schöpfer des mittelalterlichen Tristanromans, so kann für diesen Ehrentitel ernstlich nur der Dichter in Betracht kommen, der den Liebestrank erfand und die getrennten Motive der ältesten keltischen Dichtung durch die kunstvolle Szenenbrücke des Mittelstücks zur grossartigen epischen Einheit zusammenschloss. (p. 21)

There is one outstanding and highly significant difference between Ranke's work and that of Golther and Kelemina, all three of whom traced the inner development of the legend through its numerous hypothetical and known versions. Ranke was the first to advance the thesis that the history of the
material clearly reflected the changing spiritual climate ("Geistes- und Kunstenwicklung," p. 2) of Western Europe:

Der Tristanroman begleitet die Entwicklung des Liebesproblems im Abendlande von den naïveren Verhältnissen der Frühzeit zu der tiefgehenden Erotisierung der ritterlichen Gesellschaft um die Wende des zwölften zum dreizehnten Jahrhundert, und weiter zum Durchbruch der bürgerlichen Gesittung, die für die gefühlvollen Übertreibungen der höfischen Zeit kein Verständnis mehr hatte. (p. 1)

The attitude displayed by Ranke must be seen in the framework of the developments in intellectual thought in Germany at this time. Scientific positivism had now begun to be replaced by Geistesgeschichte, which sought to explain literature in terms of a Zeitgeist. This Zeitgeist was a quintessential spirit of the time, an intellectual atmosphere or climate of opinion, a unitary force abstracted largely from the characteristics of all cultural and other activities of man. The gradual turning away from positivism and the adoption of the geistesgeschichtliche Methode (the philosophy of Geistesgeschichte as a basis for literary criticism) exerted a strong influence in all branches of Tristan scholarship. The interest in origins diminished rapidly in the twentieth century, while investigations into the spirit of the times as revealed in extant literature became increasingly important.

The final contribution to origin research to be considered in this chapter, namely the work by Bodo Mergell entitled Tristan und Isolde. Ursprung und Entwicklung der Tristansage des Mittelalters (Mainz, 1949), well exemplifies the application of the geistesgeschichtliche Methode to Tristan criticism, and demonstrates also the change of direction in scholarship. For Mergell, the legend's hypothetical origin ("Ursprung") was less important than its later known development ("Entwicklung"). His principal
aim was to gain "einen Überblick über den Weg, den, geistesgeschichtlich gesehen, die in diesen Dichtungen sich manifestierende Tristansage von ihren Anfängen bis zum Hochmittelalter als ein Stück abendländischer, von französischem und deutschem Geist getragener Bildungs- und Ideengeschichte genommen hat" (p. 9). As he traced the fable's history he drew structure-charts of the conjectural and extant versions, and in so doing he extended the preliminary structural analyses made in 1933 by Arthur Witte ("Der Aufbau der ältesten Tristandichtungen"). Witte, taking Ranke's book as his basis, had shown that a certain structural development accounted for the expansion of the content of the story, and had maintained also that this structural theory would vouch for the correctness of Ranke's reconstructions. Witte based all his theories on the "Wille zur Doppelung" (p. 165) or duplication of motifs found throughout the material. Where, for instance, Ranke viewed the *imram* and the *aithed* as being originally separate and distinct, Witte wrote: "Hier haben wir es vielmehr mit einem einheitlich aufgebauten, wohl ausgewogenen kleinen Kunstwerk zu tun. Die innere Verbundenheit der beiden Teile liegt . . . vor allem in dem Stilwillen zur steigernden und abwandelnden Doppelung" (pp. 166-67). Mergell now wrote concerning Witte's research: "Dieser von Witte gewiesene Weg stilkritischer Betrachtung lässt sich . . . noch weiter verfolgen" (p. 13). Mergell illustrated both verbally and visually his own thesis concerning the symmetrical, architectural composition of the fable as it expanded from *Ur-Tristan* to the extant romances. In addition, because he believed that Chrétien composed the first romance, he included structure-charts of the extant works by that poet.

According to Mergell the "älteste Tristandichtung" consisted (as Witte suggested) of *imram* and *aithed* artistically joined together, and the
Zeitgeist inherent in that first stage of the legend's development was that of the "Epoche der Romanik" (p. 200). There was evidence not only of duplication of motifs and Celtic elements, but also of specifically French formal principles as shown in the central composition: "[Es] bedurfte, damit diese keltischen Gestalten literargeschichtlich wirksam wurden, ihrer Gestaltung und Erhöhung durch romanische Formkunst . . . die sich schon in der Fügung der ältesten Dichtung kundgibt" (p. 18). The first romance, on the other hand, was situated "zwischen Hochromanik und Frühgotik" (p. 200). After making similar equations between the particular Zeitgeist and the extant versions he concluded: "Tristansage wie Tristandichtung sind, nach Gehalt und Form, Ausdruck der nämlichen geschichtlichen Wandlungen mittelalterlichen Geistes" (p. 203).

Since Mergell's work appeared in 1949 no significant study of the genesis and early development of the Tristan fable has been made. In 1951 Bruno Panvini, who sought to resuscitate the Liedertheorie, suggested that the legend first spread abroad in lais and Latin chronicles ("delle narrazioni prosastiche, cronistiche, celtiche, scritte in latino, quelle che prima da sole e poi insieme con i lais hanno tramandato e diffuso la leggenda di Tristano")--but this suggestion was immediately quashed by a fellow Italian, Camillo Crocetti. It remains to be seen whether or not Schröder's recent Persian hypothesis—which can be viewed as an extension of the early eighteenth-century Eastern theory—will radically alter or in any way affect the current theory that the oral legend, of insular Celtic origin, was transformed in the hands of an unknown poet whose literary creation became the basis for most of the subsequent medieval redactions of the story of Tristan and Isolde.
V Conclusion

The foregoing survey of theories on the origins of Tristan yields in the first place the certain knowledge that those origins resist definition. In the second place it demonstrates that the history of scholarly inquiry into the early development of the Tristan story falls into four well-defined periods and that the character of each has been determined largely by the contemporary state of intellectual thought.

During the first period, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the medieval Tristan romances were known for the most part only indirectly, and the story of Tristan and Isolde was classified as forming part of the Arthuriad. The primary aim at this time was to identify the geographical source from which romances of chivalry (including the Arthuriad) first sprang. The three main theories propounded by the early scholars, namely the Northern, the Eastern and the Celtic, reflected in their very diversity the great uncertainty of the pioneers working in this branch of scholarship. During this, the pre-Romantic era, scholars with antiquarian interests constituted a distinct minority.

With the emergence of Romanticism however a significant change in scholarship was effected: first-hand knowledge of the romances was encouraged by Romantic medievalism, and when Tristan criticism proper began several distinct trends soon appeared in the study of sources. Of those discussing the oral tradition, some sought a basis for the legend in actual historical events, while others explained the genesis by drawing parallels to ancient mythologies, the latter interest gaining dominance in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although various links between oral legend and literary romance were suggested, the transmission did not give rise to any argument
at this time. Furthermore, the general view that the first Tristan romance was written in French went largely unchallenged, and any minor differences of opinion did not occasion heated controversy. The interest of the Romantics lay in the poetic and philological renewal of medieval literature rather than in a discussion of its prehistory.

The third period, extending from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth, assigned overweening importance to the historical development of the Tristan material. This shift of emphasis was due to the marked impact exerted on scholarship by positivism. At this time, Tristan scholarship consisted largely of painstaking philological enterprises and searching source studies. During the course of the inter-school debate, when the Insular School and the Continental School championed their respective theories concerning the matiègre de Bretagne, the primary aim of Tristan scholars was to discover the identity of the person or persons who first introduced into the rudimentary legend the love-theme as we now know it. Although interpretations of extant Tristan material were necessarily hampered by the one-sided nature of the positivistic endeavours, the great advances made in the study of origins were beneficial to Tristan scholarship. The spate of Tristan editions occasioned by the contemporary philological pursuits greatly aided critics in the early twentieth century when they began their quasi-mechanical reconstructions of the story as it might have been told in the oral legend and in the first romance. It was now held that the original romance or archetype was not formed in accordance with the Liedertheorie—as had been proposed by certain earlier scholars—but that this was the literary creation of a single poet, and furthermore that the archetypal romance provided the common source for most, if not all, of the extant medieval versions of the fable.
The heyday of origin research was reached by those scholars who were influenced by the positivistic approach to literature, and interest in this branch of scholarship soon faded with the encroachment of the geistesgeschichtliche Methode. In this, the fourth period, histories of the material concentrated chiefly on the known development, i.e., on the extant romances. This history was traced not only thematically and structurally, but also spiritually, for each stage in the development of the Tristan fable was interpreted as being symptomatic of the Zeitgeist. The removal of emphasis from the study of origins had a positive effect, in that it allowed interpretation to come to the fore in Tristan scholarship.
CHAPTER TWO

EDITIONS AND MANUSCRIPT CRITICISM OF THE TRISTAN ROMANCE BY GOTTFRIED VON STRASSBURG

I 1777 - 1850

When the recovery of the MSS of Gottfried's Tristan began in the late eighteenth century, the first MS to become widely known was that in Florence (F). In 1777 Bodmer's pupil, Leonhard Meister, wrote: "In der magliabecchischen Bibliothek in Florenz liegen unter anderm die Codices von den zwey Gedichten Twein und Laudine, und Tristran von Brytannie . . . das letztere hat zween Theile und zween Verfasser. Den ersten Theil verfertigte Gottfried von Strassburg, den andern Heinrich von Vriberc," and Bodmer also drew attention to this MS in his Litterarische Denkmale von verschiedenen Verfassern. Bodmer knew in addition that another MS of the romance was to be found in Strassburg, and wrote in 1780: "Von Goetfrit von Strassburg ist ein schöner Nachlass in der Johanniterbibliothek zu Strassburg aufbehalten." The earliest public mention of the Munich MS. (M) was made in 1782 by Johann Christoph Adelung in the Magazin für die deutsche Sprache. When the first edition of Gottfried's Tristan appeared it was based (indirectly) on the Florence MS.

The editor, Christoph Heinrich Myller, was a younger friend of Bodmer, and he had offered to continue the publication of Middle High German literature begun by the Swiss scholars Bodmer and Breitinger; he had presented his plan to the public in 1780 in the November issue of the Deutsches Museum. Despite the prevalent lack of interest in the literature of the
medieval period enough subscribers had been found to cover the cost of printing, and the first volume of his Samlung deutscher Gedichte aus dem XII. XIII. und XIV. Jahrhundert appeared in Berlin in 1784. Undismayed by the ungracious response of Frederick the Great, Myller proceeded with his preparations for the second volume. Published in 1785, this contained among other works both Gottfried's Tristan and Heinrich von Freiberg's continuation of that romance.

There were several defects in this edition. As Myller himself admitted, he did not use MS. F but instead the "Abschrift, welche der löbliche Canton Zürich hat nehmen lassen" (p. 141). The first 102 lines of the romance were lacking in F and thus also in this copy which had been deposited in the Zürcher Staatsarchiv. Furthermore, not only was the copy itself highly inaccurate, but also the edition contained numerous printing errors. Bernhard Joseph Docen, one of the earliest adulators of Gottfried's Tristan (see below, p. 88), was well aware of the deficiencies in the work, and planned to rectify the situation. In 1807 he wrote accordingly: "Diesem Übel aber hoffe ich in kurzer Frist abzuhelpen, da ich eine neue Ausgabe dieses unvergleichlichen Gedichtes übernommen habe." However, Docen was but the first of several scholars who expressed such an intention but failed to carry it out.

By the time Eberhard von Groote published a new Tristan edition (1821) several more MSS had been brought to light. H (Heidelberg) was taken to the Vatican from Heidelberg by the French at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was first mentioned in 1796 by Friedrich Adelung. In 1816, however, this MS was returned to the University Library in Heidelberg. In 1815 von Groote recovered B (Cologne), which
originally belonged to "den Schätzen des Schlosses Blankenheim in der Eifel, die in den Stürmen der französischen Revolution zerstreut und verschleppt wurden," and after his death the MS was taken into the Kölner Stadtbibliothek, "und von da in das Hist. Archiv der Stadt Köln."¹¹ Von Groote bought O (Cologne) from Oberlin in 1815 in Paris, and this MS also was eventually placed in the Cologne archives. N (Berlin) was found by Jacob Grimm in Paris in 1815 after it too had been removed from the Blankenheim collection during the French Revolution (which von Groote termed the "Invasion der französis. Barbaren," p. LXX). This MS was subsequently placed in the Royal Library of Berlin. Leo von Seckendorff learnt of R (Brussels) and wrote in 1810: "Noch eine Hs. des Tristan, auf Pap. in Fol. mit Bildern, befindet sich, nach E. Brentano's mündlicher Anzeige, in der Gräf. Birresheimischen Bibl. zu Koblenz."¹² As von Groote then recorded in 1821: "Sie wurde mir durch die Güte ihres jetzigen Besitzers, des als Kenner und Eigenthümer vorzüglichster Sammlungen von Kunstwerken und Altenthumern [sic] aller Art rühmlichst bekannten Grafen von Rennes, auf lange Zeit geliehen, und so war ich im Stande das Facsimile sowohl der Schrift, als auch des als Titelvignette darin vorkommenden Blattes, welches Tristan in voller Rüstung zu Pferde darstellt, zu liefern" (pp. LXXI-LXXII). Of the Vienna MS. (W) a description of such details as its script, abbreviations, capitals, lines per page and punctuation were supplied in 1810 by Seckendorff (pp. 631-32), and he gave the first 102 lines of the romance from W because (as previously mentioned) this section was lacking in F and thus in Myller's edition also. He listed the variants between W and F as far as l. 899, but the planned completion of this list was cut short by his death. Recognizing the potential value of W for a
new edition of Gottfried's work, Seckendorff wrote: "Da diese Handschrift den Müllerschen Abdruck nicht bloss in Sprache und Orthographie, sondern auch im Sinn häufig berichtet, so verdient sie bei einem künftigen neuen Abdruck durchaus verglichen zu werden" (p. 632).

Thus far we have mentioned only the complete MSS of Gottfried's Tristan which became available to the early scholars. Whereas the complete MSS usually formed part of private collections before they were finally acquired by civic or university libraries, the fragments on the other hand were more truly discovered, usually in book-bindings, as "die traurigen Reste ehemaliger, durch die unbarmherzige Hand des Buchbinders zerstörter Handschriften, deren man zum Einbinden anderer ... Werke sich bedient hatte." The first such fragment to become known was m, identified by Docen in 1807. This is sometimes referred to as fragment D. He described the fragment in some detail, and also gave its variants from F. Another fragment found at an early date was w, which Seckendorff published in 1810. Shortly after von Groote had edited the romance a third fragment was discovered: this (l) was published by Johann Gustav Büsching in 1826.

The second Tristan edition (1821) marked a considerable advance on the first. Von Groote examined several MSS during his preliminary study: "Mir führten günstige Zufälle, deren [der Handschriften] mehr zu, als bisher bekannt waren, und vielleicht je wieder an einem Orte zusammen-gebracht werden" (p. LXXIII). Those to which he had direct access were the following: H (Heidelberg), B (Cologne), N (Berlin), O (Cologne) and R (Brussels). He knew F only from Myller's edition, and though he had heard of M (Munich) and W (Vienna) he could not use these for his work. Had circumstances permitted, the editor would willingly have followed up Seckendorff's suggestion that W should be utilized for a new edition of
the romance: "Ich muss daher um so mehr beklagen aller näheren Verbindung
mit Wiener Gelehrten bey dieser Bearbeitung gänzlich entbehrt zu haben,
as es nicht unwahrscheinlich ist, dass jene Handschrift wohl verdient
hätte vor allen andern der Ausgabe des Gedichtes zum Grunde gelegt zu
werden. Es hätte dazu aber entweder des Codex selbst, oder einer guten
Abschrift desselben bedurft, zu deren Beschaffung zunächst keine Aussicht
eröffnet war" (p. LXIII). Von Groote relied most heavily on H, and justified his choice as follows:

Da ich es inzwischen für sehr wesentlich halte, einen guten Text
nach einer bewahrten Handschrift mit möglichst enger Abänderung
zum Grunde zu legen, mir jedoch zur Erlangung des Florentiner
Codex, oder einer guten Abschrift desselben eben so wenig als
bey dem Wiener ein Mittel zu Gebot stand, dafür aber der Senat
der Heidelberger Universität mit zuvorkommender Bereitwilligkeit
mir den Gebrauch jener, unter Nro. 360 . . . Handschrift
gestattete, so glaubte ich unbedenklich vor allem dem Texte
der letztern bey meiner Ausgabe folgen zu müssen. (p. LXIV)

Listed in this edition were the variant readings from FBNOHR, and a few
from W made available to the editor by Jacob Grimm. Von Groote displayed
an unscholarly attitude in using Myller's edition as his source of the
variants in F, for that he was well aware of the corrupt nature of the
text in that earlier edition was shown in the following remarks: "Manche
Weglassungen und Schriftfehler mögen wohl dem Schreiber des Codex zu
Last fallen; die vielen grösseren und kleineren Unrichtigkeiten aber,
welche den Abdruck bei Myller nicht nur entstellen, sondern fast unbrauch-
bar machen, dürften wohl der Unkenntnis des Zürcher Abschreibers und des
Correktors des Druckes Schuld zu geben seyn" (p. LXVI).

The fragments were neither utilized nor even mentioned by von Groote,
but the third editor of Gottfried's Tristan, von der Hagen, made full use
of them. He published much of the Tristan material in 1823, and advanced
beyond the work of previous editors by studying the complete MSS. MWF at first hand. Von der Hagen was aided in his preliminary work by Scherer's copy of M, Schottky's research on W, Wackernagel's study of O, and his own collation of F against Myller's edition. However, because von der Hagen's edition lacks the critical apparatus it is of little or no value from the point of view of textual criticism; it offers only the text of the poem since the supplement of variants which he had already prepared for publication were accidentally destroyed:

Bei meiner Ausgabe von Gottfrieds Werken . . . habe ich alle mir bis dahin zugänglichen Hdss. unmittelbar verglichen . . . Eine Lesartensammlung sollte den Beschluss machen . . . Von dieser Ausgabe war schon 1822 Gottfrieds Tristan mit beiden Forts. gedruckt, als mit der Druckerei in Oels die ganze Auflage in Flammen aufging, so dass ich nur das einzige Exemplar in den Aushängebogen davon behielt. The fourth editor was Hans Ferdinand Massmann, who used a total of eight complete MSS and the fragment D; he studied in particular the three MSS. MHW, and for the edition which was printed in 1843 relied for the most part on H. "Von diesen Handschriften sind MHW aufs Neue sorgfältig verglichen worden. M ist offenbar die älteste . . . Über ihren inneren Werth hingegen lässt sich wenig günstiges sagen . . . Diese Handschrift war daher nur behutsam zu gebrauchen . . . In nahem, doch nicht erstem, Verwandtschaftsgrade zu M steht H, ist aber weit besser und sorgfältiger, und verdient überhaupt unter allen Handschriften den ersten Platz" (p. 591). This edition of the romance was at best semi-critical, because Massmann supplied in the Lesarten only the variants in MHW; he gave as his reason the fact that von Groote (who also based his edition on H) had already given the variants from the other MSS. And, despite the fact that the variants which Massmann chose to list were far fewer in number than would have been the case had he furnished a complete Variantenapparat, he failed
to present even these variants from MHWF in a scholarly manner. The method which he adopted was described by the editor as follows: "Wir sind darin anfangs ausführlicher gewesen, um dem prüfenden und sprachforschenden Leser die Schreibweise der Handschriften anschaulich zu machen. Später hinein genügen mehr die wesentlichen Textabweichungen" (p. 592).
II 1850 to the Present

When faced with a choice among MSS the early editors of Gottfried's *Tristan*, since they had no clear idea of the "Überlieferung" or transmission, tended to single out one MS for their text as being most representative of the original. The transmission as such went largely ignored until the heyday of positivism in *Tristan* scholarship. In the latter part of the nineteenth century painstaking systematic research became the order of the day, and from now on the transmission was subjected to careful analysis. The first attempts to classify the MSS were made when critics sought to correct the variants given by editors such as von Groote, and the earliest such examination of Gottfried's romance was the dissertation by Theodor von Hagen (1868). The criteria upon which he (and each of the subsequent textual critics) based his theories were the errors and lacunae which he found to be common to the various MSS. From the results gained from textual comparisons he drew the conclusion that the MSS could be divided into two main groups, which he termed X and Y, and he submitted the following table (p. 30):

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c}
(G) & (X) & (Y) \\
\hline
M & H & \\
\hline
W & W & \\
\hline
F & N & D & S \\
O & L & \\
\hline
B & & \\
\end{array}\]
Concerning the X group he stated "dass M und H nahe verwandte Glieder einer, sämtlichen Übrigen Handschriften fremdartig gegenüber stehenden Gruppe sind" (p. 30). Thus, while MH derived from *X, all the other MSS (FNWOSw1D) descended from *Y, a MS which von Hagen described as follows:

So viel sich aus dem allen Gliedern dieser Klasse Gemeinsamen schliessen lässt, muss der im Vorstehenden mit Y bezeichnete Archetypus eine vorzügliche, von Lücken freie Handschrift gewesen sein, aus der die meisten Codices des Tristan hervorgingen, welche so gewissermassen die Vulgata desselben bilden. Bestimmtere Rückschlüsse über seine Beschaffenheit sind nicht möglich, da keine direkte Abschrift aus ihm erhalten ist. (p. 17)

MS. B belonged to neither group exclusively, for the first half had been copied from MS. N, but for the second half of the romance the scribe had drawn also on MS. F.

Believing that the two "archetypal" MSS. XY had been very similar von Hagen now defined a new task for Tristan scholars: "An Vollständigkeit wie an Güte stand ihr [X] ... der Archetypus der andern verbreiteten Recension [Y] vollständig gleich: Ihre sich ergänzenden Lesarten, und damit die Dichtung rein und schön wiederherzustellen ist Aufgabe der Kritik" (p. 31). The claim that a lost common source could be deduced by analytical work on extant material closely paralleled the theories which Joseph Bédier and Wolfgang Golther put into practice in their restorations of the Tristan archetype (above, p. 43), and was a trend typical of the scientific methods advocated by the positivistic approach to literature. This theory was noticeable also in the work of Hermann Paul, whose study of the transmission (published in 1872) contained a refutation of a number of von Hagen's other ideas and in particular those concerning group Y.22 Paul agreed that FN had a common source, and that B was a mixture of FM, but held that von Hagen's proposal that all the MSS except MH(B) belonged to one group (Y) was incorrect: "Er [von Hagen] sucht diesz zu erweisen aus gemeinsamen Fehlern von
WOFN(DG), denen gegenüber MH das richtige haben sollen. Aber an allen von ihm ... angeführten Stellen sind entweder die Lesarten beider von ihm angenommenen Gruppen gleich berechtigt, oder noch öfter die von WOFN entschieden vorzuziehen" (p. 386). W was not closely related to FN, and therefore one could posit not two, but three independent transmissions, MH, FN, and W. In accordance with this new theory Paul then described a method by which the original text might be recovered:

Wir haben wenigstens drei von einander unabhängige Überlieferungen FN, MH, W. Dieser Satz gibt eine entscheidende Norm für die Textkritik. ... Demnach ist die Übereinstimmung zweier von dieser Gruppen ein hinreichender Beweis für die Ursprünglichkeit einer Lesart, während jede einseitige Bevorzugung einer Classe unter allen Umständen zu verwerfen ist, insbesondere nicht die Autorität von MH, wie v. Hagen will und die Herausgeber gethan haben, der aller übrigen Handschriften gleich gesetzt werden kann. Die Durchführung dieses Grundsatzes wird den Text noch an manchen Stellen anders gestalten. (p. 389)

He then proceeded to note many instances where the text would indeed be changed if this principle were put into effect.

The next scholar to discuss the transmission was Johannes Kottenkamp (1879).23 While agreeing with von Hagen and Paul that H belonged to a tradition independent of the Y group, he doubted whether the same could be said of M, for this last had so many errors in common with MSS in group Y (FWN) that it was evidently related to the Y branch:

Da nun einerseits die Verwandtschaft von H und M durch v. Hagen unwiderleglich nachgewiesen ist, andererseits aber eine Anzahl gemeinsamer Fehler von M und Gliedern von Y eine Verwandtschaft von M auch mit Y wahrscheinlich macht, so drängt sich die Frage auf: Sollte nicht der Schreiber von M nach zwei Vorlagen gearbeitet haben, und zwar so, dass er die Quelle von H (X) zu Grunde legte und daneben den Archetypus von WFNO (Y) benutzte? (p. 6, n.3)

Von Hagen’s placement of M had been criticized in 1870 by Oskar Jänicke, who had suggested that the relationship of M to X might be less direct than
von Hagen had thought, and concluded: "Man wird zusehen müssen, ob M sich
nicht geradezu als willkürlich ändernde und abkürzende Abschrift von H
herausstellt." The following tables show the theories of these three
critics concerning the relationship of M to X:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>von Hagen</th>
<th>Jänicke</th>
<th>Kottenkamp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kottenkamp seconded von Hagen’s views on the reconstructive methods to
be employed in recovering the original text of the romance, and quoting von
Hagen wrote that "stets derjenigen Familie der Vorzug zu ertheilen sei, deren
Lesart durch ein Glied der andern unterstützt wird, falls nicht Sinn, Sprach-
gebrauch oder Metrik gegen die aufzunehmende Lesart sprechen" (p. 7).
Following this principle he then listed alternative readings selected from
the variants rejected by editors. Finding that his rule could not be applied
in certain cases, however, he then selected other means of correcting these
editions (pp. 11 ff).

It was largely because the scholars conducting research into the trans-
mission failed to reach agreement on the finer problems raised by the material
under discussion that their work did not exert any great influence on Reinhold
Bechstein, the fifth editor of Gottfried’s poem. For the edition published
in 1869 he chose MH as the nearest representatives of the original text,
and even though he later completely reworked the text (3rd ed., 1890-91) he
did not modify his views on the reliability of MH:
Die dankenswerthen Bemühungen Theodor's von Hagen (1868) und Hermann Paul's (1872) um die Klassification der Handschriften und um die kritische Herstellung einzelner Stellen haben mich nicht in meinem Grundsatz, die älteste Münchenner Handschrift (M) und die verhältnissmässig beste Heidelberger (H) zu Grunde zu legen, zumal sie einer und derselben Klasse angehören, wankend gemacht. Einmal stimmen beide Kritiker principiell und in Einzelheiten nicht zusammen, sodann geben sie oft gerade jüngeren und abgeblassten Lesarten den Vorzug. (p. XLVII)

This Tristan edition appeared in the series edited by Franz Pfeiffer entitled the Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters, and like the next edition of Gottfried's work (that made by Wolfgang Golther and published in 1888 in Joseph Körschner's Deutsche National-Litteratur) was intended for the educated reading public, not for scholars. Neither of these two editors studies the MSS at first hand; instead, they relied on the texts and variants as given by earlier editors and the descriptions of the newly-found fragments and of the two complete MSS (E: Modena, and P: Berlin) which had recently been brought to light. For the third, undeniably more scholarly edition of Bechstein's work, use had also been made of Pfeiffer's collations of MHW and that of F by von der Hagen. In some of his numerous explanatory footnotes to the third edition Bechstein did now enter into a discussion of textual matters, stating that "wenn auch nach der Anlage dieser Ausgaben kritische Fragen unberücksichtigt bleiben müssen, so boten sich doch bisweilen Fälle dar, wo auch hier zu Gunsten der Erklärung die handschriftlichen Überlieferungen heranzuziehen waren" (p. XLVII). However, the result of this refashioning of his edition was such that "die Ausgabe dadurch wieder ein zwitterhaftes Aussehen erhält und dem gebildeten Publikum zu viel bietet, den Fachgenossen aber zu wenig."  

Golther was more readily influenced by the researches carried out by von Hagen, Paul, and Kottenkamp, and put into practice their theories concerning the feasibility of reconstructing the original text in a mechanical
process of elimination. Thus, while Bechstein felt that the most reliable version of the poem could be obtained if one drew chiefly on MH, Golther on the other hand contended that the original was best represented not by one or two of the extant MSS but rather by a selection from all the MSS which, as scholars had recently shown, formed distinct groups:

This eclectic method of selecting the text of Gottfried's Tristan was based on essentially the same principles as those followed twenty years later by Golther in his reconstruction of the Ur-Tristan (above, p. 52).

As was noted above, Golther intended this as a popular rather than a critical edition of the romance, and as such it (like Bechstein's) neither required nor supplied a Variantenapparat. The numerous footnotes provided little more than explanations and modern translations of the more obscure vocabulary and terminology in the Middle High German text.

The next edition to appear (1906) stood in marked contrast to the late nineteenth-century popular editions for it was preceded by extensive and penetrating studies of the MSS conducted by its editor, Karl Marold. He was not only the first among those investigating the transmission to base his classification on a first-hand study of the MSS rather than on
the variants given by other scholars, but was also the first such critic to prepare a Tristan edition. In the article "Zur handschriftlichen Überlieferung des Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg" (1896) he wrote that he had discovered common errors in HF, HW and FW, and he also supplemented those in MF and MW to which Kottenkamp had drawn attention. Marold then concluded: "Die angeführten Beispiele sind wohl geeignet, gegen die bisherige Klassifikation der Tristanhandschriften bedenklich zu machen und die Notwendigkeit einer erneuten gründlichen Behandlung der Handschriftenverhälttnisse nahe zu legen" (p. 186). In the introduction to his edition of the romance he again discussed the interrelationships between the MSS. He commenced with a description of the common omissions, but the only conclusion drawn from this investigation was that M, because of its incomplete nature and the type of episodes omitted, represented the "first redaction" of Gottfried's poem, "deren erweiterte Gestalt in die anderen Texte übergegangen ist" (p. LVI). After his study of the lacunae he then turned to the "innere Textgestalt." He opposed the notion favoured by von Hagen, Paul and Kottenkamp that B (the mixture of MF) had no value for textual criticism; he showed that B was closely related to FHW, and used this as evidence to support his main thesis, namely that "FHW eine kompakte Einheit bilden und auf einen Archetypus zurückgehen, dem die Vorlage von M gegenübersteht" (p. LX). Among the other proofs to support this theory one was furnished by the recently discovered Zürich fragments (z): "Sie [z] stellen sich zu (M)HFW so, dass sie eine ganze Anzahl eigener Lesarten aufweisen ... im Übrigen aber vorzugsweise sich F, demnächst H und an wenigen Stellen W anschliessen; die Vorlage neigte sich also schon nach F zu, stand aber auch den anderen Texten noch nahe" (p. LXII). According
to Marold the classifications by von Hagen (group X and group Y) and Paul (groups FN, MH and W) were inaccurate because the transmission had been far more unified than proposed by these two scholars. He did however concede that "bis zu einem gewissen Grade sowohl v. Hagen, als auch H. Paul das Richtige gesehen hat: F und W haben tatsächlich eine etwas engere Verwandtschaft unter einander als jede von beiden Hs. mit H, aber sie gehen auch wieder jede ihre eigenen Wege" (p. LXV).

Of Marold’s proposed three-volume edition of the poem (I: Text; II: Sachliche und kritische Erläuterungen; III: Glossar) only the first appeared. Fortunately, however, this was not a torso similar to that published by von der Hagen, for it did contain the "sehr reichhaltigen Variantenapparat," as Carl von Kraus wrote in 1909. The manner in which the editor selected the text from the various MSS was determined by his theory that FHW best represented the archetypal MS. He wrote:

Am besten beglaubigt sind also alle Lesarten, die HFW gemeinsam Überliefern, wenngleich, wie sich gezeigt hat, einiges Richtige in M hinzübergerettet ist. Ebenso richtig sind noch die Lesarten, die H (M) mit einer der beiden andern Hss. gemein hat; aber bei der geschlossenen Überlieferung werden auch FW gegenüber H das Richtige haben aufbewahren können; nur müssen hier innere Gründe massgebend für die Wahl der Lesarten sein, und ebenso, wenn F oder W allein gegenüber den beiden anderen Hss. stehen. (p. LXV)

Although Marold’s was undoubtedly the most scholarly of all the editions which had thus far appeared, it was still inadequate: "Im Übrigen aber muss als das Urteil der Autoritäten auch hier wiederholt werden, dass die Ausgabe Marolds den Anforderungen, die wir heute an eine kritische Ausgabe zu stellen gewohnt sind, vielfach nicht entspricht."33

Kurt Herold, in Der Münchener Tristan. Ein Beitrag zur Überlieferungsgeschichte und Kritik des Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg (1911), confined his study of the transmission to an investigation and collation of
MS. M, "der ältesten und zugleich eigenartigsten Textüberlieferung" (p. 2), and maintained that the singular nature of the MS could be explained in one way: "Das Gottfriedsche Gedicht hat in M eine durchgreifende Umarbeitung nach dem Muster Hartmanns, speziell nach seiner vollendeten Epik, wie sie der Iwein zeigt, durchgemacht" (p. 3). An apt assessment of Herold's contribution to Tristan scholarship was made by Friedrich Ranke when he wrote: "Die Arbeit von Herold über die Münchner Tristanhs. endlich betrachtet diese Hs. losgelöst von der übrigen Textüberlieferung, was ihr schönes Resultat zwar nicht wesentlich beeinträchtigt, doch hat sie die Erkenntnis der Handschriftenverhältnisse deshalb nur indirekt fördern können."35

In 1917 the results of Ranke's own research in this area were published under the title "Die Überlieferung von Gottfrieds Tristan,"36 an undertaking prompted by Ranke's discovery of the defects in Marold's Lesartenapparat, which lacked numerous variants and listed many others inaccurately. When discussing the significance of Ranke's contribution Gottfried Weber wrote in 1965: "Die grundlegende Arbeit über die Handschriftenverhältnisse des Tristan verdanken wir Friedrich Ranke und dessen scharfsinniger und im ganzen weder überholter noch überholbarer Untersuchung,"37 and although he gave a detailed summary of Ranke's theories (pp. 11-14) he did not indicate the manner in which the latter's work differed from that of his precursors in this area of research. We shall therefore centre our discussion on this second point, and show what Ranke rejected in the work of former critics and also the new arguments which he put forward to replace their outworn ideas.

The first task he faced was the correction of the distorted list of variants in Marold's edition. Ranke was able to work with most of the
complete and fragmentary MSS himself, and was aided also by the collations of M made by Kurt Herold and those of FH by Hermann Paul. The emendations occupy a large part of this study (pp. 158-204) and were drawn on by Ranke to substantiate his arguments concerning the relationships between the MSS. The basic difference between his results and those of earlier scholars rested on his opinion that the transmission was far more intricate than had previously been suggested: not only were the two main groups (X and Y) interrelated, but also within each group many cross-connections existed of which earlier critics had been unaware. Even the genealogical table drawn up by Ranke (p. 404) could, as he himself admitted, only approximate to the complicated relationships. As Weber commented, however, "was ein solches Stemma leistet und was seine Aufstellung rechtfertigt, ist die rasche und Übersichtliche Orientierung" (p. 12), and he therefore reproduced Ranke's chart (omitting the fragments) on p. 12 of his study of Gottfried.

From his initial comparison of the the common lacunae in the complete MSS Ranke first of all defined three groups, X, $\infty$ and $\beta$. Unlike Jänicke, he thought that M and H went back independently to the same source:

```
(p. 209)
```
The way in which the MSS were grouped in this table bore some resemblance to Paul's theory of the triple grouping, namely MH, FN and W. However, that $\alpha + \beta = Y$ was then demonstrated by Ranke in his further study of the variants and thus von Hagen's initial classification of group Y was shown to be more accurate than the alternative as put forward by Paul. But, as Ranke's small chart well exemplified, von Hagen had no conception of the intricate pattern of the relationships between the various MSS:

von Hagen (p. 17)

Ranke (p. 262)
Further criticism of Marold and correction of his faulty arguments followed in later parts of Ranke’s work. Marold’s main tenet (the unity of FHW) was rejected outright: "Und auch die ‘resultate’ aus diesen flüchtigen zusammenstellungen erscheinen in sehr wenig glücklicher formulierung; denn dass HFW eine compacte einheit M gegenüber darstellen, ist falsch, und die vorstellung von einer handschrift, in der ‘die texte von HFW sich noch nicht in ihre jetzigen vertreter gespalten hatten,’ aus der sich der schreiber von M fehler aus jeder dieser 3 hss. habe abschreiben können, ist zum mindesten unklar" (p. 206). Ranke’s research into the fragments, including the newly discovered fragment t, not only confirmed the results gathered from the careful scrutiny to which he had submitted the complete MSS but also showed further links which rendered the whole textual tradition even more complicated (p. 403).

He put forward another new theory based on his close study of the earliest Tristan MSS. Their unity of orthography and language showed that they were all written in one location in Alsace during the thirteenth century. Dialect peculiarities as well as historical and cultural reasons enabled him to single out Strassburg as the most likely place for this medieval Schreibstube.

Ranke was the second scholar to investigate the transmission prior to editing Gottfried’s romance; his edition appeared in 1930, but as had been the case with Marold, only the first volume ever appeared in print. Ranke’s edition did not contain any critical apparatus, and thus when Behaghel reviewed the work in 1932 he wrote: "Von diesem Buch ist zunächst eigentlich nichts zu sagen, als dass es da ist. Denn es bietet tatsächlich nur den nackten Text und ein Nachwort von sechs Zeilen. Den ausführlichen Rechenschaftsbericht wird ein zweiter Band bringen, der in diesem Jahre
Ranke proposed to complete and publish the second volume when an emeritus professor, but by the year of his death (1950) it had still not appeared, nor have his preparatory notes been published posthumously. However, in 1946 an "Auswahl" of Gottfried's poem, edited by Ranke, was printed in the Altdeutsche Übungstexte; in his brief prefatory remarks Ranke listed the complete MSS in order of preference (HMFWEO), noting also that fragment a was "als bester Vertreter der Gruppe X von besonders hohem Wert für die Textkritik" (p. 3). For three sections in this "Auswahl" (ll. 1-244, 4555-5068, and 10803-12568) he furnished a Variantenapparat but due to lack of space it was incomplete: "Er enthält alle für die Textherstellung in Betracht kommenden Lesarten der Haupthandschriften HMFW, nicht dagegen ihre offensichtlichen Schreibfehler und die Abweichungen, die sich aus durchgehenden Schreibgewohnheiten erklären; Lesarten der jüngeren Handschriften und Fragmente sind im allgemeinen nur dort angegeben, wo sie sich einer der vier Haupthandschriften anschliessen; gelegentlich dienen die Angaben auch Beobachtungen von Wortverlust und Wortersatz" (p. 4); the remaining episodes have but a sparse supply of variants "in den wenigen Fällen . . . in denen mir die Textherstellung zweifelhaft erscheint" (p. 4).
III Conclusion

"Gewiss von Allen, welche den Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg zum Gegenstand eines eingehenderen Studiums gemacht haben, ist der Mangel einer guten kritischen Ausgabe . . . schwer empfunden worden." Although this statement was made by Kottenkamp in 1879 it is still valid today. Poor scholarship has been one of the major causes of this situation, for most editions of Gottfried's Tristan have been based on inadequate critical foundations. Furthermore, the results of the research conducted by those editors who did make more thorough preparations have either not been published (von der Hagen, Ranke) or, if printed, have proved to be highly inaccurate (Massmann, Marold).

With the encroachment of positivism on Tristan scholarship the relationships between the MSS attracted the attention of a few critics, but during the past fifty years no further studies of the transmission have appeared. The contemporary lack of interest in this line of research can be put down to two causes. In the first place the validity of Ranke's theories (1917) has not been questioned, and his work is therefore assumed to be the definitive statement on the transmission. In the second place, Gottfried criticism during the twentieth century has been devoted largely to the interpretation of his romance, and as a result other research activities—such as the study of the origins of the legend, criticism of MSS and preparation of editions—have receded into the background of Tristan scholarship.
CHAPTER THREE

GOTTFRIED CRITICISM IN THE NINETEENTH
AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

I Admiration and Denigration

Tiur unde wert ist mir der man,
der guot und Übel betrachten kan,
der mich und iegelichen man
nach sinem werde erkennen kan. (Tristan,
11. 17-20)

A. Early Romantics

The Tristan edition by C. H. Myller (1785) first brought Gottfried’s
romance to the attention of the reading public, and when interest in medi­
eval literature burgeoned among the early Romantics it was not long before
the first critical commentary on the work appeared. In the opening issue of
the Museum für altdeutsche Litteratur und Kunst (1809), a periodical founded
by Docen, Büsching and von der Hagen for the popularization and publication
of medieval poetry, was published the earliest significant appraisal of
Gottfried’s Tristan. Bernhard Joseph Docen discussed the poet and his
work at some length, and in his assessment deliberately refrained from the
use of standards such as were popular in the current study of the Nibelungen­
lied, which was compared from the first with Homer’s epics. He maintained
that the literature of Greek and Roman antiquity (which until recently had
been the sole rule by which literary merit was measured) should not serve
as a criterion in value-judgments of this medieval romance:

Es ist unläugbar ein grosser Unverstand, die Gattungen der
verschiedenen Zeitalter zu vermischen, und zu parallelisiren,
wenn man für die eine Zeit schon Überwiegend eingenommen ist.
Ein Roman, wie der Tristan, im Karakter der Ilias dargestellt,
müsste als ein Unding erscheinen; daraus aber lässt sich noch
According to Docen, Tristan epitomized the spirit of medieval chivalry, and the poet's intention, which amply manifested itself throughout the work, was to compose a romance especially for anyone in love. That the relationship between Tristan and Isolde (his uncle Marke's wife) was free from blame was proven above all by the Judgment of God:

All through the narrative Gottfried knew how to retain a "noble simplicity," which strongly contrasted with the "wildness" in Wolfram's Parzival, and this Tristan romance constituted "das Schönste . . . was in jenen Zeiten der Deutsche Kunstsinn hervorgebracht hat" (p. 58). Gottfried's source had not yet been recovered, but like other German medieval poets who based their works on foreign models Gottfried was far from being a mere translator; rather, he must surely have worked "mit jenem lebendigen Gefühl eigenes Bildens, ohne welches die Poesie nur ein mühsames Nachzeichnen, keine neue Belebung des gegebenen Stoffes gewesen wäre" (p. 54). Employing the evocative vocabulary of nineteenth-century Romanticism Docen concluded: "Mit Liebe versinkt er [Gottfried] in das Gefühl seines Daseins, der Seele des Alls und der Natur um ihn her . . . Wir besitzen—um mein Urtheil in den kürzesten Worten zu sagen—wenige Gedichte, die im Geiste die Ahnung des ursprünglichen, göttlichen Schönen in dem Grade anregen, wie dieses unvergleiche [sic] Werk" (p. 59).
Several topics present in Docen's Tristan evaluation recurred in subsequent criticism of the romance. These were the question of guilt in the lovers' relationship, the meaning of the episode of the Judgment of God, the comparison with Wolfram's Parzival, the recognition of the supreme artistry in Gottfried's work, and finally the problem of the poet's originality and dependence on his source.

August Wilhelm Schlegel had already made an allusion to the innocence of Tristan-love in his Berlin lectures of 1803-1804 when he mentioned the "lusternen verbotnen und doch gewissermassen so unschuldigen Liebeschandel des Lanzelot und Tristan" (p. 46). On that occasion he had also pointed out that such fables were not indigenous, and then added in true early Romantic vein: "Freylich war, bey dem damaligen Einheit Europas, Geschmack und Sinnesart Uberall sehr verwandt, und diese Verdecktschungen beweisen wenigstens, dass dergleichen Geschichten in Deutschland mit demselben Interesse gelesen wurden" (p. 47). In 1810 Schlegel discussed Gottfried in more detail when reviewing the Buch der Liebe. He preferred Gottfried's version to the Prosaroman published in that anthology, describing the former as "zarter, inniger, wunder- und geheimnisvoller . . . ein unnachahmlich seelenvolles und bis in die kleinsten Theile hinein nach Einen grossen Gedanken künstlerisch ausgebildetes Werk" (p. 233). Following Docen, he felt that Tristan—despite his disloyalty to the king—was free from guilt: "Ein Verhängniss entschuldigt seinen Fehltritt, sein Unglück und Tod büssst ihn ab, und die zartesten und edelsten ritterlichen Tugenden, deren Spiegel er ist, sind Fürbitter gegen jedes strenge Gericht" (p. 235). Almost forty years later Schlegel repeated his praise of the Tristan romance, "le chef d'oeuvre des romans d'amour," maintaining that "de toutes les rédactions de Tristan à moi connues, celle de Godefroy de Strasbourg est incomparablement la plus belle" (p. 295).
When Jacob Grimm reviewed the Buch der Liebe in 1812 he also contrasted Gottfried’s work with the Prosaroman (which was based on Eilhart). Schlegel had accorded most laurels to Gottfried, but Grimm reserved most of his praise for the older rendering of the fable, in which he found the noble simplicity which Docen had earlier ascribed to Gottfried:

... so zeigt sich in dem Eilhartischen die sage doch unstreitig älter, einfacher und poetischer. ... Was uns selbst nach allem diesen noch weit über die anderen beweise geht, und das voralter der in diesem gedicht wie in der prosa treu behaltenen fabel unzweifelhaft macht, das ist die innere geschlossenheit, ründung und einfachheit derselben, wie sie hier erscheint, im gegensatz zu Gottfrieds gedicht, das wir in so fern auch unter die prosa setzen müssen. (pp. 89-95)

For Grimm the earlier stages in any legend’s development were more natural and more poetic, and as such were preferable to the later treatment in the hands of courtly poets. He admitted nonetheless that Gottfried could not be held responsible for the "künstliche zusammenhangslosigkeit" (p. 95) because the fable had doubtless already been deformed by Thomas, his French source. Furthermore, Gottfried should be recognized as a master of style: "Von der poesie selbst ist hier gar keine rede, diese ist in dem Deutschen so köstlich, dass sie nicht übersetzt sein kann, und wäre ihr das original darin gleich, dieses nicht übersetzt hätte werden können" (p. 90).

B. "Lachmann School"

In 1820 Karl Lachmann, who is now remembered as "one of Germany’s greatest medieval and classical scholars, as a philologist of the first order, and, lastly, as the most indefatigable and patient of teachers," condemned the Tristan romance as being blasphemous and immoral. In his brief notice on the work, which accompanied an excerpt from the poem in his Auswahl aus den hochdeutschen Dichtern des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts
(Berlin, 1820)—an anthology of Middle High German poetry prepared for his students—Lachmann praised the aesthetics and denounced the ethics in Gottfried’s poem: "Seine [Gottfrieds] gehaltene, verständig geschmückte Darstellungsweise erhellet wohl aus dem gewählten Abschnitt; anderes, als Uppigkeit oder Gotteslästerung, boten die Haupttheile seiner weichlichen, unsittlichen Erzählung nicht dar."\(^9\) In the nineteenth century the majority of critics and literary historians echoed this evaluation of Gottfried’s work; such scholars, to whom we shall refer as the Lachmann School, expressed "einerseits die Hochschätzung und das Lob von Gottfrieds Kunst, der Ästhetischen Seite seines Werkes, andererseits die Abwertung im Gehaltlichen auf Grund der vermeintlichen Unsittlichkeit, die Verwerfung der ethischen Seite."\(^10\)

When the historian Georg Gottfried Gervinus, "der wissenschaftliche Begründer der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung," for whom "nationale und ethische Forderungen setzen sich an die Stelle der Ästhetischen Wertung,"\(^11\) commented on Gottfried in his Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung (1835-42) he echoed Lachmann in stating "man muss verdammen, aber bewundern und bedauern" (p. 423).\(^12\) The Tristan-Isolde story exemplified the motto "Jugend hat nicht Tugend," while its theme was the destructive effect of Tristan-love on character. The poet showed how such passion destroys "den reinsten Charakter . . . den thatenlustigen Tristan, den Retter seines Oheimes, den Eroberer seines eigenen Landes . . . wie nun alle Thaten aufhören, alle Handlungen stille stehen, nur die kleinen Entwürfe nicht, die ihm sein neues Bündniss mit Isold eingibt" (p. 417). The hero, depicted in the throes of his first love-affair, was degraded by these emotions. They dishonoured him because he surrendered to them entirely, and remained forgetful of his knightly duties and reputation. Isolde’s character was
similarly defiled by love: "Was von nun an folgt, ist nicht geeignet, etwas anderes als unseren Abscheu zu wecken. . . . So ist die reine liebe gute kindliche Isold denn gleich, nachdem sie den Trank der Schuld gekostet, dazu gereift, dem neuen Eheherrn zum trauten Empfang den schmählichsten Betrug zu bereiten. . . . Sie fängt nun an, in den Künsten der Schlangenlist und des Betrugs die raschesten Fortschritte zu machen" (p. 420).

On the other hand Gervinus did express some admiration for Gottfried's artistry, his "charming form," which so contrasted with the "coarseness" in Parzival. Following his maxim of selecting that element in medieval literature "was sich aus dem Ganzen der Nationalgeschichte erläutern und herleiten lässt" (p. 416), he refrained from giving a complete history of the Tristan material but singled out instead the difference between Gottfried's stylistic enhancement and Eilhart's cruder version of the traditional story:

Wir begnügen uns mit der Bemerkung, dass der Dichter die höchste Bewunderung verdient, wenn man sieht, welch ein bedeutungsvolles Gedicht er aus einem Stoffe bereitete, der noch in dem Tristan des Eilhart von Oberg so wüst und ekel draht und sich von aller Grösse und Würde vollkommen entblößt ist. Es ist der Stoff einer blossen Novelle. . . . Aus einer so niederen Sphäre, in der die Fabel des Tristan zu einem unterhaltenden leichtsinnigen Geschichtchen gemacht ist, rückte sie Gottfried in eine wunderbare Höhe, mit einer wahrhaft genialen Kunst. (p. 416)

On the whole, however, any approval of the romance was more than outbalanced by condemnation. Deaf to Docen's warning that the application of classical standards to medieval literature led to false judgments, Gervinus constructed parallels between the German medieval poets and Aeschylos, Sophocles and Euripides. He equated Gottfried's highly artistic formal treatment of an ignoble theme with Euripides' artistic method, but then showed that a profound moral content—the forte of Aeschylos and Wolfram von Eschenbach—was ultimately of greater worth:
Wollen wir ein Werk von seiner dichterischen Seite beurtheilen, so sehen wir von seiner mystischen und religiösen, sittlichen oder wissenschaftlichen Weisheit und Werth ab und halten uns an Darstellung und Form. . . . Suchen wir aber im Dichter den ganzen Menschen, im Gedichte die ganze Bedeutung des Lebens, dann schlagen wir uns entschieden auf die Seite der erstern, und verfechten mit Aeschylos, dass der Dichter, der Lehrer der Erwachsenen, das Gute nur lehren und das Unedle verbergen, dass er nur würdigen und grossen Stoff behandeln solle. (p. 415)

In 1839 Heinrich Laube said of Gottfried's work: "Wenn der sogenannte moralische Maasstab angelegt wird, so ist Tristan und Isolde ein Grauel." His interpretation was based on the thesis that the licentious, immoral, frivolous nature of the romance recorded a turn in the path of medieval history. Gottfried marked the end of the "romantic" Middle Ages, he preferred sensuality to spirituality, the external to the inward and romantic: "Just an dieser Stelle, wo das Mittelalter seine theoretische Vergeistigung auf die Spitze getrieben, tritt in Gottfried . . . eine so glänzende Mahnung ein, dass der Mensch auch noch etwas ganz Anderes sei" (p. 113). Laube felt duly distressed that Gottfried, a former monk (!), advocated Tristan-love and was moreover apparently a man of some experience in amatory affairs. The poet was an adept master of form who skilfully registered his opposition to contemporary moeurs, and it was no mean task for a critic to pin him down for licentiousness. As a result, no-one had recognized in Gottfried the greatest betrayer of the Middle Ages, adroitly heaping ridicule on his contemporaries and their customs: "Er [höhnt] die ritterliche und kirchliche Konvenienz der Liebe, und ist doch nirgends zu fassen. . . . Kurz, wir haben in diesem Gottfried'schen Werk einen Durchbruch der glühendsten ursprünglichsten Sinnlichkeit, der alle Konvenienz der Zeit mit Füssen tritt, und sich auf Kosten der ganzen damaligen Existenz geltend macht" (pp. 112-13).
Similar views on the historical background to the superabundant sensuality in the Tristan poem were expressed by August Vilmar when lecturing in Marburg from 1843 to 1844.\textsuperscript{15} Gottfried was a forerunner of the "immer mehr dem bloss weltlichen Streben, dem physischen Wolsein, dem materiellen Gewinn und Besitz zugeneigten, zuletzt in tiefe Roheit und fast thierischen Genuss versinkende, aus Mundbekenrnern und Thatleugnern der christlichen Wahrheit bestehenden europäischen Menschheit des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts" (p. 182). Vilmar—a Protestant theologian—denounced the Tristan theme as the most despicable mockery of marital fidelity. In his condemnation of the love-affair he omitted all reference to the love-potion and instead arraigned Isolde for having lured Tristan into the love-trap. However, he imputed the shamelessness of the anti-Christian theme not to Gottfried but to the profligate Celts among whom the story originated: "Leichtfertigkeit, Frivolität und Lüsternheit . . . die Grundzüge dieser schamlosen Unsittlichkeit liegen bereits in den britischen Erzählungen selbst"; "Göttliche und menschliche Gesetze, göttliche und menschliche Rechte werden mit Füssen getreten, als müsse das so sein, und oft mit einer . . . hartstirnigen Frechheit und einer nackten Schamlosigkeit, welche oft in Erstaunen setzt, öfter mit Widerwillen, ja mit Ekel erfüllt" (p. 177). The French redactors also deserved blame for reproducing the story just as they found it. The German poet, Gottfried, altered the tradition by imbuing it with a spirit "welchen das dumpfe britische Ingenium nicht oder nicht mehr zu erzeugen vermochte" (p. 178), but Vilmar viewed with much disfavour the spirit which Gottfried inspired into the material: the new psychological depth in his treatment of the story had the sole effect of intensifying the portrayal of an immoral earthly passion. "Er
Unlike most of the denigrators Wilhelm Wackernagel found fault not only with the moral content but also with the poetic form in Gottfried's work, and therefore his history of literature published in 1851 noted that the poet's dazzling style, far from being genuine artistic brilliance, was simply a gaudy display amounting to little more than French mannerisms and stylistic tricks. Beside such faults there was "ein Widerwille gegen allen Ernst der Gesinnung, ein Leichtsinn ... der das Unrecht beschönigt und zu solcher Beschönigung sogar den Frevel am Heiligsten nicht scheut" (p. 200). Gottfried had the gift of lending to morally suspect parts of the story a certain external charm, and here used the glittering art of courtly poetry which left Eilhart's simpler redaction in the shade. However, the critic did find one good quality in Gottfried. He wrote that, just as in more recent times Wieland's reaction to Klopstock had beneficial results, so too did the response of Gottfried to Wolfram have a positive outcome:

Und doch ist diese Art ein Vortheil für die Litteratur gewesen: dem ähnlich, wie in späterer Zeit Wieland sich zu Klopstock verhielt, glich Gottfried die Mängel Wolframs vergütend aus und rettete, vereint mit Hartmann, die Anmuth, die Klarheit, die Leichtigkeit; Rudolf von Ems hat seinen gefälligen Satzbau, es haben Konrad Fleck und Konrad von Würzburg ihren bequemen Redefluss von Gottfried gelernt, und mancher untergeordnete Dichter Gedanken und Worte ebenso gern von ihm als von Hartmann genommen. (p. 200)

Gottfried was roundly condemned by Eichendorff in his Geschichte der poetischen Literatur Deutschlands of 1857, since the romance was to be censured for destroying morals, religion, virtue, honesty—in short, everything which made life noble and great (p. 76). The language in which Eichendorff phrased his plot-summary underscored his disgust:
Der Stoff des Gedichtes ist durchaus gemein: die Verführungsgeschichte einer verheirateten Frau, die gern Lob und Ehre und Seele ihrer ehebrecherischen Liebesbrunst opfert; ein artiger, sich vor den Damen niedlich machender Fant ... der sich in seiner liebenswürdigen Flatterhaftigkeit zuletzt noch gar in eine zweite Isolde verliebt; und endlich ein schwacher Ehemann, der nicht bloss gefoppt, sondern auf das schändlichste verraten und betrogen wird und welcher am Ende noch alle Schuld allein tragen soll, weil er sich unterstanden hat, sein tolles Weib zu hüten und in ihren sauberen Kunststücken zu stören. (p. 76)

He reprimanded Gottfried for having introduced into German literature the "dogma of unrestrained sexual love" (p. 76) and for having completely reversed all moral values by founding a new system in which deception became a cardinal virtue, constancy in sin was named fidelity, whilst the loyalty of the courtiers to Marke was counted as a crime. The poet did not shirk from blasphemous mockery: "Der freigeisterische Dichter scheut sich nicht, mit der Heiligkeit des Eides und des Gebetes frevelhaften Spott zu treiben" (pp. 76-7). When measured by Wolfram, Gottfried was found wanting: the Christian view of life which was symbolized by Parzival was totally negated in Tristan, and Gottfried was the leader and master of anti-Christian art. When Wackernagel drew the parallel "Gottfried:Wolfram--Wieland:Klopstock" (above, p. 95) he arrived at positive results, but now Eichendorff drew the same parallel in a way that did little to enhance Gottfried's reputation:

Das Verhältnis beider war ungefähr ebenso, wie in neuerer Zeit zwischen Klopstock und Wieland. ... [Gottfrieds] Geist verbreitete sich wie ein heimlich zehrendes Fieber in den verschiedensten Krankheitssymptomen Über mehrere Dichtergenerationen, aus denen Rudolf von Ems und Konrad von Würzburg als die bedeutendsten hervorragten. Das Charakteristische der Gottfriedschen Schule aber ist eben die laxe weltmännische Lebensansicht des Meisters, die mit Sage und Heldentum nichts mehr anzufangen weiß, daher am liebsten nach gewöhnlichen, ja gemeinen Stoffen greift und, um das Kleine gross zu machen, allen Nachdruck fast ausschliesslich auf eine geleckte Form der Darstellung legt. (p. 78)
In short, Eichendorff's outlook on the Tristan romance strongly resembled that of Lachmann: "Wie schade um so viel Schönheit, die hier an das absolut Hübsche verschwendet ist" (p. 77).

Despite the favourable light which Heinrich Kurz and Octave d'Assaillly cast on the romance in 1853 and 1859 respectively, they failed to influence public opinion, and in 1865 Gottfried's cause met with one of its most serious setbacks. In that year G. Haebler, in writing about Tristan, dipped his pen into a well of undiluted venom ("Über Wolfram von Eschenbach und Gottfried von Strassburg"). Other denigrators had usually found at least one positive feature in Gottfried or his work—even Eichendorff could not deny that in Tristan there was "so viel Schönheit"—but Haebler now asserted: "Neben einem Inhalt, dem alle sittliche Würde fehlt, eine Form zu dulden, in der kümmerliche Künste sich auf das anmasslichste breit machen, das sind wir nicht gesonnen, solange wir noch Zunge oder Feder zum Proteste rühren können" (p. 503). He took exception not only to the romance but also to the over-lenient attitude toward the romance adopted by a fellow damnator, Gervinus, who had spiced reproof with praise. Because the latter had failed to take the contrast between Wolfram and Gottfried far enough, Haebler now set out to extend Gervinus' preliminary study: "Es soll . . . das Lob Wolfram's erwiesen und gesteigert, das rühmende Urtheil, welches man Gottfried zuteil werden lässt, auf ein Husserst geringes Mass herabgesetzt werden" (p. 459). Such high moral principles were evident in the work of Gottfried's contemporaries that the romance could not be excused as a sign of the times nor was it an offspring typical of Germany. Rather, "es ist eine walisische Schandgeschichte . . . mit all ihrem Schmuze reproducir" (p. 514), a foreign import adopted part and parcel by Gottfried, who was singularly lacking in poetic invention, and
who adhered more rigidly to every letter of his "Welsh" original than to any letter of the law. Throughout his bitterly ironical plot-summary Haebler stressed time and again Gottfried's shortcomings as a poet, and above all "die ekelerregenden Eindrücke der furchtbaren Unsittlichkeit" (p. 510). Two of the most important episodes, namely the drinking of the love-potion and the cave of lovers, were both dismissed summarily by this critic. He wrote: "Da verschlucken die beiden Unglückslichen einen Liebestrank, der für König Marke bestimmt war, und nun ist das Unglück fertig" (p. 508), and then "[Marke] schickt beide miteinander in die Waldung, holt sich aber die schöne Frau bald wieder" (p. 511). Specific reference to the Minnegrotte was made only when the critic's scathing finger pointed to the deplorable style of the romance. Haebler felt strongly that anyone who praised this episode should be punished for his sins: he should learn by heart all 250 lines of the allegory, and then to complete his penance recite the passage thrice daily, either until he was converted or until he could no longer bear to hear the "Jammer" (p. 512).

C. Mythological School

A few prominent Tristan scholars begged to differ from the detractors in their assessments of Gottfried's work, and it was no coincidence that this minority belonged to or was sympathetic towards the Mythological School (discussed above, p. 15). In seeking the origins of the story in remote mythologies, and in regarding the Tristan-Isolde legend as one manifestation of a universal theme, such critics felt that they had attained to a far deeper understanding of Gottfried's romance than could be acquired by those denigrators whose knowledge of the fable was superficial because acquired only from the medieval versions.
Franz J. Mone, the first to defend Gottfried from the charges levelled against him by his damnators, in 1821 stressed the kinship of the Tristan story with Germanic legends and suggested also where their common source might lie. He maintained that Gottfried's romance was free from all traces of immorality: "Gotfrit ist durchaus ein züchtiger Dichter, er unterscheidet recht wol Lust von Liebe... Tristan und Isalt sind daher eine heimliche Ehe, kein Ehebruch, und Marke steht eigentlich nur als der feindliche Hüter des Weibes da, als der Drache, der sie heiraten will, aber doch keine Gewalt über sie bekommt" (p. XVI). Gottfried was semi-aware of the recondite meaning in the old fable, namely how the pure soul (goodness) is contaminated by matter (evil), and how the soul is finally released from the flesh and dualism thus overcome. The suffering involved in Tristan-love resulted from this contamination, for, as Mone wrote,

.. derjenige Ausfluss des göttlichen Geistes, der sich der Materie zuwendet, [wird] in eine beständige Verwirrung verwickelt, die beinahe seinen Ursprung verdunkelt; was in der Seelenlehre heisst, der Abfall der Seele von Gott ist der Anfang der leidvollen Prüfung und je weiter sie sich vom göttlichen Geist entfernt, desto schwächer wird der Zusammenhang mit ihm, desto grösser das Übergewicht der Materie. (p. XXXVI)

Tristan resembled other legendary heroes and particularly those of Germanic folklore; the striking similarity between their adventures showed that all such legends shared a common origin in "Seelenlehre." The love-potion in the Tristan story was the drink of oblivion, a feature current in many of these legends: "Durch diese Verzauberung werden die Helden zu Doppelwesen, deren Natur bald kämpfend bald leidend, gut und böös, glücklich und unglücklich erscheint" (p. XIX). Gottfried's chief purpose was to enhance the Germanic ideals of heroism and loyalty unto death in his "Heldenlied" of Tristan and Isolde, in which Tristan exemplified the brave and steadfast hero. Thus
the story told by Gottfried was not aimed at satisfaction of sensual curiosity, as was the case with the French redactors:

Noch umfassender und tiefer ergriffen die teutschen Dichter die Sage, nicht nur, dass sie die grosse Heldenkraft Tristans nicht im weichmuthigen Leide, wie die Franzosen, verschmelzen liessen, sondern ihn den grössten Helden teutscher Sage, Dieterichen und Hiltebranden vorzogen, sondern auch, dass sie ihm und den Sagen überhaupt eine grossartige Deutung zugestanden, wie man sie bei den Franzosen nicht findet. (p. IX)

Karl Simrock’s interpretation resembled that given by Mone in that he stressed the Germanic element and, although a pupil of Lachmann, defended Gottfried against the accusations which that critic had brought against him. His Tristan studies appeared first in Die Quellen des Shakespeare in Novellen, Märchen und Sagen (Bonn, 1831) and later in the preface to his translation of the romance (1855, extended in 1875). In a few brief notes on the origins he stated that the fable was "uraltes deutsches Eigentum" (p. XII), a moral "Liebessage" closely related to the Germanic "Freundschaftssage." The story of Siegfried shared certain features with Tristan: "Liebestrank, den Drachenkampf und die Schwertlegung. . . . So betrachtet erscheint die Tristansage als die nächste Verwandte der Siegfriedssage" (p. XII). His main thesis concerning the relationship of this to other legends however was that the stories of Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, Pyramus and Thisbe, and Hero and Leander shared a single theme, and represented "eine uralte Liebessage, die in vielen Gestalten umgeht und sich immer wieder von Neuem zu erzeugen scheint". (Quellen, p. 144): in all these stories love knows no bounds, and in each case a chance event—a mistaken notion about one’s partner—has tragic results. The lovers pass away from earthly existence, to which they are no longer attached in any way, and enter into a higher sphere of life, "wo sich ihnen das ganz erfüllen wird, was sie hier vergebens zu verwirklichen strebten" (p. 397).
Gottfried's greatest achievement was his originality, his ability to take this well-known German legend and handle the theme in a way no other poet could: "Gottfried hat zuerst von der Minne mit jener Inbrunst des seelenvollsten Gefühls und in der naivsten Sprache auch mit dem hohen Schwunge gesprochen, welche des Tiefsinns der Liebessage würdig sind" (p. 402). The moral content of his redaction could be truly assessed only if the concluding episodes (not present in Gottfried's unfinished romance) were taken into account.

... das unvollendete Werk muss manchen Vorwurf hinnehmen, der das vollendete vielleicht nicht mit solcher Härte getroffen hätte. Der schwerste freilich, als ob der Gegenstand dieses Gedichts schmähliche Verhöhnung der Gattentreue wäre, lässt sich schon damit abweisen, dass zwischen Marke und Isold so wenig als zwischen Tristan und der andern, weisshändigen Isold je ein eheliches Verhülniss zu Stande kommt, wenn sie gleich vor der Welt Gatten scheinen. (p. 395)

The lovers were innocent, and their death should reconcile them with every reader of the poem. Simrock further vindicated Gottfried by pointing out that French sources were responsible for the immoral turn which the story took in the continuations of Gottfried's romance by Ulrich von Türheim and Heinrich von Freiberg: "Nach ihrer Auffassung des Gedichts als Verhöhnung der Gattentreue, hatten die Franzosen noch eine Reihe listig ersonnener ehebrecherischer Anschläge hinzugefügt, von welchen der letzte, bei dem Tristan fällt, ganz unzweideutig und keiner Art von Beschönigung fähig ist" (p. XI).

The enthusiastic and appreciative evaluation of Tristan made in 1838 by von der Hagen included similar remarks on the German poet, the Siegfried parallel and the mythological sources. Comparisons with French versions could be only to Gottfried's advantage, because the fable had been greatly enhanced through its reincarnation in his hands. The inferior French
renderings "[gefallen] sich in harten, ja rohen und nackten Ausdrücken und eben nicht züchtigen Ausmalungen" (p. 610); moreover, Gottfried's romance—"der echte Kodex der Minne, das eigentliche Buch der Liebe" (p. 562)—far outranked all medieval French works whatever their subject-matter: "Im allem was auch ich seitdem von Altfranzösischen Gedichten gesehen und gehört habe, ist keine Spur und Ahnung von dieser Zartheit und Bildung, Seele und Sprache" (p. 609). Gottfried's representation of the exemplary lovers was free from any taint of guilt or shamelessness: "Dabei strahlt die Darstellung in hoher Unschuld und Reinigkeit; so wie in der Dichtung selbst das sonst sträfliche und unleidliche Liebesverhältnis durch den verhängnisvollen Zaubertrank entschuldigt wird" (p. 609). Blessed by a divine inspiration, Gottfried expressed in Tristan a mystical yearning which far surpassed anything of that nature in Parzival:

... das ganze Gedicht spiegelt die klare und unergründliche Tiefe eines liebevollen und sehnsüchtigen göttlichen Gemüthes. Und obwohl Gottfried auch, im Geiste seiner Zeit, dem Religiösen-Mystischen zugeneigt ist, so erscheint Wolfram doch hart und streng nebei ihm, fast wie das Alter neben der Jugend. Gottfrieds Schilderung von dem seligen Leben der Gelieben [sic] in der zugleich ganz allegorischen Minnehöhle im Walde gehört zu dem Schönsten, was je gedichtet worden, und ist in der krystalhellen Darstellung... zugleich lebendigdichte Gestalt und vom tiefsten mystischen Geiste durchdrungen. (p. 610)

Furthermore, because Gottfried was fully aware of a universal meaning in the legend, in one episode the poet deliberately presented Isolde as an Eve-figure. Tristan's fate, according to von der Hagen, was that of all mankind, "die Urgeschichte und das allgemeine Geschick des Menschen" (p. 562).

The last of the mythologists to be considered in this context was Hermann Kurtz, who in the lengthy introduction written for the second edition of his Tristan translation (1847) discussed the origins, the Siegfried parallel, and Gottfried's treatment of the myth.26 Following Mone he pointed
out that the true meaning of the original cosmic myth had been forgotten by the time that medieval poets produced their corrupted versions of the theme. He cleared Gottfried of any charges of immorality, for the Tristan-Isolde relationship was not of his own inventing: "Er [Gottfried] ist somit nur für seine Form, seine Theilnahme, für Billigung und Tadel, aber nicht für die Märe selbst verantwortlich" (p. LXXXVI); "Theilen wir also gerecht was des Stoffes und was des Dichters ist: die Schuld und der unvermeidliche Trug . . . gehört der Märe an; die Liebe, die Treue, das Fromme und Heilige ist des Dichters Eigenthum" (p. LXXXVII). Besides praising Gottfried for having enhanced and purified the French version of the old myth, Kurtz then described this refining process as a moral action on Gottfried's part:

Liegt nun nicht genug sittlich dichterisches Verdienst darin wenn Gottfried, an seine Überlieferung gebunden, eine novellenhaft heruntergekommene Tragödie in den Kreis des rein Menschlichen, in die Sprache echter Minne zurück Übertrug, in jene ewig leuchtenden Farben von Lieb und Leid womon die welschen Vorbilder keine Ahnung haben kleidete, und der nur allzu gefügen Weise seiner Zeit eine sittlichere Grundlage, eine innigere Beseelung gab? (p. LXXXVIII)

When considering the relationship between the lovers he wrote that Isolde belonged to Tristan through natural law. This was shown above all by Tristan's killing of the dragon, an event which, according to Kurtz, reflected the basic myth: "Der ihr [der Tristansage] zu Grunde liegende vergessene Mythus erzählt von einer Jungfrau die in der Gewalt eines Drachen ist" (p. LXVIII). These "natural partners" were in love before they imbibed the magic potion, and thus "man sieht wohl, und Gottfried weiss es mit glänzender Kunst anschaulich zu machen, dass die Vereinigung der Liebenden auch ohne Hexerei zu Stande gekommen wäre" (p. LXVIII).
II  Positivistic Methods

The influence of positivism was as discernible in Gottfried criticism

towards the end of the century as it was in origin research and studies

of the manuscripts, and concentrated in two specific areas. These were first,

Gottfried's biography, and secondly, the poet's dependence on his source.

A. Biographical Studies

Johann Matthias Watterich wrote about Gottfried's life in his study

entitled Gottfried von Strassburg, ein Sänger der Gottesminne (Leipzig, 1858).

As was partially indicated by this title, Watterich's main aim was
to furnish an explanation for the disparity between the form of Minne in

the Tristan romance and that described in certain other works attributed to

Gottfried ("Das Lied von der Gottesminne" and "Das Lied von der williglichen

Armuth"), that is, between the secular Frauenminne "die den Adel des Weibes

nicht kennt noch achtet, die, der verklärenden Macht des Christenthums

abgewandt, auch des schönen Namens nicht werth war" (pp. 4-5), the immorality

and irreligiosity in Tristan, and the fervent Gottesminne and piety in the

hymns. He suggested that, before completing the romance, Gottfried went

on a crusade to gain the favour of his own "Isolde"; however, before

returning home he underwent a radical change in moral outlook for he met

St. Francis of Assisi and became a Franciscan. Thus the Tristan poem had

been left unfinished not because the poet had died (as was generally assumed)

but because "von irdischen, weltlichen Wünschen erfüllt, hatte Gottfried
den Kreuzzug angetreten, als ein völlig Anderer, als Gottesminnesänger sah

er die Heimath wieder" (p. 33). The romance reflected Gottfried's outlook

on life during his "immoral" period prior to conversion, and was in many

respects autobiographical. For example, "die ganze Stelle, in welcher
Gottfried das Leben Tristans bei der weisshündigen Isolde schildert (1917ff.), verräth sich als eine Selbstschilderung des Dichters" (p. 139, n.9). Watterich evidently presumed that his readers would know the story of Tristan and Isolde, for he did not give a plot-summary, but merely referred to some isolated parts of the romance in order to elicit biographical and autobiographical information. An essential feature in the biographical sketch was Gottfried's visit to Paris in order to study at the university—"O Paris, du Netz der Laster, du Pfeil der Hölle, wie durchbohrst du das Herz der Unbesonnenen!" (p. 139, n.8). It was in France, not Germany, that Gottfried first became acquainted with the sources upon which he later based his romance. By pointing out this single fact Watterich implicitly saved the "Ehre unserer Poesie im dreizehnten Jahrhundert" (p. 5). This critic, well acquainted with the views expressed by other critics who frowned upon the romance, for example Gervinus, Vilmar and Eichendorff, reiterated the main points of their Tristan evaluation and like them deplored the fact that such a base story should have been graced by Gottfried's indisputable artistic gifts:

Ein Dichter vor allen war es, der der Minne diese Schmach angethan, der mit einer alle übertreffenden Meisterschaft die Sprache des deutschen Herzens, den Liebesschmuck unseres ersten Dichterfrühlings zur Verherrlichung zucht- und sittenloser Leidenschaft missbraucht, und die deutsche Dichtung auf Jahrhunderte hin in falsche Bahnen fortgerissen hat. (p. 5)

Ten years after the appearance of Watterich's study a second biography was published, namely Richard Heinzel's "Über Gottfried von Strassburg." Heinzel, who has been named the "Typus des Positivisten," believed that biographies of medieval poets were essential source-material for "eine Geschichte der moralischen Empfindungen und Gesetze im deutschen Mittelalter" (p. 533), and that compensation for the lack of contemporary biographies was
provided by the works themselves: "Über vieles von diesen Dingen können die Werke der Dichter Aufschlüsse geben, ja, wenn sie etwas ausgedehnt sind, müssen sie es" (p. 533). He therefore conducted a prolonged dissection of the romance in order to establish the precise psychological, environmental and historical motives which underlay Gottfried's treatment of the material.

Much of his character-study rested on the assumption that Gottfried came of a bourgeois family and was employed in Strassburg as a rodelarius or Stadtschreiber—a position in which politics played a greater part than the politenesses of chivalry. Indeed, Gottfried's attitude toward the nobility was not always one of admiration: "Er mag als Bürgerlicher oder in seiner amtlichen Stellung Gelegenheit gehabt haben, die Schädlichkeit einfach ritterlicher Auffassung socialer und politischer Verhältnisse zu erproben. Natürlich konnte ein Bürger und Beamter das eher als wieder ein Ritter. Denn er zeigt in der That Spuren der Feindseligkeit gegen die Institution des Adels" (p. 535); "Tristan ... wollte der Dichter nicht nach gewöhnlicher Rittermoral handeln lassen" (p. 537). Typical of Heinzel's method of eliciting character-traits from the romance was the manner in which he obtained "proof" of Gottfried's patriotism: "Dass er [Gottfried] von einem Mann ganze Theilnahme für das Wohl des Vaterlandes fordere, sieht man deutlich aus seinem Gedicht. Tristans feurige Vaterlandsliebe wird oft betont" (p. 534). Of Gottfried's two main characteristics the first, "seine bürgerlich gelehrene Richtung" (p. 550), was on occasion detrimental to the poem, as for example when he paraded his learning and poetic talents in the allegory of the Minnegrotte: "Dann die Allegorie, von der Gottfried wahrhaft Missbrauch [sic] macht. Und je treffender sie ist, desto frostiger wirkt sie. Das Waldleben wird geradezu verdorben durch die allegorische Minnengrotte" (p. 541).
The second major characteristic was the poet’s acute and sensitive appreciation of beauty and love. Decency and decorum—lacking in French literature—characterized Gottfried’s presentation of the story, while the delicacy and tact displayed by Gottfried were absent from Wolfram’s work (p. 549). His views on love had been sublimated by his passion for a woman of noble standing in a rare link forged between the two social classes: "Das Singuläre seiner Lage musste die Empfindungen und Fähigkeiten Gottfrieds steigern" (p. 544). Moreover, his amatory doctrine bore little resemblance to the customary Minnesängermoral:

Liebe ist nur möglich bei ursprünglicher unwillkürlicher Empfindung. Wo aber Gottfried in der Meinung seiner Zeitgenossen oder der literarischen Übung der Dichter eine gleichmässig immer wiederkehrende Form des Empfindens vorfindet, da scheint er an der Echtheit desselben zu zweifeln und lässt die Personen seiner Dichtung nicht nur sich anders benehmen, sondern erklärt auch ausdrücklich, dass sie sich von der Regel entfernten. (p. 550)

The poet should not attract censure on the charge of immorality since love constituted for him the highest value in human life; the love of Tristan and Isolde was justified, whereas Marke on the other hand was the guilty party, blindly deceiving himself in order not to see where his wife’s affections lay. In Tristan-love the demands of sêle and sinne were reconciled: "Sie löst die Gegensätze zwischen Geist und Sinnlichkeit im Menschen auf,—er nennt es ëre und lip. . . . Jede Einseitigkeit hiebei wäre tadelnswerth" (p. 552). Only from love such as that experienced by Tristan and Isolde could one obtain ëre (reputation) and virtue. In his prologue Gottfried described two worlds, ir aller werlde (which could not tolerate unhappiness) and ein ander werl (in which joy and sorrow both played a part). Tristan and Isolde belonged to this latter society, and their conduct, however immoral or illicit in the eyes of ir aller werlde
Gottfried’s approbation of the relationship between hero and heroine was partially due to his environment: in 1212 eighty heretics belonging to a sect which preached a doctrine of complete sexual licence were put to death in Strassburg following an ordeal by fire ("Feuerprobe"), and, as Heinzel concluded, "Es wäre nicht unmöglich, dass diese Anschauungen, welche von so vielen Zeitgenossen und Mitbürgern Gottfrieds getheilt wurden, zu der Rücksichtslosigkeit beigetragen haben, mit welcher er für die Liebe unter allen Umständen auch ihr sinnliches Recht fordert" (p. 556).

The next scholar to discuss Gottfried’s biography dwelt at great length on the significance of the "Feuerprobe." In his "Zum Leben Gottfrieds von Strassburg" Hermann Kurz stressed that, although the lovers appeared to leave the ideal heights during the Judgment of God episode, the action "muss mit dem Masse seiner [Gottfrieds] Zeit gemessen werden" (p. 336) and in order to view it in that way the local, historical background should be taken into account. The "Pfaffenfeind" Gottfried, although himself unsympathetic to the heretical doctrines (p. 338), wanted to hold up to ridicule the corrupt Church practice of "Feuerproben"; in short, Gottfried was attacking "die Geistlichkeit, die . . . das Gottesurtheil hegt und pflegt, das Werkzeug des schändiglichsten Betruges (p. 335). Furthermore, as it was beyond doubt that his own relatives had helped condemn heretics during the "Strassburger Feuerprobe" of 1212 the Judgment of God episode in
Tristan was clearly the direct result of his distress at the participation of his family in this shameful event—and was, moreover, a most fitting way in which further to exonerate the lovers who were undeniably guilty before God and man:


Als wendet sich also zu der einzigen Behörde, die hier auszuhelfen geeignet ist, die nicht bloss die Macht hat, sondern auch die Mitschuld. Welche Behörde konnte Gottfried auch für seine sündigen Lieblinge besser in Anspruch nehmen, als eben jene, die ganz die gleichen, ja noch weit andere Sünder (falls sie nur keine Ketzer waren) freisprach, sie, die im Verzeihen oft fast noch stärker als im Nichtverzeihen war? (pp. 329-30)

Although much of the general biographical data in Kurz' study was the same as that supplied by Heinzel, it frequently underwent a different interpretation in his hands. A further example of the reassessment of given facts is found in the explanation of Gottfried's antagonism towards the nobility. According to Kurz this trait was due to the poet's family background rather than his occupation: Gottfried "[zählte] zu den herrschenden Familien. . . . Jener städtische Adel war dem Landadel ebenbürtig und fühlte sich bald wegen seines Reichthums hoch über ihm" (p. 216).

The predominance of positivistic methods in German literary research was due largely to Wilhelm Scherer, and it is therefore hardly surprising that one of the main features in his Tristan interpretation was the causal relationship between biography and romance. In his Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur (Berlin, 1883) he wrote that Gottfried selected the Tristan
theme for epic treatment with a distinct purpose in mind: in all probability not a nobleman by birth, he wished to make himself as aristocratic as possible and had therefore adopted as gospel the easy-going, tolerant, morally lax view of life held by the nobility and defended it in his romance with the inexorable logic of a fanatical apostle. While the original theme of the legend showed how noble knighthood was ruined by passion, Gottfried treated the fable in such a way as to defend the chivalrous philosophy of life even in its utmost extremes. Scherer maintained, however, that such a view of life was not indigenous, for the French chivalric moeurs and the French outlook on life had asserted themselves on the neighbouring Germans, and German chivalry then developed itself in all aspects after the French model. Thus, as Scherer had claimed in his contribution to the Geschichte des Elsasses:

In gewissem Sinne ist Gottfrieds Tristan der französischste Roman des deutschen Mittelalters ... wenn wir unter dem Französischen die vollendete äussere Durchbildung, die untadelige Feinheit der geselligen Form, die liberale Lebensanschauung, die lässige Beurtheilung sittlicher Dinge ... verstehen: so ist der Tristan das französischste Buch der älteren deutschen Litteratur. 32

The importance attached to the French character of the romance must be seen also in the context of Scherer's theory of the three classical periods in German literature (ca. 600, 1200 and 1800). As was made evident during the second and third of these literary peaks, the aesthetic sense of the Germans was at those times shaped by the Romance nations: "Und so kommt uns der ausgebildetere romanische Formkunst zu Hilfe, läutert unsern Geschmack, verlockt uns zur Nachahmung, und, indem er uns zu unterwerfen schien, hat er uns selbständig gemacht." 33 Due to this influence the second and third classical periods were marked by an abandonment of rigid
conventionalities in life and literature, and moral judgments became more liberal: "Mit der Toleranz der Nationalitäten geht die Toleranz der Religionen und die Lösung von starren Lebensgesetzen Hand in Hand. Und werden wir duldsamer im sittlichen Urteil, so herrscht dafür ein feineres Gefühl von Ehre und leitet zu edler Menschlichkeit" (p. 21).

B. Source Studies: The Gottfried-Thomas Relationship

Quellenforschungen sind jetzt an der Tagesordnung. Aus ihnen wird später auch die ästhetische Beurteilung Gewinn ziehen. Es wird sich immer mehr herausstellen, wie unsere alten Dichter gearbeitet haben, in wie weit sie der Quelle unterthan und in wie weit sie in der Benutzung des Stoffes selbstständig sind.34

In the survey of theories on the origins we noted that one of the basic reasons for the wide diversity of opinion among scholars lay in the indeterminate nature of oral tradition and also in the lack of the first romance. Scholars attempting to assess the extent of Gottfried's dependence on his source (Thomas of Brittany) found themselves in a similar situation, for much of the early part of this French work had been lost and the fragmentary remains began at almost the very point where Gottfried's own incomplete romance broke off.

Close study of the Gottfried-Thomas relationship commenced in 1865, when the fragments of a Tristan by a certain "Thomas" printed thirty years previously by Francisque Michel35 were identified by Adolphe Bossert as the work of Thomas of Brittany in the study entitled Tristan et Iseult: Poème de Gotfrit de Strasbourg, comparé à d'autres poèmes sur le même sujet (Paris, 1865). Bossert analyzed that portion in the Thomas fragments which overlapped with the German poem, and proved conclusively that Gottfried utilized Thomas for the corresponding section in his own romance:
Est-il besoin d’insister sur la parenté de ces deux textes ?
Il semblerait même, s’il était permis de porter un jugement sur une page isolée, que les emprunts de Gotfrit ont été plus considérables qu’on ne le suppose d’ordinaire. Il transforme son modèle, mais il en profite largement. . . . Enfin, il est permis de croire que le poète allemand a trouvé dans Thomas plus qu’une relation exacte des aventures de Tristan, et qu’il s’est inspiré souvent de la poésie du livre qu’il avait devant lui. Gotfrit, bien qu’il ne soit pas tout à fait exempt des défauts de ses contemporains, était un homme de goût et d’un tact délicat, et nous pensons que la valeur littéraire l’a décidé, autant que toute autre considération, à prendre Thomas de Bretagne pour modèle, en rejetant des traditions plus généralement accréditées. (pp. 112-13)

The next scholar to attempt a clarification of this relationship was Richard Heinzel, who in 1869 followed up his biographical study of Gottfried by an article on the source ("Gottfrieds von Strassburg Tristan und seine Quelle") wherein he propounded a misguided hypothesis based on an analysis of several medieval versions, namely Béroul, Eilhart, Thomas, Sir Tristrem and Gottfried. He held that Gottfried drew on two sources: an historical chronicle written by Thomas, (who also wrote part of a Tristan romance commencing with the hero’s arrival in Brittany) and a lost French Tristan romance which, having been formed in accordance with the Liedertheorie, was a compilation of originally separate poems (see the earlier discussion of this subject, p. 27). Heinzel concluded: "Thomas von Britannien [war] nicht Gottfrieds unmittelbare quelle . . . Gottfried selbst [hat] in einem geschriebenen buche eine darstellung von Tristan und Isolden gefunden, die in den historischen thatsachen mit den angaben der vita Tristani bei Thomas zusammentraf" (p. 274).

However, as Otto Behaghel pointed out in 1878, "Heinzel hat etwas wichtiges übersehen, indem ihm die nordischen Fassungen der Sage unbekannt geblieben sind." Behaghel compared the thirteenth-century Norwegian version of the theme (Tristramssaga) with Gottfried’s redaction, and con-
cluded that both derived from the same French original. The scholar Gísli Brynjúlfsson, who in 1851 had edited part of the Saga, had noted that this rendering corresponded so closely to the Thomas fragments in Michel's edition that the Norwegian redactor had virtually translated Thomas' work. Behaghel now suggested that one could deduce from these undeniable textual relationships that—contrary to Heinzel's supposition—a Tristan romance by Thomas may indeed have been Gottfried's direct source:

Wir haben somit in der Saga ein ziemlich sicheres Mittel, das Verhältniss Gottfrieds zu seiner Quelle zu beurtheilen. Welches ist aber nun jenes gemeinsame Original? . . . Gottfried und Saga haben im Wesentlichen ein und dieselbe Quelle: Gottfried und Saga stimmen in den vergleichbaren Theilen zu Thomas: ist also doch Thomas die Quelle für Gottfrieds Tristan? (p. 228)

That same year Emil Lobedanz approached the Gottfried-Thomas problem from another angle in his dissertation Das französische Element in Gottfrieds von Strassburg Tristan (published in Schwerin, 1878). To establish whether the Thomas to whom Gottfried referred wrote in French or in Latin (a possibility which had not yet been excluded) he conducted an analysis of the extent to which Gottfried drew on French literature. From this, an undertaking typical of the "Parallelenjagd" and "pedantische Kleinlichkeitskrämerei" of positivism, he determined that sufficient evidence had been accumulated to prove that Gottfried not only utilized a French Tristan romance as his source, but that in all his activities as a poet Gottfried was totally dependent upon French literature:

Unser Dichter schildert das Leben der Ritter wie ein Chrestien, er befolgt das höfische Ceremoniell bis auf die eigenthümlichsten Vorschriften der Etiquette so genau wie die Franzosen. . . . Mochte das französische Ritterwesen sich auch zum grossen Theile auch unter dem deutschen Adel eingebürgert haben, immerhin bleibt es auffallend, dass Gottfried dasselbe bis auf alle Einzelheiten . . . den Trouvères nachzeichnet. . . . Gottfried entnahm dem Französischen eine Reihe von Wörtern und Redensarten. . . . Er folgt darin der Mode, aber er zeigt diesen Geschmack stärker ausgeprägt als andere mittelhochdeutsche Dichter. . . . Er malt Sitten und Gebräuche mit ihrem Pinsel. (p. 44)
Lobedanz maintained also that the correspondence between Gottfried's poem and the fragments printed by Michel indicated either that Gottfried used Thomas as his source, or that both these poets relied on another work. In either case the German poet depended upon a French *Tristan* which he followed almost slavishly—and so keen was Lobedanz to make this last point clear that he had few scruples about basing this prejudiced hypothesis upon the slimmest of factual evidence, as can be seen in his comments on the *Minnengrotte* and its accompanying allegory in Gottfried's version: "Da Gottfried die Minnengrotte selbst (*la fossiure a la gent amant*) und ihre Umgebung (*funtanje und planje*) wörtlich aus dem Original entlehnte, so liegt die Vermuthung nahe, dass auch die weitere sinnbildliche Darstellung nicht sein Eigenthum ist" (p. 32); the cave scene was lacking in the extant Thomas fragments, and this attack on Gottfried's originality was therefore based on the occurrence of a few French words in Gottfried's depiction of the scene!

The third investigation of the Gottfried-Thomas relationship produced in 1878, and the one which drew from Weber the acclaim: "Das Jahr 1878 ist ohne Zweifel eines der entscheidenden Jahre in der Tristanforschung (und auch in der Gottfriedforschung im engeren Sinne)," was that conducted by Eugen Kölbing. Brief mention of his contribution to *Tristan* scholarship was made in the discussion of Bédier's reconstruction of Thomas' work (p. 45) and we then referred to his thesis that Gottfried's *Tristan*, the *Saga* and *Sir Tristrem* all derived from Thomas of Brittany's version of the fable. This conclusion was reached by Kölbing while he was in the process of editing the Norwegian and the English redactions. He had made an intensive study of the English work when collating the Auchinleck MS. in preparation
for a new edition of *Sir Tristrem* to replace that made by Walter Scott, and since the as yet unedited *Saga* facilitated an understanding of the closely related *Sir Tristrem*, he had decided to publish also the Norwegian version. Both the *Saga* and the extant Thomas fragments presented certain episodes in the same sequence, and the Norwegian redactor (Brother Robert) abbreviated and translated Thomas' work. The *Saga* could therefore be regarded as a fairly reliable guide to the missing parts of the French source, and according to Külbing the logical conclusion to be drawn from these premises was that a comparison of Gottfried's *Tristan* with the *Saga* would give an indication of the magnitude of Gottfried's reliance on Thomas. After studying these relationships at some depth he then brought in the following verdict on Gottfried's originality:

Wir können dasselbe dahin zusammenfassen, dass Gottfried sich in allem, was den sachlichen inhalt seiner vorlage angeht, peinlich genau an dieselbe gehalten, ja lange stellen fast wort für wort übertragen hat. . . . Gottfried ist, eben so wie Hartmann, ein feinsinniger übersetzer . . . als einen dichter, welcher in selbständiger gestaltungskraft über seinem stoffe steht, der unebenheiten des originales bessert oder ausgleicht, die darstellung modernen verhältnissen näher bringt, sich volkstümlicher zeigt, aus bewusster welt- und menschenkenntniss ändert, charakte veredelt im verhältniss zu seiner quelle, mit einem worte, als einen so idealen und grossen geist, als welchen ihn Heinzle hinstellen möchte, werden wir ihn von jetzt ab nicht mehr zu betrachten haben. . . . Gerade hier ist eine pessimistische anschauungsweise nur allzu gerechtfertigt. (p. CXLVIII)

The obvious flaw in Külbing's argument strongly resembles that present in the hypotheses of certain origin researchers. It is no more possible to deduce from other redactions the precise contents of Thomas' version than it is to reconstruct the plot of the archetypal *Tristan* from a comparison of the extant primary versions. To brand Gottfried as an accurate translator of his French source on premises such as those set up by Külbing cannot be regarded as a logical procedure.
Kölbing by no means excluded the possibility that stylistic studies (which, like the question of the poem's morality, he did not pursue) might lead to different results about the originality of German poets. "Es wird sich vielmehr in zukunft das augenmerk in wesentlich höherem grade, als dies bisher geschehen, auf die stilistischen unterschiede zwischen den altfr. quellen und ihren mhd. übertragungen richten müssen, und dabei werden die vorzüge wie die schwächen der letzteren in ein neues und helleres licht treten" (p. CXLVIII). Even though Gottfried displayed no powers of narrative invention in his work, comparative stylistic studies might therefore indicate that he had some praiseworthy and unique talents. Lobedanz had emphatically denied this possibility (above, p. 113) for in his opinion the poet lacked all poetic individuality. In 1881 however Carl Lüth gave a brief account of Gottfried's style ("Der Ausdruck der dichterischen Individualität in Gottfried's Tristan") in which he refuted openly Lobedanz' arguments and listed many features in the romance that testified to the originality of the German poet. Lüth devoted his extensive preliminary remarks to an explanation of the practice of source-usage in courtly romance, as he wished to make clear that Gottfried should not be criticized for having followed the French version closely, as such borrowings were the common practice at that time and were regarded as praiseworthy, not blameworthy. Through his artistic form and skilful presentation Gottfried raised the traditional material "zu der herrlichsten aller mittelalterlichen Kunstschöpfungen" (p. 9). Lüth deliberately refrained from passing judgment on Gottfried's moral outlook, and wrote: "Darum nun, dass er überhaupt diesen Stoff wählte, mögen wir ihn tadeln oder loben; wir können auch Schlüsse daraus ziehen auf seine ganze Individualität, seine Lebensanschauung und
Lebensauffassung; aber seine dichterische Individualität erkennen wir nicht daraus" (p. 9).

The year 1885 saw the publication of the Tristan-Studien by Friedrich Bahnsch, who maintained that any inventive powers Gottfried may have possessed remained latent because of his adherence to Thomas, "die sklavische Abhängigkeit von der Vorlage." This critic, however, made known his feelings about the German poet not in order to detract from the latter's fame but, on the contrary, to enhance his reputation. Singling out the many "flaws" in the romance, such as unclear descriptions, contradictions, and the "blasphemous" episode of the Judgment of God, Bahnsch emphasized that Gottfried found these in his source, and therefore had to retain them in his own rendering of the fable. In short, "die naive Glaubigkeit, die Gottfried überall seiner Quelle entgegenbringt, zwingt ihm mitunter, selbst Dinge zu erzählen, mit denen er sich innerlich nicht einverstanden erklären kann" (p. 11).

Whether a modern scholar could indeed detect any of the additions and amendments made by Gottfried when writing his Tristan was called in doubt by H. Roetteken, whose article "Das innere Leben bei Gottfried von Strassburg" appeared in 1890. Recognizing the weakness of Kölbing's tenet, he asserted that from a comparison of Tristan with the Saga one achieved no clear-cut results about the German poet's originality, and a careful analysis of the romance would therefore be a more profitable and revealing study for the Tristan scholar. His survey of the "innere Leben" was little more than a collection of facts culled during a close and thorough examination of the text, and as such well demonstrated the materialistic preoccupations then current in literary scholarship. He agreed with Bahnsch that Gottfried's dependence on his source accounted for the undeniable flaws in the work, and,
far from belittling Gottfried for this reliance on Thomas, maintained that the German poet possessed great and unique gifts: "Überhaupt muss, trotz allem . . . Gottfrieds grosses talent in unangefochtener anerkennung bleiben" (p. 83). In the concluding remarks to this study Roetteken gave voice to the frequently expressed two-sided evaluation of the romance: "Tristan ist auf alle falle für uns ein unsympathischer held. Um so grösser muss aber unsere bewunderung für die kunst des dichters sein, die uns trotzdem fesselt" (p. 114).

The criticism of Gottfried by the French scholar Joseph Firmery in 1901 ("Notes critiques sur quelques traductions allemandes de poèmes français au moyen âge") contained a number of arguments about Gottfried's lack of originality which had hitherto escaped attention—for example, his imitation of many French poets and in particular of Chrétien de Troyes. So closely did he model himself on French literature that "quant on sort par exemple de la lecture du Cligès de Chrétien, pour passer au Tristan, on a la sensation qu'on n'a pas changé d'art, à peine de pays. C'est la même façon de concevoir l'amour et d'en parler" (p. 116). Gottfried's imitation of Chrétien compensated in some measure for the loss of the latter's Tristan romance, for the style and manner of Chrétien so impregnated Gottfried's work that "on croirait souvent entendre le maître lui-même" (p. 128). However, Gottfried differed from the French poets upon whom he schooled himself in that he greatly exaggerated the stylistic devices which he had borrowed, and in this way art degenerated into artificiality. Firmery openly criticized German scholars such as Massmann who unjustly imputed indecency to the French medieval poets; elegance matched decency in the writings of Hartmann von Aue and Gottfried von Strassburg, and both these
features were the marks of the French courtoisie with which these two refined German poets were imbued. In summing up his views on Gottfried, Firmery wrote: "Le traducteur du Tristan s'est montré un artiste habile et élégant, mais il est . . . l'élève de la poésie française" (p. 145).

Joseph Bédier proved to be far less prejudiced and chauvinistic than his compatriot Firmery: he recognized and acclaimed Gottfried's originality, despite the fact that the extent to which Gottfried relied on Thomas was of more consequence for Bédier's present task (the reconstruction of the missing parts of the French version) than were Gottfried's deviations from the source:

Nous n'avons pas à dégager ce que Gottfried a pu ajouter à l'œuvre de son devancier; c'est aux critiques de Gottfried de le tenter, si notre reconstruction du Tristan de Thomas leur offre pour la première fois, comme nous l'espérons, une base solide. Notre tâche est précisément inverse: et c'est d'extraire du Gottfried la plus grande somme possible des éléments par lui empruntés à Thomas.47

Speaking briefly of the difference between the two poets he mentioned that Thomas' robust, elaborate, trouvère style was replaced by Gottfried's gentler, more graceful and more musical treatment, and that "ce n'est plus cette gravité, triste souvent, du poète anglo-normand, mais la gaiété, la lumière, cette sorte d'exaltation sentimentale et d'ivresse légère que les poètes courtois, donnant au mot un sens érotérique, appelaient la joie" (p. 80). He hailed Gottfried as a kindred-spirit to Thomas, related by nature and sensibility, yet as one who possessed and exercised independent powers of poetic invention. While accepting, following and wishing to reproduce the "plan" and the "law" of Thomas, Gottfried transformed—perhaps unknowingly and probably involuntarily—his model. In short, Gottfried created his own Tristan. Summing up the impressions which he had gained of the relationship between the two poets, Bédier wrote: "L'histoire des
lettres offre-t-elle un second exemple d'une telle soumission et d'une
telle indépendance? Pendant vingt mille vers, Gottfried a transposé son
modèle: nulle trace de parasitisme pourtant; il s'est insinué à la
place de Thomas, il s'est vraiment substitué à lui" (p. 79).

The first fruits of Bédier's reconstruction appeared almost immediately
in the research into L'originalité de Gottfried de Strasbourg conducted by
Félix Piquet (1905). Piquet undertook this project for two reasons: first,
to defend Gottfried from those critics who mistakenly regarded him as a mere
copyist, lacking in all initiative, and secondly, in order to show how
erroneous were certain critics who attributed to Gottfried the responsibility
for good and bad features in the work. For these Thomas should more rightly
be honoured or blamed. The extensive comparative examination conducted by
Piquet between Tristan, Saga, Sir Tristrem and Thomas (fragments and Bédier's
reconstruction) embraced far more than the few linguistic and stylistic
differences already indicated by Bédier. Piquet found signs of Gottfried's
originality throughout Tristan; the poet's attitude toward his source was
not that of a passive recipient but rather that of a critical observer, who
succeeded in giving a greater plausibility to the action of the story: "Il
a dominé son récit et s'est appliqué . . . à éviter les dissonances qu'il
trouvait dans son modèle. . . . Il a atténué les invraisemblances de son
original. . . . Il a ajouté au récit quantité d'explications nouvelles"
(pp. 373-74). Furthermore, Gottfried not only proved to be the greater
psychologist of the two, but he also possessed a sensitivity, a nobility of
feeling, a critical awareness, and a keen sense of humour not evident in
his predecessor. These gifts, combined with his imaginative and logical
gifts of narration, marked him as an original poet, and to call him a
translator would be to do him a great injustice. However splendid these unique gifts of the German poet, Piquet considered that the most illustrious quality was his style: the sheer art of poetry far outranked all his other talents and was such as to set him above his great contemporaries: "Le style de Gottfried a ses défauts, mais ses beautés élèvent l'auteur du Tristan allemand bien au-dessus de ses contemporains, qu'ils s'appellent Hartmann d'Aue, Wolfram d'Eschenbach ou Walther de la Vogelweide" (p. 374).

From our earlier discussion of the contributions made by Wolfgang Golther to the study of origins we recall that this critic had a propensity to change radically his opinions on certain matters (see p. 42) and his writings on the Gottfried-Thomas relationship display the same tendency. Contained in his brief article "Zur Tristansage" (1888) was the statement: "Des Thomas Gedicht ist aber, wie wir es längst durch die meisterhafte mhd. Übertragung hindurch ahnen, die Krone und der Schlusstein der Tristandichtung" (pp. 363-64). Lest this praise of Thomas should detract too much from Gottfried's fame, he added a footnote explaining his assessment. Thomas' achievement far excelled that of Gottfried, for although the prize for aesthetics went to Gottfried, Thomas' accomplishment was that of the creative poet: "Die Gerechtigkeit verlangt ein weit mehr zu betonendes Hervorheben des Thomas, und eine Beschränkung der Vorzüge Gottfrieds auf das ihnen zukommende Gebiet... Vom geschichtlichen Standpunkte aus war die That von Thomas eine grösse, da ihr die vollkommene schöpferische Selbstdändigkeit zukommt" (pp. 363-64, n.3).

However, when discussing this same relationship in his Tristan und Isolde in den Dichtungen des Mittelalters und der neuen Zeit (Leipzig, 1907), these views were much modified, and both Thomas and Gottfried were credited
with having demonstrated their originality in reworking literary sources in individual ways. Thomas altered the Urtristan, thereby creating the first courtly Tristan romance. Gottfried did not translate this work, "er hat vielmehr das französische Gedicht so verdeutscht, dass eine eigenartige und hochbedeutende Neudichtung daraus ward. Gottfried hat vollendet, was Thomas begann, die höfische und zugleich klassische Form der Tristansage geschaffen" (pp. 170-71). Golther now quoted extensively from the writings of Bédier and Piquet to illustrate his arguments, and moreover accorded the laurels to Gottfried rather than Thomas, thus reversing the judgment passed in 1888: "Gottfried hat diese Schöpfung verfeinert, vertieft, in Form und Darstellung vervollkommnet. Könnten wir zwischen einem vollständigen Text des Thomasgedichtes und dem vollendeten Gedichte Gottfrieds wählen, so wäre der Preis sicher dem deutschen Dichter zuzuerkennen, da hier das Gold doppelt geläutert ist" (p. 179).
III Conclusion

Certain distinct trends are noticeable in the first century of Gottfried criticism. The initial Romantic enthusiasm for the Tristan romance, expressed most eloquently by Docen and A.W. Schlegel, soon yielded to the disapprobation voiced by Lachmann and echoed by successive generations of literary historians. All critics, when discussing topics such as the triangular relationship between the main characters (Tristan, Isolde and Marke), the guilt or innocence of the lovers, and Gottfried’s amatory doctrine, were faced with the problem of the moral content of the poem. The Lachmann School, measuring the work by the standard of the tight-laced nineteenth-century moral code and contrasting the theme with that of Wolfram’s Parzival, voiced strong objections to the romance which, in their eyes, was nothing but a repugnant tale of adultery. The manner in which these critics summarized the plot clearly mirrored their attitude. Gottfried was classified as a blasphemous anti-Christian, who in his licentious lack of spirituality anticipated the sensuality of the Renaissance. This evaluation was usually coupled with effusive praise of Gottfried’s artistry, by means of which he refined the material which he borrowed from the French for his own use. Thus in the Lachmann School vehement denigrations were balanced by the equally strong assertions that the German poet enhanced the coarse, foreign, immoral story with his refined and refining artistic talents, and in so doing adorned with a shimmering external beauty a corroded, repulsive romance.

The apologia given by the Mythological School was founded on the claim that one could unearth a deeper meaning which lay at the root of the love-story. The medieval poets who reworked the fable were unaware of the
ancient myths, and their presentation of the story in its corrupt, younger form—in which the myths such as the maiden’s rescue from the dragon had been obscured or forgotten—accounted for the frequency with which a poem such as Gottfried’s *Tristan* was now attacked on moral grounds.

It is not without interest to note that those scholars who championed Gottfried’s cause all delineated the common bond between the *Tristan* and the *Siegfried* legends. The fable which, in their view, did not merit the label of immorality affixed to it by the Lachmann School, was related to Germanic folklore. Gottfried’s detractors, on the other hand, did not fail to point out that the poet did not invent the story, but adopted it from French (and ultimately Celtic) sources, and this of course implied that the immorality in *Tristan* should be imputed not to the Germans but to the French and Celts.

Gottfried criticism in the latter half of the nineteenth century was potently influenced and shaped by positivism, and interest centred now on biographical and source studies. Gottfried’s life offered happy hunting-ground to the positivists, who constructed a number of hypotheses determined by three main factors: their interpretation of the text, their views on the poet’s bourgeois upbringing, and the environment in Strassburg at the time of writing *Tristan*. The close investigation of the Gottfried-Thomas relationship was synchronous with the Insular-Continental controversy and bore a marked affinity to it: just as the question of Chrétien’s originality occasioned much dispute in the inter-school controversy, so too were Gottfried’s inventive powers at stake in this branch of scholarship. However, such scholarship, initiated by the identification of the extant fragments of the *Tristan* by Thomas of Brittany, furthered by Kölbing’s textual studies, and culminating in Bédier’s reconstruction of Thomas’ work, could offer no
final, definitive statement on the relationship between the two poets simply because so much of Thomas' original version was lacking. Scholarship therefore had to remain for the most part in the realm of hypothesis. The textual comparisons conducted at this time yielded little more than the certain knowledge that, in one small portion of his romance, Gottfried showed a depth of psychological insight, a desire for plausibility, and a mastery of poetic style not present in his source.

On the whole, Thomas' accomplishment stood higher in the opinion of the late nineteenth-century scholars than did that of the "translator" Gottfried, and this attitude can be linked to the chauvinism which emerged in the evaluations of the morality in the latter's Tristan poem. To prove that Gottfried was singularly lacking in poetic invention and therefore translated the adulterous story into German was not necessarily a means of discrediting him, for implicit in such an accusation was a vindication of Germany and German literature. Thus the discussion of the aesthetics in Tristan and of the Gottfried-Thomas relationship afforded German critics good opportunity to demonstrate the superiority of their culture over that of France—a sentiment of cultural supremacy perhaps not evoked yet surely intensified by the contemporaneous political triumph. However, at the turn of the century the respect for Thomas' achievement in creating the courtly Tristan—and all that such respect implied—showed signs of diminishing. This reappraisal of Thomas was a development clearly occasioned by the importance now attached to "die erste Aufgabe der Tristanforschung" (Golther), namely the recovery of the archetypal romance, the primary source tapped by Thomas and the other early Tristan poets.
CHAPTER FOUR

TWENTIETH-CENTURY INTERPRETATIONS
OF GOTTFRIED'S TRISTAN

I Survey of Interpretations

"Sie [die Geistesgeschichte] hat gelehrt, dass die sogenannten 'philologischen' Probleme wie: Entstehungsgeschichte, Einflüsse, Quellen, Textkritik, einen Wert nur haben als materielle Vorbereitungen der eigentlichen Aufgabe, der Interpretation des Dichtwerks als eines sinnlich-geistigen Ganzen."¹ In the course of the twentieth century a number of scholars have attempted to arrive at an understanding of Gottfried's work, and their original interpretations stand in marked contrast to the stock mythological and "Lachmannian" approaches popular in the nineteenth century. Aware that resemblances in story outline by no means prevent major differences in intent, the recent interpreters of the Tristan poem have aimed at discovering the meaning with which the medieval poet invested the inherited story and the psychological reasons which determined his particular treatment of the material. The new approach was closely bound up with the spread of Geistesgeschichte in literary criticism, when the general trend of thought was abandoning scientific positivism in favour of metaphysical speculation. The theories of Geisteswissenschaften, the genesis of which is associated particularly with Wilhelm Dilthey, constituted a radical reaction to positivism. Dilthey, who developed a new method of literary interpretation which emphasized understanding ("Verstehen"), felt that the spiritual traditions of the past should be relived by anyone wishing to study it, for only in this way would an historian truly understand or experience the Zeitgeist of former eras and the creative
process and experience of earlier writers. The belief held by members of the
new school in this Zeitgeist or spirit of the times led a number of them to
trace a parallelism or "wechselseitige Erhellung" of all the arts.\textsuperscript{2} Thus,
while the positivists were preoccupied with meticulous analysis, the new
method was theoretically one of analogy and synthesis in that it emphasized
the likenesses between the productions of a particular period.

Certain topics which, when treated by earlier scholars, were considered
peripheral to or unproblematic for Tristan interpretation, now developed
into central issues. As Friedrich Ranke aptly commented on earlier attitudes,
"im allgemeinen war es ja freilich um die Jahrhundertwende noch kaum Sitte,
so in die Tiefe, ins Weltanschauliche dringende, so unphilologische Fragen
an das Mittelalter zu richten."\textsuperscript{3} Prominent among the problems which engaged
twentieth-century critics was that of the medieval Gott-Welt dualism: the
struggle for harmony between the eternal and the temporal, the supernatural
and the natural, the divine and the human, true joys and vanity, soul
(spiritus) and body (caro), spirituality and sensuality, agape and eros.
Furthermore, the possibility that Gottfried's thought was shaped by medieval
theology, mysticism and philosophy came to the fore in Tristan scholarship,
and the complexion of source studies was transformed when scholars began
to consult writers other than Thomas of Brittany in their endeavours to
understand the romance.\textsuperscript{4} The Gottfried-Thomas relationship continued to
claim the attention of scholars, however, especially since the poet's
deviations from the French source assumed a position of crucial significance
for modern interpretations of the German romance. Indeed, it is hardly an
exaggeration to say that in 1925 the course of the whole future development
of Tristan interpretation was set by Ranke's analysis of one section in
the romance which originated indisputably with Gottfried, namely the allegory
of the Minnegrotte (see p. 136).

Some indication of the new range of interests was given in the work of those scholars writing in the first quarter of the century who, like Watterich and Heinzel some years earlier, showed a greater desire to solve the enigma of Gottfried's biography than to interpret his original treatment of the love-theme. At the same time these biographical studies helped to eradicate the image of Gottfried as a carefree and irreligious blasphemer which had been popularized by the Lachmann School. Félix Piquet and the Catholic theologian Ulrich Stökle were the first to stress the poet's religiosity, and the discussion of his life and education was continued by Hermann Fischer and Matthias Thiel, O. S. B.

Piquet in 1905 emphatically rejected the idea put forward by Hermann Kurz over thirty years previously that Gottfried was none other than a "Pfaffenfeind," whose hostility to the clergy disclosed itself in the episode of the Judgment of God (see p. 108). Of Gottfried's comments on the outcome of Isolde's trial by ordeal Piquet now wrote: "Gottfried, en effet, ne s'indigne ni contre les prêtres, ni contre le Christ . . . mais contre ceux qui le contraignent à cette versatilité, contre les plaideurs maîtres . . . . [Ce n'est] ni un acte impie, ni une critique du clergé, mais la manifestation indignée d'un honnête homme" (pp. 268-69). Piquet aimed throughout his study at differentiating between Gottfried and Thomas, and phrased his conclusions on the German poet's pronounced piety accordingly by maintaining that there existed "un sentiment religieux bien plus apparent dans le poème allemand que dans le Tristan français" (p. 326).

This new attitude toward Gottfried reappeared in Stökle's dissertation Die theologischen Ausdrücke und Wendungen im Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg (1915). He noted the extensive use of theological expressions
in the romance and presented this vast assemblage of phrases as sure proof of Gottfried’s religiosity. Stbkle concluded "dass Gottfried kein ‘Bürgerlicher’ gewesen, sondern den Kreisen der Geistlichkeit sehr nahe gestanden ist. Vielleicht hat er selbst zu ihr gezählt; jedenfalls sprechen mehr Gründe dafür als dagegen" (p. 672); and that Gottfried probably was a magister secundus or clergyman teaching at the cathedral school in Strassburg. Much greater value for future scholarship lay however in Stbkle’s demonstration that the poet possessed a far wider knowledge of theological-philosophical literature than Tristan scholars had hitherto realized: Gottfried drew on "Kirchenschriftsteller . . . wie Rupert von Deutz, Honorius Augustodunensis, Alanus de insulis, Petrus Comestor, Hugo von St. Viktor" (p. 581). In 1916 Stbkle’s former teacher, Hermann Fischer, endorsing the argument concerning the religious training which the poet had undoubtedly received, at the same time anticipated a problem which provided later critics with much food for thought. He detected some discrepancy between, on the one hand, Gottfried’s retention of the outward forms of religion in his epic, and, on the other, the love-theme. This brought him to the conclusion that, though formally correct in theological matters, Gottfried could not be called a truly religious man.

Matthias Thiel countered Stbkle in 1921 in the article "Hat Gottfried von Strassburg dem Kreise der Geistlichkeit angehört?" He carefully sifted Stbkle’s arguments and was left with no substantial proof that Gottfried belonged to religious orders; on the contrary the theological knowledge displayed by the poet was such as could be acquired by any educated member of the laity. This fact, together with the poet’s familiarity with such matters as music and court etiquette, convinced Thiel that Gottfried did not come from a bourgeois family, but rather belonged to the petty nobility,
and that as a member of that class he attended, rather than taught at, the local monastery or cathedral school. In one of Thiel’s counter-arguments another sign of the growing interest in Gottfried’s theological sources can be seen:

Wenn man sich die von Gottfried angewandten Bilder und Vergleiche im einzelnen näher ansieht, dann gewinnt man allerdings bei einigen den Eindruck, dass hier das bloße Lesen der Bibel nicht hinreicht, um sie befriedigend zu erklären. So redet er V. 16504 vom Balsam der Minne. Dieses Bild kann wohl an Ecclesiasticus 24, 20: "sicut balsamum aromatizans, odorem dedi" erinnern, ist aber nicht so ohne weiteres von dort hergenommen. Will man hier auf jeden Fall eine Beeinflussung des Dichters durch die kirchliche Literatur annehmen, dann dürfte wohl am nächsten liegen, an die Mystik zu denken. Ob Gottfried aber diese Beeinflussung direkt durch eigenes Studium der mystischen Werke erfahren hat oder nur indirekt, lässt sich bei der geringen Zahl solcher Bilder nicht feststellen. (pp. 24-5)

These biographical sketches drawn up in the early twentieth century contributed as little to a satisfactory elucidation of Gottfried’s life as had done the hypotheses propounded by earlier scholars, nor can it be said that their authors attained to a deep understanding of the romance. Nevertheless certain trends in this, the biographical branch of scholarship, do merit attention for they appeared also in the Tristan interpretations which were being given at this time. These trends were as follows: first, the general investigation of the theological-philosophical works which Gottfried might have known; secondly, the research into the influence of mysticism on the poet; and thirdly, an intensified study of the attitude which he displayed concerning the recognized outward forms of religion. Among the most notable contributions to Tristan interpretation made during the first decade of the century and guided by these and similar concerns were those of Wilhelm Dilthey. Dilthey played a conspicuous role in the whole development of literary criticism, and it is indeed fortunate for an outline of Tristan scholarship that he was familiar with Gottfried’s
work; twice he discussed the poem, and each of these commentaries manifested his new approach to literature. Because his method of literary interpretation emphasized "Verstehen" and "Erlebnis," he attempted to gain insight into Gottfried's process of literary creation by relating certain features in the romance to the spirit of the times evident in the theological, historical and philosophical background against which the poet had written. Comparing Tristan-love with the experiences of the medieval mystics, for instance, he wrote: "Was die mystische Religiosität des Mittelalters in dem Verkehr der gläubigen Seele mit Gott als höchstes Gut verwirklicht fand, dies Wunder wird im Verhältnis der Liebenden für ihren Dichter Wirklichkeit--greifbare Erfahrung" (p. 139). Writing on Gottfried's views on religion and on the question of the Gott-Welt dualism he stated that, because Gottfried experienced life within a secure, stable divine order, he could emancipate himself from the conventional religious traditions in order to express his very joy in life and his "gospel" of love, beauty and secular pleasures (p. 135). Furthermore, the Zeitgeist--as illustrated by the flow of intellectual and political developments during Gottfried's life-time--was reflected in the nature of this intellectually-ruled poet:  

In Gottfried regiert die Souveränität des Geistes. In den Kämpfen der Hohenstaufen mit dem Papsttum gelangte sie zum Durchbruch; sie hat dann in der Politik Friedrichs II. und seiner Staatsmänner, in dem, was über ihre Denkart spärlich uns erhalten ist, ihren weltgeschichtlichen bedeutsamen Ausdruck gefunden, und darin ist nun der Tristan für das Verständnis der damaligen Kultur ein unschätzbares Denkmal, dass diese höchste Stufe geistiger Souveränität, die das Zeitalter erreicht hat, hier in einem poetischen Werke vollen Ausdruck gefunden hat ... in dem vollen Ausdruck des Erlebens, wie nur Dichtung ihn bietet. Denn sie allein schöpfen aus den letzten Tiefen des Erlebnisses den Ausdruck für den ganzen Gehalt desselben. (p. 132)
In a similar manner the character of the hero mirrored contemporary political history: "Immer wieder muss man bei seinem Helden, in den er alle seine Seelenkunde zusammengenommen hat, an die Persönlichkeiten auf der grossen politischen Bühne seiner Zeit, vor allen Dingen an den grossen Hohenstaufen, denken—so biegsam und fein und doch so stählern und so sicher verwundend, so unbezähmbar und herrisch im Willen und doch so geheim in dessen Wegen—von so ungebundener Skrupellosigkeit" (p. 138).

Moreover, as he noted in Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung (1906), the whole romance was impregnated with Gottfried's "subjectivity," personality and sentiment: the poet had undoubtedly experienced the "Lust und Leid der Liebe" (p. 156) and had chosen to treat the Tristan material "weil er das Gefäss seines hellen Lebenssinnes, vielleicht selbst persönlicher Zustände und Erlebnisse sein konnte" (p. 155).

Friedrich Vogt also stood on the threshold of the new era in Tristan criticism, and in his work are found further indications of the awakening interest in the poet's literary background and in the influence of mysticism on his thought. Vogt cast fresh light upon the aesthetics in the epic, and in so doing introduced a method of interpreting Gottfried's attitude which remained in vogue for several years. But at the same time Vogt harboured the traditional moralizing views on the content of Tristan: he brought in a verdict of immorality on the love-theme, and thus in Paul's Grundriss of 1901 referred to "den verletzenden Stoff" and "die sittliche Stumpfheit." Over twenty years later he was still raising similar objections to the work, and in 1922 showed that his sympathies clearly lay with Marke—a basically noble and kind figure—and not with the lovers, whose behaviour defied all moral codes.
Of Vogt’s two main contributions to modern scholarship the first was the lecture which he delivered in 1908 on the subject "Der Bedeutungswandel des Wortes edel,"13 the second was his discussion of the Minnegrotte allegory in the literary history. The former included a brief commentary on the concept of the noble heart (daz edele herze) in Gottfried’s Tristan, and according to Vogt’s definition the concept of nobility covered by that term was not that of hereditary nobility. Distinguishing between the noble hearts and the average members of the courtly world he asserted that the poet was writing of and for an aristocracy composed of people of fine sentiment and acute appreciation of the aesthetic—in short, the noble hearts were those who displayed "[ein] verfeinertes ästhetisches Empfinden"; "Das edle Herz nach Gottfrieds Sinn ist offen für alles Schöne der Welt, für Naturschönheit und Frauenschönheit, für Gesang und Dichtung; es ist auch vor allem inniger Liebe fähig" (p. 11). In discussing the source from which Gottfried adopted this idea of the noble heart, Vogt drew an analogy between it and the noble soul of medieval mysticism. However great was the distinction which could be drawn between the aims of the mystics and those of the "Weltkind" Gottfried, the close relationship of these notions of spiritual nobility was undeniable:

Dies ganze Sichinsichselbstversenken, dies Beobachten und Zergliedern der eigenen Empfindungen und dieser sentimentale Kultus der Minne ist schliesslich religiösen Ursprungs: die Mystik hat der mittelalterlichen Sentimentalitätsliteratur den Boden bereitet. . . . In der mystischen Bibelexegese aber begegnet uns schon seit dem 11. Jahrh. der Ausdruck die edele sèle. (p. 12)

Although Vogt incorporated these findings into his evaluation of the romance in 1922, he now laid more emphasis on what he termed the "cult of the beautiful" than on the mystical connotations, writing: "Denn ein Kultus des Schönen ist auch sein inneres Leben. . . . Das sinnlich und
Vogt's study of the noble heart in Tristan had a twofold influence on future research. First, scholars sought other possible derivations of the term, and in their semantic research used medieval theological and mystical literature as a guide. The link between the noble heart and religion, first forged by this critic, increased in strength as a result of these investigations. Secondly, the aesthetics in Tristan now underwent revaluation. Nineteenth-century critics had virtually all agreed as to the beauty of description and the mastery of niceties of style, rendering this tribute of praise almost in spite of themselves, for all this manifold beauty was in their minds only the attractive cloak for gross immorality. Now a new approach was adopted: the aesthetics, as seen by Vogt, were integral to the content of Gottfried's poem and not merely a formal decoration unrelated to the story.

The second feature of Vogt's Tristan research which merits special consideration lies in his remarks on the allegory of the Minnegrotte. Already in the late nineteenth century Wilhelm Scherer had pointed to similarities between this allegory and medieval interpretations of the Bible, and had remarked that Gottfried "folgt den geistlichen Dichtern des zwölften Jahrhunderts, welche etwa das Herz des Frommen als einen Palast Christi schilderten, der aus lauter Tugenden erbaut ist." Friedrich Vogt now supplied more precise details of the type of theological literature after which the allegory might have been patterned, and wrote:

Gottfried [hat] mit einer sinnbildlichen Auslegung der ganzen Einrichtung und Ausstattung der Minnegrotte schon ganz die Pfade eingeschlagen, welche die mittelalterliche Bibelexegese mit ihrer allegorischen Schriftdeutung wandelte. . . . Ähnlich etwa wie die
apokalyptische Himmelsburg nach ihrer ganzen baulichen Einrichtung auf theologische Vorstellungen, so wird hier die Liebesgrotte auf Begriffe einer weltlichen Minneethik gedeutet, und damit wird in dieser Einlage Gottfrieds das erste Beispiel einer Gattung weltlicher Minneallegorie gegeben. ... Diese verstandesmässig ergrübelte Verkehrung des Sinnlichen ins Abstrakte durchbricht fremdartig und doch Gottfrieds Neigung zur Allegorie gemäss die sinnliche Fülle und Frische seiner Darstellung jenes paradiesischen Liebeslebens; aber sie führt uns auch in Gottfrieds sinnig ernste Auffassung von der Minne edeler Herzen, ihrem Wesen und ihren Pflichten, hinein. (p. 342)

On the whole the allegory of the Minnegrotte had not fared well in the hands of early critics, for although most expressed admiration for the general aesthetic merits of the romance, many took exception to this particular episode, and as a result this passage became a target for much hostile criticism. Haebler, for instance, described it as a "Jammer" (see p. 98), to Heinzel the allegory destroyed the lovers' Waldleben (see p. 106). Scherer wrote: "Die Absichtlichkeit des Erzählers, seine Sucht, dem Leser etwas zu beweisen, trägt ein Element der Kälte in den empfindungsvollen Stoff. Und auch die geistige Richtung des höfischen Epos, die Neigung persönliche Eigenschaften als selbständige Personen zu denken, verführt ihn zu frostigen Einfällen" (p. 169). Although such deprecatory remarks reflected the general nineteenth-century aversion to medieval allegory, our own era has not been free from such attitudes. Josef Janko, for example, stated in 1906: "Der moderne Geist gefällt sich in derart primitiver Symbolik mit nichten," and Hermann Schneider wrote as late as 1943: "Das Spiel wird lange fortgetrieben--für uns zu lange und bis zur Spielerei." The allegory was disliked by such scholars for purely formal stylistic reasons. Until 1925 it was usually considered as an interlude without intrinsic aesthetic value and without any significance for or connection with the rest of the work. Apart from Janko's attempt to elucidate some details of Gottfried's biography from this episode, and Piquet's short
note that the allegory was in all likelihood invented by Gottfried,\textsuperscript{18} no other means of evaluation were called into play. Thus the meaning and significance which this passage has for the understanding of Gottfried's \textit{Tristan} remained undisclosed until Friedrich Ranke, in 1925, extended and multiplied the parallels drawn by Vogt between the allegory and theological literature.

"Mit Ranke beginnt ein neues Kapitel der Gottfriedforschung—und Überhaupt erst ihr entscheidendes."\textsuperscript{19} The importance of Ranke's publication \textit{Die Allegorie der Minnegrotte in Gottfrieds "Tristan"} (1925)\textsuperscript{20} can hardly be overestimated. This study provided the point of departure for future interpretations of the romance, and thus also for assessments of the poet's original treatment of the love-theme. Earlier critics judged the allegory solely on its aesthetic merits—or flaws. Ranke realized that a more comprehensive approach was necessary:

Wenn ein Dichter von so empfindlichem Formgefühl und so bewussten künstlerischen Grundzügen . . . auf einem Gefühlshöhepunkt seines Epos . . . seine Erzählung durch einen Exkurs unterbricht, der in mehr als 200 Versen die einzelnen Teile der Grotte allegorisch auf die Eigenschaften der vollkommenen Minne ausdeutet . . . müssen wir versuchen, die Motive zu verstehen, die den Dichter zu seinem Exkurs getrieben haben: Wie kommt Gottfried zu der allegorischen Ausdeutung der Minnegrotte? Was will er mit ihr? Welche Bedeutung hat sie im Gesamtplan seines Werkes? (p. 21)

His next step was to examine the "Parallelvorstellungen" which the allegory would have evoked among the more educated of Gottfried's contemporaries.\textsuperscript{21} The parallels suggested by Vogt to the allegorical and symbolical interpretations of the Heavenly Jerusalem, although valuable within their limits, did not satisfy Ranke on two counts. In the first place Vogt failed to incorporate these findings into an interpretation of the love-theme—in short, to draw the conclusions "die sich aus dieser von ihm angenommenen Parallelle-
sierung der Minnegrotte mit dem jenseitigen Hoffnungsziel des Frommen für Gottfrieds Liebesauffassung ergeben würden" (p. 29). In the second place Ranke had discovered a far more accurate and significant parallel—that between Gottfried's allegory of the cave and traditional allegorizations of the medieval cathedral. His study of this analogy revealed that the "Ehre" generally accorded to the cathedral of God was in this case given to the cave of love. By means of this allegory the poet had associated Tristan-love with religion: "Die Liebesgrotte dem Tempel Gottes gleichgestellt—man mag es eine Blasphemie nennen, jedenfalls war es kein 'frostiger Einfall,' wie Heinzel und Scherer meinten, sondern ein Stück von allergrößter Wichtigkeit für unsern Dichter wie für seine Zeitgenossen" (p. 32). According to Ranke the deity worshipped by the "transfigured" Tristan and Isolde in the grotto was the pagan goddess of love: "Gottfried [baut] sich in der allegorischen Ausdeutung der Minnegrotte aus dem diesseitigen, sinnlich-irdischen Stoff gewissermassen seine eigene spirituale Welt, die neue Seinspyramide, in der nicht Gott, sondern die antike Venus, die Göttin Minne als oberster Wert die Spitze bildet" (p. 39).

Ranke's discussion of an excursus at an earlier point in the epic (11. 12191 ff.) supplemented this explanation of the "Liebesreligion." In this, the kurze rede von edler Minne, Gottfried described his ideal of true love as "rückhaltlose, in standhafter Treue alle Schmerzen ertragende und alle Hindernisse Überwindende, ... durch volle Hingabe beseligende Liebe" (p. 34), and the general tone of the rede was set by the poet's lament on the absence of such true love in the present day and in the contemporary convention of courtly love. The "zealous preacher of love," Ranke continued, was painfully and bitterly aware that love such as that between Tristan and Isolde could exist now only in art, in
aesthetics, in allegory—not in reality, and therefore invented the allegorical temple in which to house his ideal. "Er [erbaut] seinem Idealbild, seiner Göttin Minne, den Tempel, die ecclesia amoris materialiter et spiritualiter, und lässt seine Liebenden wie fromme Klausner im Dienste dieser Göttin unirdischer Glückseligkeit teilhaftig werden" (p. 34).

A fundamental problem was raised by this Tristan interpretation. Could worship of the pagan goddess of love co-exist with worship of the Christian God, or was the one necessarily excluded by the other? Was Gottfried after all the "Führer und Meister der antichristlichen Kunst," as Eichendorff had claimed (p. 75)? Ranke was indeed aware of this problem, but chose not to include his solution to it in this article: "Auf die vielbehandelte schwierige Frage nach Gottfrieds Verhältnis zur christlichen Religion gehe ich hier nicht mehr ein" (p. 39, n. 3).

However, in the book published that same year (Tristan und Isolde), he indicated that Gottfried designed the new religion as a replacement for traditional Christianity:


Gottfried employed the external forms and formulae of the Christian religion in order to fill them with his vision of ideal love.

Although this discovery was undoubtedly Ranke's most important contribution to Tristan interpretation, we should note also his treatment of the "Kultus des Schönen" to which Vogt drew attention. Gottfried, Ranke pointed out, was resigned to the fact that love such as that between Tristan
and Isolde was realizable only in the realm of art. Yet the inevitable sadness resulting from this knowledge was balanced by the pleasure which the poet gained through the quasi-ecstatic aesthetic experience, through the religious realization in art of an otherwise unattainable ideal:

Gottfried's Gedicht durchzieht ein Ton schmerzlicher, müde gewordener Resignation. Sein Liebespreis nimmt die Formen religiöser Ekstase an, die Liebe wird ihm, während er dichtet, zum religiösen Erlebnis; aber in aller Ekstase bleibt er sich der Erdenferne seiner Gesichte bitter bewusst. . . . Sehnsucht nach dem Unerreichlichen und unerfülltes Suchen nach der Harmonie, das doch zugleich als Suchen ästhetisch genossen wird, das ist die seltsam gebrochene tiefste Grundstimmung von Gottfrieds Dichten. (Tristan und Isolde, pp. 209-10)

Ranke's Minnegrotte study profoundly influenced developments in Tristan scholarship. It promoted new ideas on the subject which had figured so prominently in earlier criticism, namely the question of Gottfried's originality. According to Ranke's interpretation the main ingredient in the poet's originality did not lie in qualities such as his aesthetic refinement of the fable, his plausibility, or his skilful psychological motivation of character, but rather in the religious treatment of Tristan-love. From 1925 on, discussions of the poet's originality were intrinsically bound up with interpretations of the love-theme. Comparisons with Thomas were usually regarded as extraneous to this purpose, for the focal point of interpretation (the Minnegrotte allegory) was, as critics agreed, introduced into the traditional story only with Gottfried. Studies of the Gottfried-Thomas relationship did continue, but were concentrated chiefly on the formal distinctions between the work of the two poets. They differed from those conducted by earlier critics in that they showed the influence of Geistesgeschichte: rather than act as proof of the superiority of one poet (and nation) over the other, these studies served instead to demonstrate the changing Zeitgeist. The parallelism between the arts, as
advocated by the new school of thought, acted now as a criterion in comparisons of Thomas with Gottfried. As a result such equations were made as Thomas=Romanesque—Gottfried=Gothic (Aaltje Dijksterhuis); Thomas= (early) Gothic—Gottfried=High Gothic (Bodo Mergell). Furthermore, the "analogical" method used by Ranke soon gained a strong foothold in Tristan criticism, and reflected in its very nature the general aims and habits of thought of Geistesgeschichte (see p. 127). It became common practice for scholars to refer to theological, philosophical and historical sources when drawing their analogies, and also when seeking to present Gottfried as an embodiment of the Zeitgeist and of the intellectual—and, according to a few critics, of the political—climate which existed in Europe around 1200. Moreover, Ranke's work prompted many scholars to explore other aspects of the Minnegrotte episode, such as its structural and geographical setting. The literary sources of the allegory have also engaged a number of critics, and recently the allegory has been seen even in the light of alchemy. 

The impact of Ranke's thoughts about the allegory was such that nearly all future critics referred to them and took a stand on the central issues before offering their own interpretations of Tristan-love. As a result, the years following Ranke's publication were filled with controversy on the connection between love and religion in the romance. Clearly, the derogatory attitudes of those earlier critics who described Gottfried as a totally irreligious poet now stood in need of considerable modification and revision. By 1943—when Julius Schwietering made the second outstanding contribution to the understanding of Gottfried's religious treatment of the love-theme (see p. 154)—scholars had already made the preliminary explorations along all the avenues of approach to an interpretation of Tristan-love characteristic of twentieth-century interpretation. When reduced to their simplest
terms the recurrent modes of interpreting the love-theme were as follows. According to some, Minne in the poem constituted a beneficent deity, which either replaced God as the new sumnum bonum, or existed in harmony with God. To others, Minne, a supernatural force, was a sumnum malum or Damon. The relationship between Tristan-love and mystical love also became a matter for scholarly speculation. Some critics suggested that Gottfried preached heretical doctrines in Tristan. Many disputed whether the demands of gotinne Minne conflicted with the precepts of courtly society. A topic not infrequently included in the religious interpretations concerned Gottfried’s indebtedness to the hohe Minne of Minnesang for his formulation of love.

The religious interpretations prompted by Ranke were held by some scholars to be basically unsound and misleading, and alternative methods of interpretation—for example the relationship of Tristan-love to classical antiquity—were advanced. However, the fact that such non-religious interpretations have not found many sponsors reflects the decisive and determinative role of Ranke’s work in modern Tristan scholarship. 27

The year following the investigation of the allegory Hermann Schneider delivered a lecture on Gottfried and his Tristan poem; he emphasized Gottfried’s originality, cleared the poet of the charges of immorality and blasphemy still being brought against him, and offered an interpretation of the nature of Tristan-love which, though owing much to Ranke’s discovery of the analogy, presented nonetheless a totally different view of the poet’s amatory doctrine. 28 While Ranke believed that Gottfried was inspired by and revered the ideal love which he depicted as existing between Tristan and Isolde, Schneider held that Tristan-love was not a divine ideal. Rather, it was to Gottfried a tragic, inexorable fate. Minne, the universal force,
"wird ihm zur höchsten Gewalt über die Menschheit" (p. 141); "Durch das Erlebnis der Minne ist Gottfrids [sic] Weltbild ganz umgeformt worden" (p. 142). Schneider emphasized this point again when writing on Tristan in his Heldendichtung, Geistlichendichtung, Ritterdichtung (1943): "Die Liebe ist Himmel und Hölle. . . . Gottfried war es ernst mit seiner Weltmacht. Sie fordert unbedingte Hörigkeit. Der Dichter versteht; dass er innerlich billigt, zeigt er nicht, und am wenigsten, dass er an all dem Geschehen Freude hat." As to the place of Christianity in Gottfried's new world-view, in 1926 he suggested that the Gott-Welt dualism posed no problems for the poet, since he eliminated the supernatural and showed concern only for the sensual and secular: "Der grosse Zwiespalt jenes Jahrhunderts: Gottesminne gegen Weltminne, Diesseitsfreude gegen Jenseitssehnen, Sensualismus gegen Spiritualismus scheint für ihn seine Aktualität verloren zu haben. Er versucht es mit keiner Synthese, sondern er schaltet den Supranaturalismus einfach aus. Die heisse Sorge um Gottes Huld erfüllt dieses Gemüt nicht" (p. 143). Although in 1943 Schneider did amend this statement by placing the Christian God within Gottfried's scheme, he nevertheless stressed God's subordinance to Minne: "Die hohe Herrscherin, der sich Gottfried und seine Helden beugen, die Minne, wird von Gott selbst gebilligt und gefördert. Nur dass sie nicht mehr, wie bisher, als des Höchsten Geschöpf erscheint; sie ist ihm über den Kopf gewachsen" (p. 316). In his lecture Schneider took up an idea already expressed by Dilthey (see p. 131) when he traced the parallel between the all-absorbing love of hero and heroine, and the unio mystica:

Die irdische Minne, die in dem geliebten Wesen das Ein und Alles sieht und sich ihm bis zur Aufgabe des eigenen Selbst einschmiegt, war jener Generation erwachsen aus der himmlischen Minne, mit der die ekstatischen Mystiker Frankreichs die Gottheit umfangen und in ihr aufgehen wollen. Gottfried ist der einzige, der diese Analogie zu Ende gedacht oder vielmehr empfunden hat. (p. 142)
The next interpretation using Ranke's work as its basis was the dissertation by Emil Nickel (a pupil of Ranke) entitled *Studien zum Liebesproblem bei Gottfried von Strassburg* (1927). Nickel held that the reason for Gottfried's "Liebesproblem" lay in the personal dissatisfaction with the forms love had taken, both as the hollow courtly convention and as the purchaseable commodity. Gottfried's outlook on the cult of *hohe Minne* resembled that of the Christian on Original Sin; redemption from the sin was to be found through the divine experience of Tristan-love. However—and this constituted the second reason for his "Liebesproblem"—Gottfried knew that his personal ideal of love was not realizable in contemporary society. Gottfried therefore sought a solution, and found this in a "Flucht in die Literatur" (p. 80). In this way the poet underwent an ecstatic experience. True love was realized aesthetically:

> Und so bleibt ihm denn, in dieser Lage, nichts anderes mehr, als diesem Bewusstsein eigener Nichtswürdigkeit, dieser Welt der Erbärmlichkeiten ganz und gar abzusterben, immer wieder von neuem sich zu versenken in die mystisch-übersinnliche Welt des Ideals, an diesem sich zu erbauen wie der Christ am Sakrament, im Anschauen des Ideals seine Kräfte zu sammeln und zu stärken zur erlösenden, notwendigen Herzensgläubung, an ihm den befreienden Aufschwung zu nehmen zum Erhabensten und Höchsten; so bleibt denn also an Lebenswertem einzig noch die Literatur Übrig, als die Welt des gestalteten Ideals, als die einzige, die letzte Möglichkeit, sich ihm zu nähern. (p. 82)

Nickel's thesis, though essentially an expansion of Ranke's ideas, in some instances marked a radical departure from these—as for example when Nickel discussed the sacerdotal function performed by the poet. He held that, in his priestly role, the poet administered the redemptive gifts of the immortal legend of sacred love to his select congregation, and concluded: "Höher als er hat schliesslich in seiner Zeit doch keiner den Dichter zu erheben gewagt: bis zum sakralen Typ eines Dichters, der als Priester am Altar der Kunst das Brot des Lebens an die Gemeinde aller edlen Herzen austeilte" (p. 84, n. 4).
The following year two of the main points of recent interpretation—the religious aspect of Tristan-love and the cult of the aesthetic—had fresh light cast upon them by Gottfried Weber. His Tristan interpretation was included in a study of Wolfram von Eschenbach (Wolfram von Eschenbach. Seine dichterische und geistesgeschichtliche Bedeutung, 1928), where he developed the results of recent Tristan research into an original thesis which he then greatly expanded and reformulated in 1953 (see p. 163).

Following Ranke he described Gottfriedian love as an irresistible, supernatural force, but then went on to state that the power exerted by gotinne Minne was daemonic—and destructive. This power brought the lovers face to face with an insoluble dilemma: they could free themselves neither from their love, nor from the social order with which that love conflicted. "Das Problem, welches er in der Welt sieht, ist das des Aufeinanderplatzens wesensverschiedener und daher einander feindlicher Mächte; es ist der Widerstreit zwischen den aus den Überkommenen Anschauungen erwachsenen Pflichten und der zu dämonischem Zwang gesteigerten Triebneigung" (p. 238). Tristan and Isolde constantly strove to reconcile these irreconcilable opposites, and, because they did not know how to construct a new ethic which would be at once individual and social, they were doomed to tragedy. This tragedy Weber interpreted in terms of the Zeitgeist: "Die Hochgotik ... ist endgültig gescheitert, zerbrochen, ohne dass die innere Haltung der Renaissance erreicht ist. Wille und ... Intellekt sind für diese Gestalten ein Nichts, Erleben und Erleiden alles" (p. 238). The seeds of destruction sown by this love-force fell not only on hero and heroine. Like earlier scholars, Weber referred to the ruin of noble characters by passion, but unlike his predecessors he extended this notion to include Marke and Brangaene (pp. 239-40). All the central characters came to disregard
spiritual and ethical values, and both the lovers and the king showed signs of mental collapse. "So hätten--dies sei gegenüber der bisherigen Forschung stark hervorgehoben--das Ende der Tristandichtung kein anderes sein können als die sittliche, geistige und darum schliesslich auch physikalische Vernichtung aller Helden. Wesenhaft sind Gottfrieds Menschen zum Untergang bestimmt" (p. 240).

Ranke had described Gottfried as "eine im letzten Grunde zerrissene, entwurzelte Natur," whose flight into the aesthetic enabled him to realize his vision of love (Tristan und Isold, p. 210). Weber saw Gottfried's torn nature reflected throughout the poem: in Tristan and Isolde ("die weltanschauliche Zerrissenheit ist der Schlüssel zu ihrem Verständnis," p. 245), in stylistic elements ("und deutlich wird auch, vor allem in dem beherrschendsten Stilmittel des Tristan, der Antithese, was am stärksten im hochgotischen Menschen nach Lösung drängt: der weltanschauliche Dualismus," p. 247), and in the mixture of Christian and non-Christian religious elements ("so weist das Epos eine merkwürdige weltanschauliche Doppelheit auf: Konvention und wirkliches Empfinden, Theorie und Praxis scheinen sich unklar aber schroff entgegenzustehen. Vielfachen Anzeichen unbedingter Kirchlichkeit sind Aussprüche von frivoler Skepsis . . . gegenüberzuhalten. In diesem Nebeneinander von Rechtgläubigkeit und Emanzipation aber ruht das eigentliche weltanschauliche Problem der Dichtung," pp. 244-45). In Weber's opinion such polarities stemmed ultimately from the problem of Gott-Welt dualism. Gottfried von Strassburg, not finding an ultimate solution or "Lösung" to the problem, sought instead an escape route, an "Erlösung." This "Erlösung" was the flight into the aesthetic:
Dem Tristandichter eröffnet sich als erstem seiner Zeit in vollgültiger Weise ein neuer Ausweg aus den als unentrinnbar empfundenen Wirrsalen der realen Welt; es gelang ihm, sich in ein drittes Reich zu flüchten: in das der schönen Form, ins Reich der Kunst und der künstlerisch gesehenen Lebenshaltung. . . . Es ist der Zusammenbruch der religiös-ethischen Weltanschauung (im mittelalterlichen Sinne), aus dem sich in Gottfried der Ästhetische Mensch erhebt. (p. 245)

In Weber's statement on the formal excellence and the cult of the beautiful in Tristan there is a definite change from attitudes prevalent in the nineteenth century. Early critics commended the poet for having enhanced the coarse legend through his poetic gifts, but tempered their praise by the accusation that Gottfried tried to dazzle his audience with aesthetic perfection in order to blind them to the ethical flaws. According to Weber, "in der sanften und vollkommen gleichmässigen Bewegtheit der Form ist die verzehrende Unruhe und Dynamik des Inhalts überwunden; in der Freiheit der Form, dem gelösten Spiel des Ästhetischen, die Unfreiheit, das qualvoll Dämonische des unauflösbar-tragischen Gehalts" (p. 246). Furthermore, the poet used the very elements of the tragedy of his lovers—such as the necessarily constant co-existence of love and suffering—in an aesthetic, formal game, where antithesis provided the favoured stylistic device. In this way Gottfried evaded the problem posed by dualism: he converted that very problem into a game of aesthetics within the romance. It is of interest to note Weber's later reassessment of this, his early evaluation of Tristan. Writing in 1953 he stated that, in his former discussion, he had not yet avoided making a basic mistake perpetrated by previous scholars and in particular by Friedrich Vogt: "Die ästhetische Komponente des Tristan erscheint noch überbetont." 34

Although Georg Keferstein followed Weber's interpretation of the love-theme as an exemplification of an essentially daemonic, irrational power, the main tenet in his study "Die Entwertung der hofischen Gesellschaft im
Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg" (1936) was that Gottfried's work represented a "disenchantment" or "depreciation" of the courtly world, and, as a corollary, that Tristan-love did not conflict with courtly society. Whereas a scholar like Gustav Ehrismann found in the romance an affirmation and faithful depiction of a "ritterliches Tugendsystem," Keferstein demonstrated that the courtly world in the Tristan romance was a mere aesthetic façade, a hollow shell, and its virtues artificial. He related this thesis to Gottfried's social status and also to medieval mysticism:

Das Erlebnis der Desillusion der höfischen Formenwelt wird noch besonders begünstigt durch das dem neu aufkommenden bürgerlichen Zeitalter innenwohrende Streben, die ganze Welt von der Innerlichkeit her zu deuten. In der Gestalt Gottfrieds pocht dieses bürgerliche Zeitalter an die Pforten der höfisch-ritterlichen Kultur. . . . Bürgerlicher Geist steigt nicht gern in die substantiellen Tiefen der objektiven Welt hinein, sondern "entlarvt" und desillusioniert lieber die objektive Welt in ihrer Hohlheit und Unwahrhaftigkeit gegenüber der allein geltenden subjektiven Innerlichkeit. Dieser neue bürgerliche Geist ist mit der Mystik eng verbunden. . . . Hinter dem schönen Schein steht keine tragende ethische Grundkraft, von der aus das Ästhetische erst Sinn erhält, sondern dahinter grinst nur das Gesicht des Todes und der Verwesung. . . . Trotz allen zaubervollen ästhetischen Spieles ist der Tristan Gottfrieds eine Dichtung zum Tode! (pp. 426-27)

The love between Isolde and Tristan bore no relationship whatsoever to the hohe Minne of court lyric and of the actual courtly world, for hohe Minne too was "disillusionized" by the poet. The lovers, themselves aware of the hollowness of courtly society and of the superficiality of the moral code of that society, did not experience a tragic conflict in trying to maintain their love and their public reputation (ére) simultaneously, since this ére was in any case a meaningless quality. "Gottfried hält Gericht über die höfische Welt und ihre Moral, gerade indem er sie äusserlich anerkennt" (p. 432).

In the final section of his study Keferstein pondered whether Gottfried constructed a new morality to fill the void. The love-affair did seem to
engender a new virtue, the private, subjective triuwe to which a positive value was attached in the poem. But, as he pointed out, the daemonic and irrational power of their love, "die jenseits von Natur und Sittlichkeit steht, ist nicht imstande, eine neue Ethik zu begründen" (p. 439), and therefore Isolde attempted to have the loyal Brangaene murdered, and Tristan was finally unfaithful to Isolde. "Selbst eine unmittelbar aus diesem Liebesphänomen sich entwickelnde Haltung wie die persönlichste, subjektivste triuwe wird durch dies selbe Liebesphänomen bedroht . . . weil hier der Mensch . . . in seiner Härtigkeit gegenüber einem dämonisch-'gewissenlosen' Reich betroffen wird. Von dem Wissen um die Realität dieses Reiches aus wird in der Tristandichtung die hoffisch-moralische Welt desillusioniert" (p. 440).

In common with Schneider, Nickel and Weber, Keferstein was influenced to some degree by Ranke's work of 1925, but in retrospect it is very clear that the full range of implications inherent in the latter's theory concerning the religious nature of Tristan-love was yet to be disclosed. Nor did this process commence until 1940, when Helmut de Boor, in constructing a comprehensive interpretation of the poem, incorporated his precursor's work as the touchstone of his thesis (see p. 152). Before opening the discussion of de Boor, however, some mention will be made of two further explanations of the romance published in 1938 and 1939 in neither of which the Minnegrotte study determined the approach adopted. Rather, the tone for the first of these (written by Hans Naumann) was set by the new mythology of National Socialism, while that for the second (by Denis de Rougemont) was provided by the critic's speculations on the myth of passionate love.
Hans Naumann, in his *Deutsche Kultur im Zeitalter des Rittertums* of 1938, interpreted the love-theme as being heroic and thus typically Germanic. He drew a parallel between the heroism evident in Gottfried's work and that in the national epic, the *Nibelungenlied*, and wrote:


Stressing the fact that the concept of courtly love, and what he termed its "dual morality," was of foreign origin, Naumann stated that German poets of the medieval period formulated love in terms more representative of the Germanic spirit: "Es setzt Gottfried die heroische Liebe dafür, Walther die Personliebe, Hartmann und Wolfram die Eheliebe" (p. 146).

In *Tristan* the heroic love was frequently given religious status, but this love-religion was unrelated to the Christian God and Christian ideas of salvation; rather, the poet described such love as an absolute, outside the sphere of Christian morality (p. 148) and in this manner he revealed "die vom staufischen Zeitgeist glücklich wiedererreichte Harmonie von Gott und Welt" (p. 93). This interpretation of the love-theme, written in 1938, should not be viewed in isolation from the current political events in Germany. The influence of the strongly nationalistic ideas propagated by National Socialism is clearly demonstrated in Naumann's concentration on the "Germanic" element in Tristan-love; for exponents of the creed of racial self-adulation "not the Christian virtues are the ideal, but what they regard in contrast as the heroic virtues." An interesting parallel
can be drawn between Naumann and the nineteenth-century Mythological School: both he and this earlier group aimed at eliciting the Germanic characteristics from the poem; both linked Tristan with the Nibelungenlied; and, above all, both were motivated by patriotism.

Between the Mythological School and Denis de Rougemont also there are certain affiliations, for Tristan's "dualism" and struggle to be released from terrestrial ties, as perceived by Franz Mone in 1821 (see p. 99), and also the theory of remote Celtic sources of the Tristan myth were incorporated into this more recent study, L'Amour et l'Occident (1939; revised 1956). But this work, both in method and in scope, is essentially a product of the twentieth century, for in it the influence of Freud (e.g., the concern with repressed desires) is as discernible as is that of Geistesgeschichte (e.g., the sweeping analogies). De Rougemont, whose central purpose was "to describe the inescapable conflict in the West between passion and marriage" (p. 8), interpreted the medieval Tristan poems as constituting one set of examples among many drawn from the twelfth century which all "sprang up out of the communal spirit of the time" (p. 111) and expressed in various subtle forms the contemporary need for a myth which would embody a pagan desire, a dark passion which Christian doctrines had hitherto repressed. This desire was none other than a death-wish. That the yearning for death should be associated with passionate love (or Eros) and opposed to Christian Agape, with its love for one's neighbour in the present life, could be understood by an examination of its antecedents: in Platonism (transmitted to the West by Plotinus) erotic or Platonic love is "the way that ascends by degrees of ecstasies to the one source of all that exists, remote from bodies and matter, remote from what divides and distinguishes" (p. 61); in Indo-European mythologies, with their fundamental
dualism (the struggle between gods of Day and Night, good and evil)
Woman is a divine being symbolizing the other world, and as such mingle sexual attraction with eternal desire; and finally, in the Manichaean dualist heresy which, in the third century, syncretized all the myths of Night and Day, the divine soul is imprisoned in created form and there succumbs to carnal, evil laws while all the time struggling to attain to Day, light, "Eros, the object of our supreme Desire... From the standpoint of life, it is this Love which is the absolute woe" (p. 66).

In the twelfth century "love was encouraged as a passion worth cultivating" (p. 75); the cult of Eros or passionate love took esoteric forms and flourished in the guise of orthodoxy and heterodoxy alike which drew "a ready response out of the depths of the spirit of the age," for Christian marriage "imposed on the natural man a constancy which he found unbearable" (p. 73). In short, the myth of passionate love appeared in Europe as a reaction to Christianity (and in particular to its doctrine of marriage) by people whose spirit was still pagan. Cortezia or courtly love, coming into existence at this period, during a complete revolution of the Western psyche, was congenitally connected with the Catharist dualist heresies (developed from Manichaeism) notably because both overtly opposed the Christian view of marriage. Gottfried von Strassburg, more conscious of the theological implications of the myth of extra-marital passion and love-for-death than were earlier Tristan poets, turned the fable into a Catharist legend.

Whilst the souls of Tristan and Isolde were incarcerated in bodies in the created world (which, being evil, was the Devil's), they fell victim to the power of evil--symbolized in the love-philtre and their subsequent carnal desires. In Gottfried's redaction there was no question of love
existing between them prior to their drinking the potion; the drink was treated "as the seal of destiny—the sign of a blind force external to the persons concerned, and as an expression, too, of the goddess Minne's will" (p. 132). Correspondingly, Thomas had degraded the myth in depicting their love as existing independently of the potion. \(^4\) The lovers, however, welcomed their fate, for although passionate love eventually drew its victims to death that was their supreme desire. More in love with love and death than with the partner, they repeatedly sought out the obstructions which would foster love until they reached the final obstacle, death, and entry into divine union where the sufferings endured when subjugated to the evil principle during the exile on earth would be avenged. \(^4\)

Diametrically opposed to this definition of the romance as a [heretical] Catharist legend was the interpretation given the following year by Helmut de Boor who, developing Ranke's study of the single [Minnegrotte] episode, now viewed the entire poem in the light of the Christian religion: he argued that Tristan-love was clearly a religion, a fact evidenced by its analogical relationship to traditional Christian legends of martyrs and saints. \(^4\) The poem, in short, was construed by Gottfried as a "Minnelegende" and its hero and heroine were saints of love, "Minneheilige." Among the arguments to support this thesis the following comparisons are found: the Christian martyr underwent trials and tribulations due to his unwavering loyalty to God—and similarly, the suffering and death of Tristan and Isolde were determined by the transcendental power of Minne to which they submitted themselves. Marke's role was that of the hostile heathen ruler in the Christian legend. The position customarily occupied by the Christian God was in the romance assigned to Minne: "Gottfried entfaltet seine Minne-Transzendenz, stellt bewusst den Daseinsgipfel 'Minne' auf die Höhe des
alten Daseinsgipfels 'Gott.' Er verwendet auch als das gegebene literarische Vorbild infolgedessen die Legende" (p. 147).

The weak point of de Boor's analogy lies in the contention that in both the Tristan romance and the Christian legend the action is divided into two distinct parts, with a "conversion" causing the division. The two worlds in Gottfried's prologue (ir aller werlt and the edelen herzen) are said to represent the two stages through which the lovers progressed. The love-potion brings about their conversion; they now enter a vita nuova in the world of noble hearts, characterized by the joy and sorrow of love.

De Boor admitted that the distinction between the old and new life of Tristan and Isolde was not as marked as that in a Christian legend, for the system of values which obtained in ir aller werlt (which he interpreted as the courtly world) continued to command their respect even when they were living according to a new moral code. However, de Boor interpreted this continued respect for the precepts of courtly society as an inability on Gottfried's part to outgrow the "static" way of thought typical of the period in which he lived: "Seiner grossen Idee einer Neudeutung der Welt aus der transzendent und göttlich gefassten Minne als summum bonum entspricht nicht der Mut und die Schöpferkraft zur Entfaltung eines neuen Menschentypus mit grundsätzlichen Wertmasstäben" (p. 168) and moreover in this way defended Gottfried against any convictions of anti-Christian tendencies: God and the Christian church were not challenged in the romance since both occupied a firm, traditional position in the courtly world which the lovers did not entirely abjure even when "converted" into saints of love.

De Boor asserted that for his formulation of Tristan-love Gottfried was much indebted to the doctrine of hohe Minne as found in medieval love
lyrics and especially in those composed by Reinmar, but he pointed out that there existed nonetheless one basic difference between the two, namely that Gottfried portrayed the sensual fulfilment of love. Furthermore, Gottfried enhanced that sensual love by endowing it with sacramental significance in his love-legend, for in an elaboration of Ranke's findings de Boor concluded that the Minnegrotte constituted the temple of love, and the crystal bed the altar in that temple. This contention, along with the legend analogy and the Minnesang parallel, met with strong criticism in 1943 from Julius Schwietering who now offered a new interpretation which centred on the links between Tristan-love and Christian mysticism.

Already in 1936 Schwietering had drawn attention to Gottfried's frequent use of words and motifs from Latin religious literature "vor allem seit Bernhard von Clairvaux," and he wrote more explicitly in 1943 that Gottfried, in enhancing the love of his two main characters, appropriated to his task the language of the mystics and in particular that used by St. Bernard in his sermons on the Song of Songs. The religious aura thus lent to the story was not deliberate blasphemy on the part of Gottfried; on the contrary, the introduction of secular contrafactura into the forms of Christian mysticism was common practice among the poets of Gottfried's generation. In fact, Gottfried did not necessarily use Bernard's sermons as direct source material, for his period was deeply impregnated with the concepts and familiar with the vocabulary of Bernadine mysticism. To Schwietering, viewing medieval literature in terms of a changing Zeitgeist, the concurrence of courtly culture and mysticism in the twelfth century represented the change from the Romanesque period to the Gothic, a change visible in all the arts. That Gottfried was more Gothic than contemporary
poets was shown not only by the extent to which he applied mystical thought in his writing, but also by the manner in which he shaped his poem. In subordinating all the action to the central idea (the love of Tristan and Isolde), he informed his poem with the "Gothic unity" unknown to poets like Wolfram and Veldeke.

Schwietering maintained in contrast to de Boor that the love-theme bore no relationship to hohe Minne: "Tristanliebe ist nur erfahrbar im Gegensatz zur Liebeslehre des zeitgenössischen Frauendienstes des Minnesangs" (p. 7). Gottfried replaced the courtly pattern of service and reward (Dienst and Lohn) by a depiction of inter-personal love and of mystical union in that love. The suffering in this love (to de Boor a symbol of the lovers' martyrdom) had a parallel in the compassio of mysticism. The hero and heroine suffered with and for one another, they experienced "[ein] mystisches Versenken in das Leiden des andern" (p. 10); "Auch Mitleiden, compassio mit dem Mensch gewordenen, leidenden Gott kann unmittelbar zur mystischen Liebeseinung führen" (p. 12). Furthermore, the whole scene of the grotto of love and its environs was analogous to Christian love-mysticism. The grotto (which de Boor conceived of as a temple) was patterned after the bedchamber (cubiculum) of Solomon; consequently the crystalline bed found its counterpart not in the altar but in the lectulus Salomonis in its connection with the mystic love of Christ and His church. That the lovers required no food during their sojourn in the grotto was a detail introduced into the original Waldleben episode by Gottfried, and could be related moreover to the "mystische Einswerdung gegenseitiger Speisung" (p. 15) as described in Bernard's sermons.

Although in this interpretation Tristan-love was analogous to mystical love, the unio of Tristan and Isolde in this life was imperfect. Whilst
in the grotto they regretted the loss of ere, and this concern for their public reputation in the outside world constituted a link to that world, and hindered the attainment of perfect mystical union within the grotto:

"Die Liebenden sind . . . nicht völlig von der Welt gelöst, ihr nicht gänzlich abgestorben. . . . Es haftet ihr [ihrer Liebe] die Unvollkommenheit alles Irrischen an, darum kann der Zustand seliger Abgeschlossenheit nicht von Dauer sein" (p. 14). Only after their physical death, when amor carnis would be replaced by amor spiritualis, could the lovers reach the ultimate, perfect mystical union.

The discussion of Gottfried’s usage of mystical imagery was continued in 1947 by Hans-Günther Nauen when he dealt with the question of the poet’s religiosity, examining first the theological expressions in the work and secondly the religious, mystical aura surrounding Tristan-love. Ulrich Stöckle had drawn the conclusion that the large quantity of religious terms testified to Gottfried’s piety (see p. 129), but Nauen, after studying their quality, found on the contrary that the poet’s Christian religiosity was at best superficial: "Gottfried hat kein innerliches Verhältnis zur christlichen Religion gehabt. Das beweist die grosse Anzahl religiöser Wendungen, die . . . ständig zu Frivolität und Leichtfertigkeit neigen" (p. 27). Furthermore, the Gott-Welt dualism posed no special problems for the poet: he achieved a superficial integration between the two spheres by the very introduction of these numerous theological expressions into his work--but, as Nauen added, "eine solche Haltung, die jeder grundsätzlichen Lösung aus dem Wege geht, können wir nicht religiös nennen" (p. 31).

However, the lack of sincere religious sentiment evident on the "courtly" level of the story was more than compensated for by Gottfried’s religious
treatment of the love-theme. Nauen saw the love between Tristan and Isolde not as a mere sensual passion, but rather as a divine, spiritual, morally edifying power. The moral demands gotinne Minne made upon her "disciples" would lead them to salvation, and not (as Weber had suggested) to moral destruction. Because the law of love was supreme, no conflict could arise between its demands and those of courtly society: "Zwar haben beide Welten, die der höfischen Bildung und die der Liebe, ihre eigene Berechtigung. Aber über allem steht die Welt und das Gesetz der Liebe, dem sich alles zu beugen hat. Stets behält sie das Recht, auch gegenüber Religion und Sittlichkeit. Aber von einem tragischen Konflikt des Dichters zwischen beiden Welten, überhaupt von einem Zwiespalt ist im Tristan mit keinem Wort die Rede" (p. 107). 

While Nauen regarded Gottfried as being superficial and frivolous in matters pertaining to the Christian religion, Bodo Mergell two years later advanced the opposite viewpoint and presented the romance as an embodiment of profound and sincere Christian thought. Indeed, Mergell's study of Gottfried has been called the most extreme formulation of the many religious interpretations inspired by Ranke. In his outline of the origin and development of the Tristan legend, formulated in 1949, Mergell described the love-experience as depicted by Gottfried as a prologue to mystical union with God, and thus Tristan-love ultimately brought the lovers to the Christian summum bonum. Another "extreme" thesis put forward in this work was that Tristan was a finished work, and much of the evidence to substantiate this notion came from Mergell's comparison of literature with architecture. Considering first the subject-matter without taking the form into account, he discovered that the love between Tristan and Isolde, engendered even before the potion had been drunk, underwent a maturing process. At
its climax at the "end" of the poem it brought about harmony between the human and the divine: their passion, *amor carnalis*, becoming gradually less secular and egocentric, developed finally into *amor spiritualis*. In the *Minnegrotte* they were depicted as progressing towards this final, sacred, mystical state. *Passio* eventually became *virtus* when Isolde, after her final meeting with Tristan, swore lifelong fidelity to him as his *vriundin* in a union which could be maintained henceforth during their physical separation. He, on the other hand, now lagged behind his former pupil; the encounter with Isolde Whitehand had yet to take place. But then Tristan would realize the truly spiritual and sacred nature of his love for the first Isolde. The gradual spiritualization of Tristan-love helped bring the lovers nearer to God, and Gottfried showed that, as it progressed, "Tristanliebe mehr und mehr Übergang und Stufe auf dem Wege zu Gott wird, ja dass sie zuletzt ein Abbild himmlischer Minne widerspiegelt, imirdischen nicht vollendet, sondern angestrebt in Richtung auf höhere Wandlung" (pp. 176-77).

The criterion of poetic form provided Mergell with support for this interpretation and also for his thesis that *Tristan* was a completed work. He drew a structure-chart which made visible the exact symmetrical proportions of the epic in the form in which we have it today. This chart showed that the groundplan of a *complete* Gothic cathedral underlay the narrative. As the two branches of the transept, for instance, there were opposed to each other the first meeting of Tristan's parents at Marke's festival—with the "ensuing perfection of their love through death"—and the final meeting in the orchard with the "subsequent perfection of love in life." The formal pattern of Gottfried's epic would therefore be unbalanced by any further narrative.
This argument in favour of a completed poem was further bolstered by comparisons between the redactions by Thomas and Gottfried. The German poet, according to Mergell, drew repeatedly on the final parts of his French source: for example, he used details from the death of Isolde in Thomas' version for his own portrayal of the death of Blanscheflur. Similarly, he took elements from Thomas' Hall of Statues for his Minnegrotte. This fact precluded any intention on Gottfried's part of using these passages later in his work.

Mergell's comparison of the French and German works made a fresh contribution to the study of Gottfried's originality. The poet, by introducing Christian mystical thought into the traditional Tristan material, had completely altered the "death" of Tristan and Isolde. In Thomas (as in earlier versions) the lovers' death was physical. Gottfried, on the contrary, envisaged the "death," to which he so frequently referred in his epic, as a physical separation of the lovers during life, and the subsequent perfection of their love in a mystical, spiritual, non-physical union. Mergell concluded: "Gottfrieds Einschmelzung des Hohen Liedes in die epische Tradition mittelalterlicher Tristansage hat nicht nur Geist und Sprache, sondern auch Gehalt und Form der deutschen Tristandichtung bedeutsam verändert" (p. 123).

In Mergell's Tristan interpretation we again see how the work of Julius Schwietering promoted new approaches in Gottfried criticism. The mystical analogy in the romance, first verified by Schwietering, encouraged fellow scholars to probe deeper into this use of mystical terminology. Mergell, as has been shown, produced the revolutionary interpretation that not only the content but also the form had been radically altered by the mystical parallel. Gottfried Weber, in 1953, also based his novel interpretation
of Gottfried’s epic on the work of Schwietering. However, before commencing the discussion of Weber’s work, two other interpretations should be taken into consideration. These were made by Maurer and Goerke—and in neither of these did Christian mysticism play any part at all.

Friedrich Maurer, indeed, refuted any religious interpretation of the romance, and that offered by de Boor was the main object of his criticism. Maurer claimed in his study of *Leid* (1951) that the epic should not be understood solely "von der *Minne-Idee* aus" (p. 206), as had been the practice in Tristan criticism. Previous scholars had expressed different opinions on the compatibility of Tristan-love with the demands of courtly society, and to Maurer the conflict was indisputable and gave rise to the central theme, the *leit* of Tristan and Isolde. Thus an examination of the "Leid-Problem" (p. 205) would best uncover the meaning of the work.

In his structural and semantic analysis of the romance he studied first the "Vierreime," then the small sections embraced by these, and finally the sequence of events, in order to show that the motif of *leit* and certain elements connected with it (such as *riuwe*, *tot*, *minne*, and *ere*) underlay the composition of the work. Turning then to the story itself he wrote: "Das tiefste Leid im Tristan besteht darin, dass die Liebe von Tristan und Isolde uneingeschränkt gilt und bejaht wird; und dass anderseits auch die Werte des *rehts* und besonders der *ere* unbestritten ihre Gültigkeit behalten. Dieser Konflikt muss zwangsläufig in tiefstes Leid, in den Untergang führen" (p. 236). The inevitability of *Leid* in human life was not only recognized by the noble hearts but also consciously accepted by them, especially in its connection with love. The suffering of the lovers ensued undoubtedly from the conflict of their emotions with the demands of a Christian, courtly society because Gottfried, far from
"depreciating" the precepts of that society (as Keferstein had suggested, see p. 147) fully affirmed them. "Gerade dies scheint mir Gottfrieds Erkenntnis, dass es eine Liebe gibt, die die Ordnungen Gottes in der Welt erschüttern kann und erschüttert. Dies ist neu, steht im Gegensatz zu der idealen Auffassung von triuwe und staete, von reht und tugent. . . .

Gottfried erkennt, wenn er mit realistischem Blick um sich schaut, dass es eine Liebesmacht gibt, die trotz allem Widerstand auch den, der die ethischen Werte hochschätzt, . . . doch zwingt, sie aufzugeben" (p. 251).

Furthermore, ere commanded more respect from the lovers than did the higher courtly values of reht—and got (p. 253). Viewing the suffering in the light of medieval dualism, Maurer proposed that "die Spannung zwischen Welt und Gott verkörpert sich in jenem Konflikt zwischen Minne und ere" (p. 209).

Gottfried (unlike Wolfram) did not answer the question as to why God allowed so much suffering in the world, but addressed himself instead to the problem wie man zer werlde solde leben. The poet clearly believed that one must accept one's fate despite the suffering it would involve; "Er [Gottfried] sieht die Schicksale in dieser Welt (hinter denen unbezweifelt Gottes Walten und Gnade stehen kann). . . . Bejahung von Leid und Tod, Aufgehen im gemeinsamen Leid in edler und vollkommener Erfüllung, das ist Gottfrieds Antwort" (p. 261).

Not less significant than his suggestion that the minne-ere conflict contained the key to Gottfried's epic was Maurer's attitude towards the religious interpretations inspired by Ranke. He maintained that, as his explanation of the Tristan romance made clear, Tristan-love was for Gottfried neither a religion nor an absolute:
"Religions" ist diese Liebe insofern, als sie Züge trägt, die den Bereichen des göttlichen entnommen sind, den Bereichen des mystischen Liebeserlebnisses und der liebenden Vereinigung der Seele mit Gott. Diese Parallelen heben die Tristanliebe auf eine besonders hohe Stufe; sie lassen begreifen, wie es überhaupt möglich wird, dass dieser Liebe eine solche Macht im Menschenleben und in der Auseinandersetzung mit den hohen Werten des Lebens zukommen kann. Aber sie machen diese Liebe nicht zum Gott und sie erheben sie nicht zum summum bonum. (p. 209) 49

Hans Goerke was the second scholar to examine the Tristan romance in the light of heretical doctrines. While Denis de Rougemont connected the work with Catharism, Goerke on the other hand aimed to prove that Gottfried was propagating the heretical teachings of Amaury de Bène. In his dissertation "Die Minnesphäre in Gottfrieds Tristan und die Häresie des Amalrich von Bena" (Tübingen, 1952) he reaffirmed the views variously expressed by other critics that God occupied a position subordinate to that of the religiously conceived "Minnestranszendenz" (p. 76), and that a "depreciation" both of orthodox Christian ideals and of conventional social norms took place in the poem. The lovers' respect for Ére was not genuine; the apparent validity of the Ére concept for Isolde and Tristan was merely a tactical means employed by the poet for a specific purpose, namely the propagation of his "Minneideal" (p. 82) among the noble hearts, who were those members of Gottfried's audience who, having been initiated into Amalrician teachings, would appreciate and understand the carefully concealed heretical beliefs in his Tristan romance.

Among the arguments put forward in support of this thesis was the reflection in the poem of the heretical belief in the innocence of all lovers ("[dass] demjenigen, der in der Liebe stehe, keine Sünde zugerechnet werde" p. 90) and also of their "Begründung einer neuen, die Sinnenseite voll bejahenden Geschlechtsmoral" (p. 91). Particular emphasis was given
by Goerke to the doctrine that salvation was attained already in this life and not in an afterlife: the belief in their own divinity had led the pantheistic Amalricians to the conclusion that "bereits in diesem Leben [ist] die Auferstehung vollzogen" (p. 94), and this heretical belief formed the backbone of Gottfried's ideal of love. It explained the meaning of the "new life" which came to Tristan and Isolde with their love. That the lovers attained this salvation and were thus "resurrected" to a new life was brought about by the "Verlagerung des Heilsziels in die Diesseitigkeit eines transzendent Überhöhten Minneerlebens" (p. 98).

Before opening our discussion of Weber's two-volume work Gottfrieds von Strassburg "Tristan" und die Krise des hochmittelalterlichen Weltbildes um 1200 (1953) we shall recapitulate the salient points of the Tristan interpretation which he made in 1928 (see p. 14). He wrote then that Tristan-love was daemonic. It brought its victims into an inescapable conflict with the social ethos, and finally to destruction. On enlarging the angle of focus to include the Zeitgeist of Gottfried's era, he then concluded that the tragedy of Tristan and Isolde was that of the Hochgotik itself. Concerning Gottfried's views on the religious and ethical problems raised by the Gott-Welt dualism, he stated that the poet, incapable of finding any satisfactory solution, resorted to a third sphere—that of aesthetics. Four key topics figuring in these early thoughts on the epic, namely daemonic love, the conflict with society, dualism, and the Zeitgeist of 1200, were treated in depth by Weber in his more recent study of Tristan.

For the reformulation of his ideas Weber was heavily indebted to Julius Schwietering, whose studies had appeared in the interim. It is indisputable that the relationship between Tristan-love and Christian mysticism, brought
to the fore by Schwietering's work, played a most important role in shaping Weber's thought. As Weber himself wrote, "in tiefgreifendem Masse weiss sich auch dieses Buch Julius Schwietering verpflichtet, ohne dessen Arbeiten mein Plan schlechterdings nicht zu denken ist" (I, 6). Using his vast knowledge of the theological and philosophical source material of the times as his starting-point, he traced back in its numerous ramifications the like structure and different content (called by him the analogia antithetica) of the love phenomenon in Tristan and the mysticism of Christian love ideology.

Weber's work constitutes the most extreme example of the "geistesgeschichtliche Methode" in Tristan criticism; as indicated by its title, it examined the romance in the context of the contemporary crisis, "das Zentralproblem des Hochmittelalters, das Ringen um Harmonie oder Disharmonie von Natur und Übernatur, Menschlichem und Göttlichem, das hier—in einer ganz bestimmten Konkretisierung, nämlich im Liebesphänomen—aufleuchtet" (I, 39). The crux of his interpretation lay in the contention that Tristan-love was love of the sense (Sinnenliebe) and of the soul (Seelenliebe) at the same time. Prior to their drinking the love-potion, there existed between Tristan and Isolde a unique community of soul, "die seelisch-geistige Einheit der Liebenden" (I, 53). Their love then fell prey to the domination of the senses, and Seelenliebe became subordinate to Sinnenliebe. The separation of the lovers restored the primacy temporarily to spiritual love, but only death would ensure that the tyranny of the flesh would be permanently overcome. Thus, for the most part, sensual love had the upper hand in their lives. The sensual passion to which they were subject was dictated by a supernatural, essentially daemonic power of evil, named by Gottfried gotinne Minne:
Gottfried evidently believed in a power of evil in the world equal to the power of God, and Weber therefore contended that the poet was strongly influenced by heretical dualistic doctrines, and in particular by the belief in man's inevitable exposure to the sins of concupiscence. "Das Sinnenhafte im Liebeswillen ist als eine offenkundig dämonische Macht selbst ein 'Gott,' ist der Gott des Glaubens an Stärke gleich, dem guten Gott der wahren, geistigen Liebe. nicht unter-, sondern nebengeordnet. Solche Ideologie aber ist manichäismusnaher Dualismus!" (I, 132). Weber was thus the third Tristan scholar to bring the charge of heresy against Gottfried von Strassburg.

Throughout Tristan he found confirmation of his thesis that the "antithetical analogy" was basically a perversion or daemonization of Christian love-mysticism. Tristan-love in both its forms was described in the language of mysticism, but the love-union of Tristan and Isolde was achieved independently of the Christian God. God appeared in the work only as a traditional element of courtly culture, and Gottfried displayed a fundamentally sceptical attitude towards church institutions and the teachings of the Christian church. "Die Ideenstruktur des Dichters ist ganz und gar christlich; sie lebt aus dem Christlichen. Der Ideeninhalt dagegen ist gänzlich unchristlich, weil verabsolutierte ... Liebesmystik der Kirche" (I, 127). Thus to Weber, the Minnegrotte, far from being a hallowed sanctuary of divine love, was a "Dämonendom" (I, 168).
The contrast between **Seelenliebe** and **Sinnenliebe** was for Weber one manifestation in the romance of the great existential crisis around 1200, namely the seemingly insoluble problem of harmonizing "Gott und Welt, Übernatur und Natur, Seele und Leib, Agape und Eros" (I, 247). This crisis found expression also in the conflict between **minne** and **ére** in **Tristan**. Like Maurer, from whose premises he developed arguments to support his own thesis, he maintained that the romance should not be viewed one-sidedly as a "Dichtung der Minne": "die gesamte innere Tristanhandlung [wird] erst dadurch möglich, dass nicht ein, sondern zwei Ströme in diesem Kunstwerk fließen—-freilich gegeneinander fließen—, dass für diese Liebenden nicht eine Triebquelle existiert, sondern deren zwei, nämlich Minne und Ehre" (I, 205). By depicting his characters in a critical situation, where the demands of courtly society were opposed to those of love, Gottfried gave testimony to his belief "dass im Menschensein weder Harmonie noch Ordnung, sondern Zwiespalt, Konflikt, Dilemma und Unordnung den bestimmenden Platz innehaben" (I, 214). Thus the poet projected into the inherited material his awareness [or, in Dilthey's terminology, his "Erlebnis"] of the **universalinordinatio**.

Because Weber admittedly owed so much to the stimulating research conducted by Schwietering, it is appropriate that we conclude our discussion of the former's lengthy **Tristan** study with some remarks passed by Schwietering the year following its publication. He wrote:

It has thus become possible for the first time to create a picture of Gottfried which springs from a consistent view of his environment and which is historically sound. . . . It is also perfectly understandable psychologically that Weber, feeling as he did that there had been until very recently no unifying point of view, such as can be obtained only from the poem itself, was misled into repeating more often than was necessary formulations which came close to being catchwords. . . . The extensive digressions
of the second volume . . . may be credited with having given to the layman in theology—and are not all Germanists that?—a feeling of historical certainty and the possibility of making his own critical evaluation by the use of the sources themselves. Weber’s book is not the final word on the subject. We stand at a point of division in “Tristan” research or rather at a new beginning. This is a definite and clearly defined phase of the study of the literary history of the Middle Ages and in it has arisen a unified conception of Gottfried, which points to a new approach and which, by putting new life into detailed research, invites further analysis.51

The "new beginning" as heralded by Schwietering in 1954 failed to materialize. Since that time interpreters of the romance, apparently unimpressed by the theories of the antithetical analogy, of Gottfried’s reaction to the critical situation in which he and his contemporaries found themselves, and of his overt heresy, have worked independently of Weber either along those lines of research which have long since proved popular (e.g., the sacred nature of Tristan-love, Gottfried’s biography, the minne-sīre question, and the etymology of the noble heart,) or have struck out in new directions quite unrelated to Weber’s work (e.g., medieval and Marxist politics).

Gerhard Meissburger, who contended that the Tristan romance was impregnated with Augustinian thought, concluded "dass er [Gottfried] also kein Haeretiker ist, sondern von der christlichen Tradition ausgeht" in his study published in 1954.52 In the first place Gottfried’s religious treatment of Tristan-love was a bold, but by no means blasphemous, secularization of Augustine’s equation of God with love, "Deus charitas est" (p. 127). Secondly, the relationship of Tristan to the two women named Isolde represented man’s choice between the civitas dei and the civitas terrena, the rule of God and that of the devil, Jerusalem and Babylon, the narrow and the wide paths, life and death—all the pairs of opposites found in Augustine’s writings:
Die Ansicht, der Mensch müsse in seinem Leben notwendigerweise zwischen zwei äussersten Seinsmöglichkeiten wählen und werde im Tod dann für seine Wahl belohnt oder bestraft, ist der innerste Grund, oder anders: das Thema und der sich durch alle Wirrungen durchziehende Gedanke, den Gottfried vor Augen gehabt hat. Das bedeutet nichts Geringeres, als dass die Struktur des Tristanepos Gottfrieds letzten Endes auf Augustin zurückgeht, also geistlich ist. (pp. 123-24)

The German poet not only worked this religious idea into a basically secular story with great success, but also introduced appropriate and more obvious religious elements into the romance. These last were the sacred language, the eucharistic connotations [deist aller edelen herzen brot], similarities to Christian legends, and the Minnegrotte episode, with its "Gleichstellung" of cave and cathedral.53

As became evident in the discussion of Maurer, there was some question among Tristan critics as to whether or not the religious interpretation of the love-theme was indeed valid. Maria Bindschedler, who in 1954 wrote "Der Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg" and "Gottfried von Strassburg und die höfische Ethik",54 resisted those views which stated that the romance should be seen in the light of religion. Continuing Maurer's argument she maintained that Gottfried's originality lay in his handling of the antimony between minne and ère. Gottfried, like the hero and heroine, respected the concept of ère, and had he completed the work he would have effected a reconciliation between the two conflicting elements:

Selbst wenn wir annahmen, dass auch Gottfried, der Fabel folgend, zuletzt mit dem Tod der Liebenden den endgültigen Sieg der Minne würde dargestellt haben, so änderte dies nichts am Grundcharakter des Epos. Einmal musste ja, wenn das Werk abgeschlossen werden sollte, das Geschehen ein Ende finden und damit auch die innere Spannung aufhören.--Es besteht aber auch die Möglichkeit, dass dann, zuletzt, die Ellipse zum Kreis geworden, ihre "Brennpunkte" zusammengefallen wären: dass Gottfried Minne und Ehre, etwa durch eine letzte versöhnende Geste Markes den Toten gegenüber, die er ehrt--, zur Übereinstimmung gebracht hätte. (p. 66)
Developing Maurer's observations on the *leit* in Gottfried's poem she drew a parallel between the *leit* of the noble hearts and the lot of a Minnesänger, "wenn er trotzig entschlossen ist zu 'dienen,' auch wo ihm ein bequemeres Leben verlockender erschiene" (p. 69). While Maurer connected Gottfried's thought to Walther alone among the Minnesänger, Bindschedler (like de Boor) found similarities between Gottfried on the one hand, and poets such as Heinrich von Morungen and Reinmar on the other.

In 1956, however, the favoured religious approach was again used in Tristan criticism when Julius Richter bracketed the sacred aspect of the love-theme with Gottfried's own love-life ("Zur ritterlichen Frömmigkeit der Stauferzeit"). He based his understanding of the romance on the theory that a synthesis between Gott and Welt was not maintained throughout the work. A balance was struck in the first part, but the prologue and the second part (that is, the love-theme proper) stressed only the one side, the Welt. The realm of love as described by Gottfried allowed no room for the Christian God: "Darnach kann also von einem Gleichgewicht, einem Ausgleich zwischen Gott und Welt unmöglich gesprochen werden, vollends von einer christlichen Gottesauffassung kann hier nicht mehr die Rede sein" (p. 47). From these premises he then offered an explanation for the religious and mystical treatment of Tristan-love, by relating to Gottfried's biography the abandonment of conventional Christian religious attitudes in favour of the religion of love. A sudden experience of passionate love worked such a radical change in the poet's life that Christian teachings no longer held any meaning for him. Love itself became for Gottfried a new, more meaningful religion. "So wäre dann seine Dichtung zum Denkmal einer wirklichen Ersatzreligion für die Überlieferte christliche Religion geworden, wie sich kein anderes im deutschen Mittelalter findet" (p. 52, our italics).
The following year another religious interpretation appeared, when H. B. Willson—opposing Weber—asserted that "there is no fundamental incompatibility between *diu gotinne Minne* and the God of Love; they are completely harmonious."\(^56\) In his three papers published in 1957, 1964 and 1965\(^57\) Willson investigated the "extreme importance" of religious symbolism for determining and moulding the thought-processes of the Tristan poet, in the conviction that "the seeds sown by Schwietering and Ranke have yet to bear their ripest fruits" (1957, p. 208). He favoured Schwietering's theory that Bernadine mysticism played a significant part in the romance. The conception of love and that of God in the poem were not at variance with Christian mysticism in his view, and he therefore refuted the antithetical analogy of Weber. The sensual nature of Tristan-love, which Weber regarded as a sign of its daemonic, non-mystical nature, presented no problems for this critic; he pointed out that Weber had overlooked the fact that St. Bernard's whole edifice of *caritas* rested firmly upon *amor carnalis*: "If the basically sensual love of Tristan and Isolde is not deeply mystical, is the same to be said of the *Song of Songs* itself, allegory though it may be?" (1957, p. 212). *Gotinne Minne*, far from being daemonic, was sacramental: "She is the personification of Divine *caritas*" (1957, p. 212).

Gottfried invested the whole tale of Tristan and Isolde with sacramental significance. Because Original Sin prevented the attainment of perfect love in this world, their relationship was at once carnal and divine, sinful and virtuous. Yet, despite its necessary imperfection, their love participated in the perfection of divine *caritas*. In the prologue, which was sacramentally conceived, Gottfried offered the suffering of the two lovers as the priest offered that of Christ in the Eucharist. The imperfections and limitations of the world of sin caused their suffering
and death "just as they caused the death of the Redeemer himself" (1964, p. 606). Carrying this argument to its logical conclusion he maintained that Tristan and Isolde suffered "a passio analogous to the original Passio" (1964, p. 606).

According to W. T. H. Jackson, Gottfried was proclaiming a religion of love in the poem, and in describing the "unchristian mysticism" (in which union was achieved not with God but with the beloved) the poet used mystical terms in order to depict what seemed to him the most exalted of human experiences. In short, the love of Tristan and Isolde was a "mystic love in human terms" (p. 154). He followed Weber’s interpretation in that he felt that the demon of sensual passion ensnared the purer aspects of their love: sensual love both symbolized and debased their union, and only by death could their love be freed from this snare. Thus "the 'love-death' means that the lovers can be reunited in mystic love, freed from all grossness and carnal attraction" (p. 154). True mystical union could not be achieved even in the hallowed "shrine," the Minnegrotte, for the sensual was not yet completely overcome. Yet in the Minnegrotte Tristan reached his peak of development as an artist—not in the ars amandi, but in that of music. In the shrine of love Tristan and Isolde achieved perfect harmony, as symbolized by Gottfried’s use of musical imagery. There they expressed through music their spiritual consonantia.

The "seeds sown by Schwietering and Ranke" were of course not the sole origin of the harvest of religious interpretations in twentieth-century Tristan criticism. Friedrich Vogt’s definition in 1908 of the term edele herzen also exerted a strong influence, and helped prepare the ground for the subsequent assessments of Tristan-love as being mystical and non-courtly. In 1959, however, Olive Sayce finally challenged the validity of Vogt’s
assumptions. According to Sayce, "die Herleitung von edelez herze aus der Mystik ist völlig verfehlt. Vogts unglücklicher Einfall hat die spätere Kritik nur irregeführt. . . . Man darf nicht vergessen, dass der Gedanke von dem göttlichen Adel der Seele, obwohl in der frühen Mystik angebahnt, erst in der späteren Mystik in Deutschland geläufig wird (also lange nach Gottfried)" (p. 410). She maintained that hereditary nobility was an essential prerequisite for the noble hearts, and wrote therefore: "edelez herze und edeler muot sind ganz von dem Geburtsadel abhängig" (p. 403); she suggested moreover that the gentil cuer of old French poetry came grammatically and semantically closer to Gottfried's term than did the edeliu sêle of mysticism. Sayce was one of the few Tristan critics to support the views of Maria Bindschedler; she agreed that Tristan-love was neither mystical, nor opposed to the convention of courtly love. Like Bindschedler she found a similarity between the love of Tristan and Isolde and that expressed by poets of the Minnesang.

In 1960 A. T. Hatto expressed his doubts about the validity of interpreting Tristan-love as a new religion, but arrived at this conclusion by means other than those used by Bindschedler and Sayce. He weighed up the "crassest alternatives" (whether Gottfried was merely utilizing the ready-made language of the mystics in order to say things about love that had never been said before, or whether he was preaching a religion of love while at the same time rejecting Christianity, or at least Christian teaching on love), and decided that the poet was definitely not preaching a new religion. This theory rested on the fact that religious pronouncements concerned communities, whereas Gottfried's concerned relations between a minority of lovers. The hostile environment was essential for the minority in whom Gottfried placed his hopes, for "in an ideal world free of mésalliance such as Gottfried implies but never describes, his
lovers would go to pieces for sheer lack of opposition: they are heroes of the Resistance, of the underground army of love" (p. 18). Although Hatto did not accuse Gottfried of being a heretic, he felt nonetheless that the poet's outlook might well have gained in freedom from the "mutual attrition of Christianity and Catharism in his native Strassburg in his own lifetime" (p. 18). Gottfried's attitude and language implied not a religion but rather a new "cult" of love. This accounted for the poet's appropriation of religious and mystical language: "Such language was a highly developed vehicle of ecstasy, anything short of whose intensity clearly would not have suited Gottfried" (p. 17).

That the seeds sown by earlier scholars continue to bear fruit has been shown recently in the Tristan study by Petrus W. Tax (Wort, Sinnbild, Zahl im Tristanroman: Studien zum Denken und Wertens Gottfrieds von Strassburg, Berlin, 1961). In the conviction that Gottfried's deepest intentions had not yet been revealed, he examined the romance in the light of the poet's "Ursprünglichkeit und Andersartigkeit" (p. 19) vis-à-vis Thomas, and reached the conclusion that, in Gottfried's hands, the material had been "fast neu gestaltet" (p. 198) chiefly by means of extensive symbolism. In his interpretation Tax therefore studied the epic, the allegorical and symbolic planes within the romance.

Differentiating between the secular and the divine aspects of Tristan-love, he wrote that Gottfried strongly disapproved of the sensual element in the relationship between the lovers, and cloaked his disapprobation in symbolic language. The erotic Sinnenliebe was associated in the romance with the secular, courtly world, and symbolically with darkness and the devil. In its highest or spiritual form, on the other hand, Tristan-love was clearly pleasing to God--and thus also to Gottfried. This, a superior
agape-type of love, for which Tristan and Isolde were predestined by God, was achieved in a gradual process of purification and development. After death they would enter into the bliss and peace of the heavenly paradise (which found its earthly counterpart in the Minnegrotte). This interpretation of the love-theme was related by Tax to "die mittelalterliche, biblisch-augustinische Grundposition Gottfrieds" (p. 189). The poet, like Augustine, was convinced of the power held by the devil on earth, "besonders in der Liebe" (p. 187). But, as shown in the Tristan poem, "die tatsächliche Macht des Teufels in der Welt wird somit durchaus nicht geleugnet, aber sie soll von innen und von der echten, spezifischen Tristan-Isolde-Liebe hier zurückgedrängt und schliesslich Überwunden werden" (p. 202).

In his interpretation of the romance Tax presented new and cogent arguments to demonstrate that the work accorded harmoniously with the tenets of Christianity, and that Tristan-love, far from constituting a supernatural challenge to the Christian God, was on the contrary itself God-ordained. The poet neither preached heretical doctrines nor did he employ antithetical analogies in his work, but invested the traditional material with a personal "Ideologie und Gedankenwelt" (p. 198), reinforced by symbolic language, to testify to his belief that Tristan-love was at once a mystery, a destiny and a grace.

If at this point the twentieth-century interpretations are reviewed it becomes very apparent that, although the theories of Geistesgeschichte are based on a synthesis of all cultural, political and historical events of a given period, when applied in the practice of Tristan scholarship the results have been extremely one-sided because usually devoted to the analysis of one particular aspect of the Zeitgeist. Determined by Ranke's findings, the aspect most frequently studied has been the religious back-
ground: the metaphysical problems which Gottfried may or may not have faced and the theological and philosophical literature with which he may or may not have been familiar. Equally limited in scope were the few attempts to interpret the love-theme in the light of the chivalric code, as were also the studies of the influence on Gottfried of classical antiquity. Yet another facet of the medieval Zeitgeist which, though touched upon in the work of Dilthey, Keferstein and Max Wehrli (see n. 67), was there not made the single basis upon which to rest an interpretation of the romance, is the historical-political background. In recent years the Tristan poem has twice been subjected to political interpretation. Friedrich Heer and Wolfgang Spiewok, each in their own highly individual way, have both found in Gottfried's epic a sharp criticism of the medieval political scene.

Heer claimed in 1952 that the Tristan poet mounted a vehement attack on the political and ecclesiastical order as embodied in the Holy Roman Empire. Imperial propaganda had hailed the "Sacrum Imperium" (p. 330) as the kingdom of salvation and righteousness, the terrestrial representation of the kingdom of God. That this holy empire was a fiction soon became evident, and Gottfried, writing at this time, unveiled the courtly world as one of lies, delusion and futile self-deception. Marke, who was at first presented as the prototype of all holy, good and courteous kings—Charlemagne and Arthur in one—soon became a crazed, tearful creature, helpless, hopeless, the disgrace of his court and all earthly royalty. In brief, Gottfried exposed in horrifying and meticulous detail the growing infirmities of the sacrosant empire, while fashioning for himself a new kingdom—"das Reich der Minne"; "Die beiden Liebenden sind mit Minne gesalbt. Das Sakrament der Minnesalbung tritt an die Stelle der Königs- und Bischofssalbung—der
Liebende ist der neue christus, der neue rex unctus!" (p. 345). The Minnegrotte was the church of this new realm, displacing the traditional hierarchical church and its God. Thus, "Während der 'fromme,' das heisst sich streng an die Gesetze und Verpflichtungen des Sacrum Imperium haltende König nachts aufsteht, und zur Mette ins Münster geht, springt der neben ihm schlafende Tristan ins Bett Isoldens (15 143 ff.): der Gott des 'alten Reichs' ist ohnmächtig gegenüber dem neuen Gott, dessen Feier Tristan und Isolde sich selbst zelebrieren" (p. 359).

While Heer saw in Marke a symbol of the decadent and weak empire, Wolfgang Spiewok on the other hand viewed Marke as a symbol of the corrupt, yet powerful rule of the feudal hierarchy (Das Tristan-Epos Gottfrieds von Strassburg und die Grundzüge der hochmittelalterlichen deutschen Dichtung zwischen 1150 und 1250, 1963). It was generally assumed by Tristan scholars that Gottfried came from a bourgeois family, and the idea had gained favour that his social status accounted for his antipathy to the hereditary nobility and his negative attitude toward jousts, investitures and courtly love. The East German critic Spiewok was the first to carry this theory to an extreme by interpreting Gottfried's bourgeois status and the Tristan poem in the terms of the political ideology of Marxism and thus, like Naumann in 1938 (see p. 149), integrated personal political convictions into his study of the epic. In his dissertation he developed the idea that Gottfried was opposed to the ideology of feudalism.

In discussing the characters he wrote that Tristan, although indeed a member of the feudal nobility, was not presented as the typical feudal hero. In the first place, he excelled in intellectual achievements, while his military activities (symbolic of the feudal life) were clearly belittled
by the poet. The inner worth of the characters held more value for Gottfried than did any outward display of materialistic pomp, luxurious dress, and martial prowess. In short, Tristan was the "new hero" and as such the embodiment of the heroism of intellect and humanism. From this Spiewok concluded: "Die Charakterzüge, die Gottfried seinem Helden verleiht, deuten offensichtlich auf Einflüsse bürgerlicher Ideologie" (p. 281). In the second place, because of the love-affair with Isolde, Tristan came into conflict with the "Klassenmoral" (p. 279). The demands of Isolde's arranged feudal marriage with Marke ran counter to "die freie Entscheidung der individuellen Liebesbindung" (p. 282). The discrepancy between minne and ére represented the breach between Gottfried's ideal of love and the "social immorality" of feudalism. The Marxist critic concluded that Gottfried was pleading for the emancipation of women from their inferior social position, and also criticizing feudal marriage with its political and economic basis. In Marke, the chief representative of the feudal nobility, was clearly mirrored the corrupt mentality of that class: "Die herrschende Klasse der Feudalgesellschaft wird von ihm [Gottfried] bereits mit Wesensmerkmalen des Verfalls gekennzeichnet" (p. 282).

Gottfried incorporated in his work propaganda for the equal rights of the bourgeois class to which he belonged and which, in the Strassburg of that time, was gaining in both economic and political strength. The poet envisioned the world of noble hearts as a world free from class differences; the inner qualities of men in that world rendered them all equal. But, as Spiewok added, Gottfried's ideals could materialize neither in reality nor in romance. The love-story was doomed to end in tragedy, "da die gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit keine Basis für einen Ausweg bot" (p. 280). Because of the fundamental humanism contained in the epic,
Spiewok numbered Gottfried's *Tristan* among the most valuable literary documents of the medieval period, and in lauding Gottfried he wrote:

Man könnte ihm als einem wertvollen Bestandteil des kulturellen Erbes unseres deutschen Volkes im Mittelalter ein Wiedererstehen in unserer sozialistischen Nationalkultur wünschen, nachdem in unserer Gesellschaftsordnung durch die revolutionäre Aktion des sozialistischen Humanismus die Voraussetzungen zu einer allseitigen Entfaltung des Individuums in der Wirklichkeit geschaffen wurden. Die Lektüre von Gottfrieds Werk vermag uns den Wert dieses Besitzes---um den der Strassburger Meister vergeblich rang---eindrucksvoll genug vor Augen zu führen. (p. 282)
Modern scholars, unlike their predecessors, have shown both interest and initiative in unravelling the meaning of Gottfried's *Tristan*. Despite the necessity for empathy and historical relativism in dealing with the past and its literature (as recognized so clearly by Herder) the standard by which the nineteenth century measured the love-theme in *Tristan* was consistently that of the narrow-minded present, and Gottfried, thus gauged, was continually found wanting. In the twentieth century such evaluations of the work have been displaced by a variety of books, articles and dissertations in which scholars have attempted to come to an understanding of what Gottfried thought and managed to convey to a contemporary audience by grounding their interpretations on a more or less thorough knowledge of the period to which the work belongs—short, to offer an interpretation which they believe would be commensurate with the medieval outlook. This desire for historical relativism and "Mittelaltergemässheit" was reawakened by the burgeoning *Geistesgeschichte* and the corresponding wish to synthesize all aspects—cultural, historical, political—of a given period in an effort to understand the appropriate *Zeitgeist*; in this way a modern scholar would himself experience the general intellectual climate of that given period and could form an opinion of the psyche of an individual living at that time. In *Tristan* interpretation, however, the topic of religion has attracted more attention from scholars than has any other aspect of the *Zeitgeist* and as a result the bulk of modern criticism has been one-sided rather than synthetic. Assessments of Gottfried's religiosity are in stark contrast to those made earlier, for they no longer hinge on the apparent blasphemy perpetrated during the Judgment of God episode, but rather on the religious and mystical connotations of the love between Tristan and Isolde as revealed especially during the episode of *Minnegrotte*. Friedrich
Ranke, who first discovered the association between Tristan-love and religion, occupies a position of crucial importance for this development. Prior to the appearance of his work in 1925 some indication had been given that scholarship was moving into certain trends in which medieval theology, philosophy and mysticism, and also Gottfried's retention of the externals of orthodox Christianity, claimed most attention. These trends became more pronounced in the following years. Ranke's theory of the "Liebesreligion," based on the analogy between the allegory of the Minnegrotte and allegorical descriptions of medieval cathedrals, raised a number of problems to which numerous critics have addressed themselves. Chief among them was that concerning the compatibility of the "Liebesreligion" with the Christian religion. Ideas were sharply divided on this issue: representing one extreme were those who saw in the experience of Tristan-love a pathway to Heaven, whilst the opposite point of view was adopted by those who regarded such love as a destructive, daemonic force. Some scholars have charged Gottfried with heresy.

That the poet intended the love-theme to be understood in a theological and metaphysical frame of reference was further demonstrated by Julius Schwietering, who clarified the analogy to the unio mystica by drawing many parallels between the romance and St. Bernard's mystical writings; however, all who have discussed Gottfried's amatory doctrine in such terms have been confronted by the problem that both spiritual and sensual love play a role within the romance. Whereas the nineteenth-century detractors of Gottfried maintained that Tristan was the work of an artistically gifted but licentious and frivolous poet who revelled in sensuality and secularity and paid little or no heed to spiritual and divine matters, modern critics have discovered
that the Gott-Welt dualism, characteristic of the Gothic Zeitgeist, concerned Gottfried just as it did his contemporaries. Various theories have been advanced to show how the romance embodies his success or failure in his endeavours to find a solution to the problem of dualism, either by effecting a compromise between the divine and the secular, the spiritual and the sensual, or by evading the issue altogether. Scholars who discussed Gottfried's "Kultus des Schönen" developed from their interpretation of the poem the idea that Gottfried realized in fiction, art and allegory an ideal of perfect love to which he could not attain in reality: seeing himself unable to come to terms with the eternal and the temporal, he resorted to a third sphere, that of aesthetics. However, this "aesthetic" interpretation of the poet's intention enjoyed only a limited popularity and soon became outmoded.

Together with the difficulties involved in defining the relationship of Tristan-love to conventional religion and medieval mysticism are those arising from the explanation of how that love measures up to the demands of medieval courtly society. Although some interpreters have put forward the theory that Tristan-love is an absolute and that the poet openly criticized courtly morality and depreciated the chivalric code of honour, it has also been suggested that such interpretations are fallacious, because Gottfried treated the material solely in order to exemplify the tragic conflict between unlawful love and social mores. The story illustrated the incompatibility of Tristan-love with courtly precepts, and this conflict expressed itself most clearly in the minne-ere antagonism. Linked to this approach to the romance is the fact that, whereas Gottfried incurred blame among earlier critics who charged that his attitude anticipated Renaissance philosophy, secularity and individualism, a more
sympathetic light has now been shed on the poet and on the tragedy bound up with his precocity. The clash of the Gothic spirit with that of the Renaissance is symbolized in the tragic dilemma of the socially restricted yet emotionally liberated hero and heroine of Gottfried's epic.

While certain critics have found in Tristan a faithful reflection of the intellectualism inherent to Hohenstaufen politics and an instrument by means of which Gottfried mounted an attack on the Holy Roman Empire, other interpreters have been biased by more recent political developments. When seen in the light of National Socialistic ideals, Gottfried's treatment of the love-theme has been hailed as being fundamentally "Germanic" because it stresses the native virtues of fidelity and heroism; to the Marxist interpreter, however, the Tristan romance is basically the protest of a bourgeois poet against the corruptions of feudalism.

In the closing lines to his prologue Gottfried addresses his audience in the following words:

\[
\text{Und swer nu ger, daz man im sage } \\
\text{ir leben, ir tot, ir vr\"{u}de, ir clage, } \\
\text{der biete herze und oren her: } \\
\text{er vindet alle sine ger.} \quad \text{(Tristan, 11. 241-44)}
\]

A survey of the interpretations of Gottfried's Tristan poem reveals that the reader can indeed find "all that he desires."
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Auch die Tristan-Forschung ist mit ihren Fragestellungen, Sehweisen und Lösungen zum Teil dem "Zeitgeist" und dem Wissenschaftsstil der jeweiligen Epoche verpflichtet.

The primary concern of the preceding history of Tristan scholarship has been to present the ideas and achievements of different generations of critics, and it has become clear in the course of this survey that connecting links to intellectual history are made visible when the course is traced which scholarship has taken in a given area of inquiry. For example, during the nineteenth century the nationalistic literary historians, though censuring Gottfried von Strassburg for his choice of theme, claimed nonetheless that it was a German poet who, by means of his consummate artistry, produced the sovereign literary redaction of the legend. Again, during the era of National Socialism the love-theme in Gottfried's treatment was hailed as a splendid illustration of truly Germanic heroism and fortitude. Furthermore, Tristan scholars—though engaged in different areas of research—have simultaneously applied similar methods in their work. A notable instance occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the genealogical studies of the manuscript transmission and the editorial attempts to reconstruct the original text of Gottfried's poem corresponded to the research then being conducted into the relationships between the extant versions and the subsequent reconstructions of the plot-outline of the hypothetical archetypal Tristan romance. Similarly illustrative of a common approach is the fact that twentieth-century critics studying the sources, along with many of those offering interpretations of Gottfried's poem, have worked
from the premise that features of a specific Zeitgeist can be elicited from the redaction(s) being considered.

In this final summing-up emphasis will be transferred from the analysis of the aims and results of Tristan scholarship—which implicitly exposes the intellectual rationale—and laid directly upon the intellectual justification. One must ask for example what preconceived notions about the nature of different social groups were held by the early scholars, some of whom proposed that romance originated in Arabia whilst others were equally convinced that Scandinavia was a more probable birthplace of the genre. And, when reflecting on the nineteenth-century developments in origin research, one wonders why a few scholars investigating the genesis of the Tristan fable posited far-fetched mythological sources when most were content to focus their attention on the more likely historical origins; further inquiry is also needed into the reasons underlying the growth of interest in the general question of sources and influences later in the century. On turning from the study of origins to the editions and manuscript studies it is clear that among those features in need of more explanation is the failure on the part of the nineteenth-century "Germanisten" to produce an adequate critical edition of Gottfried’s Tristan poem even though the chief manuscripts had all been recovered by an early date and the transmission itself raised no major problems. And, finally, a wider background is required if one is to understand fully the changing trends in Gottfried criticism.

To the age of the Enlightenment with its firm and optimistic belief in human perfectibility, in mankind’s progress into a future bright with the radiance of reason, and with its conviction that the important distinction
between men was that between civilized and barbarian, the Middle Ages represented times of barbarity, crude ignorance, folly and superstition which afforded a marked contrast to the gentility, polished elegance, wisdom and rationalism of the present. It is therefore understandable that the early eighteenth-century thinkers, aware that literature reflected the type of society in which it was produced, considered medieval literature to be unworthy of serious investigation and discussion; the literary products of ancient Greece and Rome, on the other hand, were held in high esteem, for were these not composed during the revered Golden Age of antiquity, and were not "civilized" standards of taste at all times the same? A similar point of view on the relationship between art and the state of society is discernible in the earliest theories propounded concerning the geographical origins of romantic fiction—a genre, as Thomas Warton hastened to point out, entirely unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome. Human nature, it was thought, took on different forms under different circumstances such as climatic and geographical conditions. Scholars theorizing on the Arabian origins of romantic fiction therefore believed it unlikely that such exotic imagery and fertility of fiction could ever have originated among the inhabitants of a cold, unimaginative Western climate; similarly, in discussions of the Northern theory it was proposed that the "northern solitudes, the piny precipices, the frozen mountains, and the gloomy forests" acted on the imaginations of the first poets to cultivate the art of fiction in Scandinavia and "gave a tincture of horror to their imagery."\(^2\) Because the fabulous element in romance, the "giants, enchanters, dragons and the like monstrous and arbitrary fictions" (p. 110) could have radiated only from a place conducive to such remarkable irrationality, the proponents of the conflicting theories connected the supernatural
and the enchantments in romance to the Arabian and Scandinavian races with their uncultivated minds, wild imaginations, and pagan superstitions.

Of those scholars who turned to medieval romance in order to seek an illustration of the customs of the society in which it was produced, some opposed the "savage conditions of our ancestors" to "our present improvements in knowledge" (p. 3) but others, beginning to break away from the prejudiced view of the medieval and classical past, sought to redeem the chivalric romances from the disrepute into which they had fallen. Writers like Hurd and La Curne de Sainte-Palaye accomplished this by maintaining that past epochs should no more be judged by modern standards of taste than should "Gothic" poems be measured by "Grecian" rules. The combined influences of antiquarianism, the broadening literary horizon, the spread of primitivism, and the increasing insistence on the necessity for relativism in assessments of the past together reinforced this new attitude towards medieval literature in the later eighteenth century. While the Neo-Classicist, drawing a distinction between two kinds of poetry--that of nature (produced by a crude, barbarous society) and that of rationalism and refinement (based on the eternal principles of taste derived from Greece and Rome)--held the former up to ridicule and contempt, the Primitivist on the contrary tended to exalt natural or sentimental poetry at the expense of refined poetry. "Primitive poetry," a term embracing such disparate elements as Homer's epics, the Bible, Ossian, Indian songs, Scottish ballads, and chivalric romance, was enthusiastically lauded. This reaction was typified in the writings of Thomas Percy, who envisioned primitive poetry as a necessary and universal expression of the human imagination and emotions, and for whom the origins of poetry were therefore everywhere the same.
it was held that romance was but one manifestation among many testifying
to the universality of poetry, a shift of emphasis occurred in the study
of the origins of romantic fiction: certain knowledge concerning the exact
location, climate and social group most favourable to the early growth of
this genre was now considered less important than the recognition both of
the reasons for its inception and of its significance as forming part of
a global phenomenon—a development in scholarship closely bound up with
the equations now being drawn between the origin of poetry and that of
language. Furthermore, because chivalric romance was long fostered in
oral tradition until finally being committed to script, particular interest
was placed henceforth in the poetry of the pre-literary legend. Related
to the broad view of a universal panorama of primitive poetry was the
increasing cosmopolitanism among the intellectual élite of Goethe's age,
when, for instance, many translations of foreign masterpieces were being
written, when Goethe coined the term "Weltliteratur," and when Herder was
collecting and publishing folk-songs from many countries. Herder, moreover,
further promulgated the necessity for historic and ethnic relativism.
Though he too admitted that the geographical and climatic background of
a nation must certainly be taken into account in order to understand its
history, he felt that every nation... was animated by a certain spirit
(or "Volksgeist") which found expression in whatever its members did, and
that civilization, far from being uniform and unchanging, was differently
specified among different peoples and also in different periods of time.
In his philosophy of history the significance and uniqueness of every
historical epoch in its own right was recognized, the enlightenment myth
of infinite progress was discarded, and thus an immeasurable influence
was exerted on the revaluation and revival of medieval literature.
With the gradual deepening of the historical sense among the Romantics the contrast to the Enlightenment conception of history became yet more marked. The thinkers of the eighteenth century, looking back to the past, did so because they wished to prepare a better future, since the rise of a new political and social order was their great theme and concern; the purpose of the historian was that of the cosmopolitan philosopher, set on learning the lessons to be derived from history. The Romantics, on the other hand, loved the past for its own sake, and wished to investigate the chain of connections binding the present to earlier generations. The broad view of society and types of literature (e.g., the genre of romantic fiction) was now supplemented by study of individual phenomena: a single nation's history, the sources of individual Arthurian romances. Current investigations into historical origins embraced subject-matter ranging from European nations to medieval romances, from the collection and publication of documents of German history (e.g., the Monumenta Germaniae historica initiated in 1819 by the Baron vom Stein) to the studies into the connection between the Viking invasions of Britain and the genesis of the Tristan legend. Though all of history was sacred to the Romantics, since in their metaphysical, idealistic philosophy it mirrored the progress of a universal spirit, one specific historical phenomenon, namely the chivalric culture of Catholic medieval Europe, constituted for them a Golden Age (far removed from the Enlightenment and Neo-Classical ideal of the Golden Age of classical antiquity), a phenomenon true to itself, uncontaminated by an inappropriate classicism (to which men of letters were now fettered), and above all an ideal of political and religious unity which, it was hoped, would soon be realized in contemporary Europe. The Middle Ages were, in short, the Eden of Romanticism. The three themes—history, "Ritterromantik," and European unity—which permeated the writings of the early Romantics were clearly
evidenced in the Tristan scholarship of the time: the sources of the story were traced back to specific events in British history; the glories of chivalry were painted in glowing colours in descriptions of Gottfried’s poem; testimony to the European community of thought during the medieval era was found in the extant English, French and German versions of the Tristan-Isolde theme, knowledge of which was rapidly expanding as increasing numbers of medieval manuscripts were brought to light.

Following the downfall of Prussia in 1806, however, the dream of European unity was removed from the immediate political horizon; French nationalist expansion, purging the German Romantics of their earlier universalism, induced the rise of a fervent German national spirit. The former supranational perspective, lost when scholars came to think in national terms, was not recovered until much later. A close study was now made into the indigenous qualities of the national Teutonic character or "Volksgeist"—of whose existence Herder had made them aware—as found in its numerous manifestations: laws, language, customs, history, songs, legends, myths, epics. These developments affected Tristan scholarship in several ways. Those pursuing research into the legend’s genesis had concluded from their study of Welsh texts and British history that the fable originated among the insular Celts—but the "Germanisten" were by definition chiefly concerned with indigenous subject-matter. What, then, would warrant philological work being carried out on Gottfried’s Tristan poem similar to that on the Germanic epics such as the Nibelungenlied? An answer was sought by a few scholars who now traced the fable’s origins to remote, Indo-European mythology. The Romantics recognized that even prior to the German "Volksgeist" there existed myth, the sacred mainspring of
human culture, where art, history and poetry originated. Whereas to the eighteenth-century mind myth had been a strange, uncouth mass of confused ideas and gross superstitions, for the Romantic philosopher (e.g., Schelling) it was something to be regarded with awe and veneration. Interest in Gottfried's Tristan poem was quickened when the "Mythological School" (comprising scholars such as Simrock, Mone, Kurtz, and von der Hagen) showed how the love-story had emanated from a primeval source and was furthermore related to Germanic legends which had sprung from the same source.

But appraisals of the mythological nature of Gottfried's work did not suffice to set the tone for the majority of nineteenth-century evaluations. In the general history of ideas the influence of Schelling—who concentrated much of his attention on the philosophy of mythology—was counterbalanced and then eclipsed by the appearance of the Hegelian system. In the works of political historians deep and passionate hatred against the French was being propagated, and literary historians, deliberately pointing out that Gottfried took his theme from a French source, condemned the story for its blatant immorality; in some cases these scholars went even further in their criticism of the French in that they related features in the medieval romance to the contemporary scene: "Die schmählichste Verhöhnung der Gattentreue, so schmählich, wie sie der Sache nach nur in irgend einer der frivolsten Schilderungen der französischen Neuzeit vorkommen kann, ist der Gegenstand des Gedichtes Tristan und Iseult";³ "[Tristan ist] ein artiger, sich vor den Damen niedlich machender Fant, wie wir ihm wohl allezeit unter den eleganten Pariser Pflastertretern begegnen."⁴ Moreover, religion joined forces with patriotism and together formed the criteria by which most scholars assessed the merits of works of literature:

As Eichendorff stated, "wir scheuen uns daher nicht, diesen höchsten Masstab alles Lebens auch an die bedeutendste Manifestation des Geisterreichs, an die Literatur, anzulegen" (p. 27). In marked contrast to Wolfram's Parzival, Gottfried's Tristan, containing episodes such as the "blasphemous" Judgment of God, fell far short of the approved standards. And, finally, any difficulties presented by the fact that the romance was after all composed by a German poet during the age of chivalry so highly esteemed by the Romantics were easily overcome by the biased literary historians: Gottfried, it was now claimed, bore a far closer spiritual affinity to the Renaissance than to his own era. In his poem the institution of medieval chivalry and its ethical code were mocked and scorned while Renaissance sensuality was given pride of place—in short, Gottfried "betrayed" the Middle Ages. With these considerations in mind we can better grasp why the nineteenth-century "Germanisten" failed to produce a reliable edition of the Tristan romance despite the fact that the chief manuscripts (HMWF) had all been recovered by 1816. While it is no doubt true that poor scholarship and bad luck were among the chief causes of this situation—Massmann, for instance, was satisfied to give an incomplete list of variants, and von der Hagen's critical apparatus was accidentally destroyed by fire—the aversion of Lachmann and the literary historians to the moral content of the poem could have done nothing but discourage scholars from undertaking this editorial work.
When feelings of political and cultural superiority were aroused by the settlement of the Prussian victory over the French in 1871 the reverberations in Tristan scholarship were comparable to those occasioned by the upsurge of patriotism earlier in the century. In studies of the Gottfried-Thomas relationship, in which the question of the German poet's originality occasioned as much dispute as did the synchronous argument over Chrétien's role in the Tristan tradition, German scholars were on the whole more inclined to regard Gottfried as a slavish translator than as a talented, original poet who invested the story with new meaning. This point of view, apart from further belittling Gottfried, contained a subtle vindication of Germany and the good name of her literature: implicit throughout such demonstrations that Gottfried had translated the immoral, irreligious foreign fable into German was the suggestion that a German poet would not himself have invented such a disreputable story.

When viewed from another angle the general interest taken in the study into the German poet's dependence on his French source can be seen as forming but one part of an intensive programme of research being pursued into every stage in the development of the Tristan material: its origins, growth in oral tradition, manuscript transmission and literary history engrossed a large segment of scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for origin research and source studies generally had become a major concern for academics, whether their interest lay in medieval literature, history, or anthropology. At a time when Darwinism was much in the air (The Origin of Species [1859] and The Descent of Man [1871] had offered a wealth of factual evidence to supplement the older theories of evolution) medievalists were busy accumulating data as they
traced Germanic epics and the matiére de Bretagne back to their origins. To some extent the supranational perspective was now regained. While some Tristan scholars drew up family trees of manuscripts and extant versions, others outlined the legend's evolution and mutations from its beginnings through its descent in the insular Celtic and continental traditions, but common to both groups of scholars was the desire to prove the former existence of, and eventually to restore in a "mechanical" reconstruction, some primary source—the Pictish story, the archetypal Tristan romance, the original text of Gottfried's poem—and to link it to the fable's total development. General conclusions were drawn from an analysis and observation of the extant material: common lacunae and errors were thought to give evidence of manuscript relationships and enabled critics to establish a stemma codicum, while the legend's migration was clarified by onomastic and toponymic research into the extant redactions which philologists were now eagerly editing. Underlying the predilection for the empirical approach and inductive methods in scholarly research in the latter part of the century was the close alliance which science had entered into with non-scientific branches of knowledge such as psychology, philosophy, literary criticism and historiography. This extension of scientific methods, practised by the generation living in an age of industrial revolution and technological advance, had been advocated in the theories of positivism. One of the main tenets in this philosophy founded by Auguste Comte was that all knowledge could be brought within the sphere of scientific investigation. Historians, surfeited with earlier idealist philosophies of history (e.g., those of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) were now intent on making their subject scientific and materialistic; proceeding with empirical caution they accumulated source materials in order to ascertain precisely
what happened, and by analyzing different historical situations they
then tried to extract the general laws which those situations exemplified.

Similarly, Wilhelm Scherer—who wrote:

Dieselbe Macht, welche Eisenbahnen und Telegraphen zum Leben
erneekte, dieselbe Macht, welche eine unerhörte Blüte der
Industrie hervorrief, die Bequemlichkeit des Lebens vermehrte,
die Kriege abkürzte, mit einem Wort die Herrschaft des Menschen
über die Natur um einen gewaltigen Schritt vorwärts brachte—
dieselbe Macht regiert auch unser geistiges Leben: sie räumt
mit den Dogmen auf, sie gestaltet die Wissenschaft um, sie drückt
der Poesie ihren Stempel auf. Die Naturwissenschaft zieht als
Triumphator auf dem Siegeswagen einher, an den wir Alle gefesselt
sind.

established in an inductive process that the course of German literary
history consisted of a series of epochs alternating with predictable
regularity; Tristan, as part of the Middle High German period, belonged
to the second of the "classical" periods, those culminating points which
recurred at intervals of six hundred years.

At the same time the spate of studies into the Gottfried-Thomas
relationship, like the concurrent research into Gottfried’s biography,
reflected Scherer’s dictum of observing "das Erlebte, das Erlernte und
das Ererbte"—a formula related to Hippolyte Taine’s "race, temps et
milieu." In general the phenomena of human character and social existence
were approached by scholars with the expectancy of finding them as reducible
to general laws as were the other phenomena of the universe; in literature,
the naturalists depicted man as the end product of the forces of heredity
and environment; in Tristan scholarship Gottfried’s bourgeois status
formed the basis for an understanding of his work.

In this, the era of positivism, scholars professedly abstained from
metaphysical speculation and subjective judgment in studies which, based
on observation, calculation and experiment, were meant to be analogous to
those pursued by natural scientists. As Gustave Lanson stated,
Yet the methods adopted were frequently neither impartial nor objective. Subjective evaluations were not absent from Scherer's literary history. The quasi-scientific attempts by Tristan scholars to produce the contents of the hypothetical original romance by analytical, comparative work upon its derivatives were at best little more than approximations to the missing archetypal work, for in reconstructions of this nature the chances are slim indeed that the contents might be restored with any degree of accuracy by means of a procedure which inevitably relies to a greater or lesser extent on the restorer's personal choice among the different renderings. For instance, the very fact that Colther drew on four primary versions, while Bédier used five, clearly shows that the subjective element intrudes from the very outset of such work. When methods such as these are adopted in the editing of texts the same reservations obtain: the "original text" of Gottfried's poem cannot be obtained in an eclectic process of selection and elimination among the manuscripts, even though studies of the transmission can potentially go a long way towards establishing a feasible pedigree, thus clarifying which of the manuscripts might reasonably be considered as close representatives of the original; as was pointed out by the Tristan manuscript critics, "innere Gründe" (such as the individual scholar's solution to problems of semantics and authenticity raised by linguistic differences between the manuscripts) must frequently be taken into account in such reconstructions. And finally, the view that any valid
inference as to the life and personality of a writer may be drawn from his work cannot be accepted without strong reservations—yet the nineteenth-century biographers of Gottfried, knowing nothing whatsoever about his life apart from the fact that he composed the Tristan romance, gleaned the necessary details for their biographies from the romance itself. Each of these scholars was therefore free to manipulate the materials afforded by the romance in various ways as suited his personal point of view concerning Gottfried's attitude towards the Church, the chivalrous life, and the love-theme—and, having deduced the biography from the romance, they then explained the romance on the basis of this biography.

The mechanizing tendencies of the age of science and technology produced a state of crisis in intellectual and cultural life for—as analyzed with great perception by Nietzsche—the encroachments of the natural sciences and the oversaturation with history had brought in their wake a spiritual bankruptcy. However, a re-orientation of thought came about when the values of human personality and individuality, which scientific laws could neither measure nor regulate, were once more accentuated. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the opening years of the twentieth, when philosophers such as Wilhelm Dilthey and Heinrich Rickert stressed that certain branches of knowledge contrasted with the natural sciences in that they did not conform to general laws, scholars gradually became aware that different epistemological approaches were required in the spheres of science and culture, in the "Naturwissenschaften" and the "Geisteswissenschaften."

Students of literature began to abandon descriptive scientific positivism (e.g., philological research, manuscript comparisons, preparation of editions) in favour of subjective interpretations and evaluations of individual works of art. In Tristan scholarship a waning of interest in
"Stoffgeschichte" and manuscript criticism was accompanied by a rapid increase in academic endeavours to plumb the depths of meaning in Gottfried’s poem, which as a result has now proven to be a seemingly limitless reservoir of potential interpretations.

In the modern era, characterized by the practice of depth psychology and "Geistesgeschichte," many scholars have approached literature as an objectification both of one particular poet’s philosophy of life and also of a more general attitude towards life typical of the Zeitgeist, by which is meant the definite cultural climate or unifying spirit of the time as manifested in all cultural activities of a given age, for literature, along with the other arts, counted among the "Auswirkungen des Gesamtgeistes" (Rudolf Unger). In interpretation one penetrated not only the poet’s personality but also the collective psyche of the epoch in which he lived; "Ausschlaggebend ist weder das Formalästhetische noch das Empirisch-Biographische, sondern die ‘geistige’ Grundtendenz einer Epoche, die sich--genau genommen--auch aus der Politik, Philosophie oder Religion ableiten liess." Although some Tristan scholars in their interpretations took into account the "Auswirkungen des Gesamtgeistes" such as Hohenstaufen politics, the current influence of classical literary traditions, and the structural principles of Gothic architecture, for the majority the theological-philosophical literary background of the period assumed most importance as they endeavoured to reach an understanding of Gottfried’s amatory doctrine. Since the chief characteristic of his original treatment of the theme was seen to reside in the religious significance with which he, facing the "Gothic" problem of the Gott-Welt dualism, endowed Tristan-love, knowledge both of the philosophy underlying this dualism (e.g., the writings of St.
Augustine) and of the literary sources from which Gottfried drew his religious imagery (e.g., Bernardine mysticism) helped to deepen the interpreter's appreciation of the poet's predicament and accomplishment.

Though the practice of the "geistgeschichtliche Methode" in Tristan interpretation has without doubt been fruitful in that a more comprehensive picture of Gottfried and his times has emerged as a result of the detailed studies of contemporary works and movements, it is nonetheless open to serious question. First, the tendency has been to assume that Gottfried was conversant with all the eruditions of his age: what the scholar after laborious investigation learns to have pre-existed the romance, or to have coexisted with it, he believes to have been known to the poet and consciously or unconsciously used by him. Secondly, because a single interpretation cannot realize the ideal of placing the work in its total setting, it follows that only certain limited aspects of the integrating Zeitgeist are taken into consideration by the scholar at any one time. However, in Tristan scholarship the interest in the theological-philosophical background has far outweighed any other aspect; the contemporary political scene, and the survival of classical literary traditions, to name but two other features of the period, have rarely caught the attention of interpreters. Thirdly, the scholar adopting this method aims to furnish an interpretation commensurate with the "Gothic" spirit, but this very desire for "Mittelaltergemässheit" requires that he turn a blind eye to the gulf which inevitably separates a contemporary (medieval) from a modern (twentieth-century) understanding of a temporally distant work. This, in turn, raises the issue of the accessibility of the past to later investigation. Not only does every critic look at the past from a certain point of view, but in addition his understanding of the medieval "Weltanschauung," though
gained partially from the works and movements of the period, is also set on a teleological and comparative basis conditioned by his knowledge of the historical and intellectual developments from 1200 to the present. The scholar who now views the Tristan poem as the quintessence and culmination of the "Gothic" crisis is therefore open to almost the same criticism as was the earlier scholar who found in Gottfried a herald of the Renaissance.

The desire for "Mittelaltergemässheit" discussed in this third point affords a striking contrast to a quite different approach adopted by a few scholars in recent years who, biased by their commitment to modern political ideologies, have deliberately set out to interpret works of literature within the framework of such ideologies. Just as, in the nineteenth century, assessments of Gottfried's stylistic supremacy and the immorality of the legend were not infrequently influenced by the intense chauvinism on the part of the German literary historians, so too in the twentieth has interpretation of his Tristan poem been utilized as National Socialist and Marxist propaganda. Clearly, a committed approach does not necessarily preclude important insights into a literary work, but in the case of the modern political Tristan interpretations little advance has been made over assessments of the "Germanic" nature of the love-theme offered by the Mythological School early in the nineteenth century on the one hand and the positivistic biographical studies of Gottfried, the "bourgeois," on the other.

In modern Tristan interpretation the poem has become the transparent medium enabling the reader to perceive the tenor of the age in which the poet lived, but the study of the extrinsic circumstances in which the poem is set has far outgrown interest in the literary value of the work itself;
surrounded by so much scaffolding, the poem has all but disappeared from view. That the practice of close textual criticism or *explication de texte* has been notably absent from the work submitted by the large group of scholars who in recent years have given interpretations of the *Tristan* poem is explicable both by the predominance of the "geistgeschichtliche Methode" and by the work's very nature, for an acquaintance with backgrounds becomes proportionally more necessary as the writing is temporally remote. Yet twentieth-century literary scholarship in general has been characterized by various movements (e.g., New Criticism and Russian Formalism) sharing the common outlook that close reading of a work has priority over historical study; the literary text has been made the centre of interest in the theory of Emil Staiger—who wrote "nur wer interpretiere, ohne nach rechts und nach links und besonders hinter die Dichtung zu sehen, lasse ihr volle Gerechtigkeit widerfahren,"—as also in that of Wolfgang Kayser:

Die Persönlichkeit eines Dichters oder seine Weltanschauung, eine literarische Bewegung oder eine Generation, eine soziale Gruppe oder eine Landschaft, ein Epochengeist oder ein Volkscharakter, schliesslich Probleme und Ideen--, das waren die Lebensmichte, denen man sich durch die Dichtung zu nähern suchte. . . . Eine Dichtung lebt und entsteht nicht als Abglanz von irgend etwas anderem, sondern als in sich geschlossenes sprachliches Gefüge.  

In *Tristan* studies some indication has recently been given that a new criticism is now emerging, for in certain cases excessive investigations of the historical background and of the spiritual climate no longer occupy the central position in critical assessments of the work. Studies of the poem's structure and symbolism have cast fresh light on Gottfried's accomplishment as a poet—for instance, on his mastery of form and technical composition as revealed in the symmetrical setting of the *Waldleben* episode, and on his ability to present on a symbolical level his views
concerning the nature of Tristan-love. These results indicate that if in future criticism the whole mosaic of theological and philosophical data accumulated during the past four decades is relegated to the periphery, intrinsic literary study could be profitably combined with a sensitive appreciation of the poem as such.

Yet even then a "definitive" interpretation of the work would not be obtained for—like any great work of art—this romance can never be exhausted. The story of Tristan and Isolde is open to perpetual interpretation. In medieval and modern times changing generations of scholars and poets have construed their own meaning of the legend, and like the different methods which critics have employed when treating the material, these recreations correspond both to a personal point of view and to that of the current intellectual climate. Gottfried's Tristan—indeed, the entire medieval Tristan tradition—has led a protean life during which it has received nourishment from men of letters while at the same time offering food for thought to all who have approached it.

Ir leben, ir tot sint unser brot.  
sus lebet ir leben, sus lebet ir tot.  
sus lebent si noch und sind doch tot  
und ist ir tot der lebenden brot. (Tristan, 11. 237-40)
CHAPTER ONE: NOTES


3Eilhart von Oberge, ed. Franz Lichtenstein, Quellen und Forschungen zur Sprach- und Culturgeschichte der germanischen Völker, 19 (Strassburg, 1877).

4Das Buch der Liebe / inhaltendt herrliche schöne Historien allerley alten vnd neuen Exempl / darausz menniglich zu vernemen / beyde was recht ehrliche dargegen auch was vnordentliche bulerische Lieb sey (Frankfurt, 1578).

5Buch der Liebe, ed. Johann G. Büsching and Friedrich H. von der Hagen (Berlin, 1809).

6As yet a complete critical edition of the roman en prose has not been made; Renée L. Curtis has edited the first portion of this work ("l’histoire des ancêtres, l’enfance et la jeunesse de Tristan," p. 5), published as Le Roman de Tristan en Prose, Tome 1 (Munich, 1963).


8"Histoire du Chevalier Tristan, fils du roi Méliadus de Léonais," Bibliothèque universelle des romans, I (April, 1776), 53-238.


11In the essay "Of poetry" Temple wrote: "Runes was properly the name of the ancient Gothic letters or characters, which were invented first or introduced by Odin, in the colony or kingdom of the Getes or Goths, which he planted in the Northwest parts, and round the Baltic Sea. . . . But, because all the writings they had among them for many ages were in verse,
Chapter I notes, cont.  

it came to be the common name of all sorts of poetry among the Goths, and the writers or composers of them were called Runers or Rymers. . . . The Gothic Runers, to gain and establish the credit and admiration of their rhymes, turned the use of them very much to incantations and charms. . . . Out of this quarry seem to have been raised all those trophies of enchantment that appear in the whole fabric of the old Spanish romances, which were the productions of the Gothic wit among them during their reign." Quotation taken from Five miscellaneous essays by Sir William Temple, ed. S. H. Monk (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1963), pp. 190-92.

12 Quoted from the edition made in Paris, 1781, II, 7.


14 Quotations in our text are from the London, 1807 edition.


16 Percy found in the romances the essential qualities of "spontaneity," "pleasing simplicity" and "artless graces" common to all primitive poetry. According to the Primitivists, the origins and early development of poetry were universally uniform. The Bible, Ossian, Homer, the Welsh bards, the Lapland and Indian Songs, Scottish ballads and chivalric romance all gave testimony to the universality of poetry. Poetry such as this arose from universal mental needs, and originated from an overflow of emotion. These theories were later developed by Herder when writing on folk-poetry. See Wellek, Rise, pp. 68-9, and the same author's A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950. I: The later eighteenth century (New Haven, 1955), pp. 126-27.

17 Quotation from the edition made in Edinburgh, 1858, III, xi-xiii.

18 See Edward D. Snyder, The Celtic Revival in English Literature, 1760-1800 (Gloucester, Mass., 1965).

19 See Wellek, Rise, p. 156.

20 Quotations in our text are from the edition by W. C. Hazlitt (London, 1871).

In this Dissertation Ritson wrote: "There are no limits . . . to the extravagances of his imagination or invention. . . . This poetical historian is very ready, at a venture, to affirm anything, however imaginary and absurd"; quoted from the edition made in Edinburgh, 1891, p. 14.

Ritson wrote: "There are no limits . . . to the extravagances of his imagination or invention. . . . This poetical historian is very ready, at a venture, to affirm anything, however imaginary and absurd"; quoted from the edition made in Edinburgh, 1891, p. 14.

\[\text{22}^{22}\] Herders sämmtliche Werke, ed. B. Suphan (Berlin, 1877-1913), XIV (1909).


\[\text{24}^{24}\] See note 1.


\[\text{26}^{26}\] Edward Jones, Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards (London, 1784); Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales, ed. Owen Jones, E. Williams, and Wm. Owen Pughe (London, 1801); Wm. Owen Pughe, The Cambrian Biography: or historical notices of Celebrated Men among the ancient Britons (London, 1803).


\[\text{28}^{28}\] Ancient Scotish Poems, never before in print (London, 1786), I, xxi-lxxiv.

\[\text{29}^{29}\] Pinkerton was correct in his suggestion (I, lxxv) that the MS of Sir Tristrem might be found in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh where, according to Bishop Percy, there were "not fewer than xxxvii Poems or Romances, some of them very long" (Reliques, III, xxxiii, note 32).

\[\text{30}^{30}\] Scott, op. cit., p. xxxvi. Later scholars considering this problem quoted a passage from Chrétien's Cliges which Scott did not believe had been written by Chrétien (see Scott, p. xliiv): "Cil qui fit d'Erec et d'Enide / Et les comandemanz Ovide / Et l'art d'amors de l'espaule fist / Del roi Marc et d'Iseut la blonde" (Cliges, 11. 1-4).


\[\text{32}^{32}\] Oeuvres de M. Guillaume Schlegel écrites en français, ed. E. Böcking (Leipzig, 1846).

\[\text{33}^{33}\] Taliesin; or, the Bards and Druids of Britain (London, 1858). Arnold wrote: "In reliance upon the discovery of this mixture of what is late and spurious in them, to pooh-pooh them altogether, to treat them as a heap of rubbish, a mass of Middle Age forgeries, is to fall into the greatest possible error. Granted that all the manuscripts of Welsh
poetry . . . that we possess are, with the most insignificant exception, not older than the twelfth century . . . what then? . . . Does it merge the whole literary antiquity of Wales in her medieval literary antiquity or, at least, reduce all other than this to insignificance?" Quoted from the essay "On the Study of Celtic Literature," in The Works of Matthew Arnold in Fifteen Volumes (London, 1903), V, 39-40.

34 See note 5.


36 The review, first printed in the Leipziger Litteratur-Zeitung (1812) was included in Kleinere Schriften von Jacob Grimm, ed. K. Mühlenhoff and E. Ippel (Berlin, 1864-66; reprinted Hildesheim, 1965-66), VI (1966), 84-100.


38 London, 1809. Davies' work, according to Matthew Arnold, was "full of his notions about an arkite idolatry and a Helio-daemonic worship." See Arnold, op. cit. (note 33), 28.

39 Quotation from Southey as given by Francisque Michel, Tristan, recueil de ce qui reste des poèmes relatifs à ses aventures composés en français en anglo-normand et en grec dans les XII et XIII siècles (London, 1835-39), I, cxii, note 94.


44 Christophe-Paulin de La Poix, chevalier de Fréminville, Mémoire sur le château de la Joyeuse Garde, Mémoires et Dissertations sur les antiquités nationales et étrangères [sic] publiés par la société royale des antiquaires de France, 10 (Paris, 1824), pp. 239-43, as quoted by Michel, op. cit. (note 39), I, cix-cxii, note 93.

Foreign Review, VII (July, 1829), 141-62.

See note 39.

Detailed summaries of the controversy are to be found in the following: Der Karrenritter (Lancelot) und das Wilhelmsleben (Guillaume d'Angleterre) von Christian von Troyes, ed. Wendelin Foerster (Halle, 1899; reprinted Amsterdam, 1965); Karl Voretzsch, Introduction to the Study of Old French Literature, trans. Francis M. du Mont (New York, 1931); Heinz Küpper, "Les études françaises sur la légende de Tristan et Iseut: I," Revue Germanique, XXVI (1935), 322-35; Wilhelm Röttiger, Der heutige Stand der Tristanforschung, Programm des Wilhelm-Gymnasiums zu Hamburg, Bericht über das Schuljahr 1896-1897 (Hamburg, 1897).

Karrenritter, pp. LXXXIX-XC, note 1.

The popular eighteenth-century explanation for the many discrepancies and apparent lacunae in the Homeric epics proposed that the epics were originally composed as short lays or rhapsodies, and only later collected into their present long, epic form. This would account for their various discrepancies and lacunae, and the theory "led inevitably to that of an oral tradition, particularly as there were no extant sources available, nor any trace of such"; Friedrich August Wolf, in his Prolegomena ad Homerum (1795) insisted particularly on this oral tradition and on the fact that, after the reduction to writing even, there had been deliberate revision of the material, and that, therefore, no one man could be termed the author of the poem. His book was a synopsis and a completion of all the accepted theories with regard to the Greek epic, and became recognized throughout Germany as the standard work on the subject. It had, however, a far more far-reaching effect than ever its author had foreseen; for this same theory was utilized by German scholars for the explanation of the epics of their own country . . . and, finally, adapted by Lachmann and applied in its entirety to the Nibelungenlied," Mary Thorp, The study of the Nibelungenlied: Being the History of the Study of the Epic and Legend from 1755 to 1937, Oxford Studies in Modern Languages and Literature (Oxford, 1940), p. 14. Léon Gautier, who in 1865 applied this theory to the French epics (which in his opinion were simply chaplets of folk-songs [cantilènes]), found the support of Gaston Paris (see Voretzsch, op. cit., pp. 89-99). Richard Heinzel, in 1869, applied the Liedertheorie to Tristan material when he dismembered Béroul's version into twelve separate lais: "Von Tristan's und Isoldens wechselvollen Schicksalen am Hofe König Markes muss man um die Mitte des [12.] Jahrhunderts mindestens zwölf Darstellungen gekannt haben, deren keine diese ganze Periode umfasste, sondern sich ablösend oder auch sich kreuzend behandelten sie einzelne Abschnitte der Sage, die jedem, der von den grossen Zügen Kenntnis hatte, verständlich sein mussten"; see Heinzel, "Gottfried's von Strassburg Tristan und seine Quelle," Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum [ZfdA], XIV (1869), 298.
Chapter I notes, cont.

51 "Romans en vers du cycle de la table ronde," Histoire Littéraire de la France, XXX (1888), 1-270.

52 "Note sur les romans relatifs à Tristan," Romania, XV (1886), 598.


57 "Etudes sur les romans de la Table Ronde," Romania, X (1881), 466. See also note 50. "... aux dernières années de sa vie, commissaire responsable des éditions de Béroul et de Thomas, G. Paris avait repris l'examen de ces problèmes avec une ardeur généreuse. ... Ce fut pour nous un moment d'émotion profonde quand il nous dit que, longtemps rebelle à l'hypothèse d'un archétype unique, il avait été conduit, par des observations différentes des nôtres, mais concordantes, à la tenir pour fondée en vérité. Mais il ajouta ... que, à son avis, ce poème primitif devait être anglais et qu'il avait dû rester inachevé. ... Nous doutons qu'il ait écrit et qu'on puisse retrouver dans ses papiers les arguments qui appuyaient son opinion," Joseph Bédier, Le Roman de Tristan par Thomas: Poème du XIIe Siècle. Tome Second: Introduction, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 46 (Paris, 1905), pp. 314-15. See also Paris, Journal des Savants (June, 1902), 301, note 2: "Je me permets de dire ici en passant, --c'est une opinion que je pense avoir l'occasion de développer quelque jour, --que je suis actuellement porté à croire que tous les poèmes français sur Tristan reposent sur un poème anglais perdu (qui était peut-être incomplet)."

58 "Etudes," 466.

59 "Romans en vers," 22.

60 Cliges von Christian von Troyes (Halle, 1884).

61 Der Löwenritter (Yvain) von Christian von Troyes (Halle, 1887); Erec und Enide von Christian von Troyes (Halle, 1890); Der Karrenritter (Lancelot) (Halle, 1899), see note 48.
In his *Erec* introduction (1890) Foerster restricted considerably the influence of Geoffrey's chronicle upon Chrétien and stressed instead that exercised by oral Armorican traditions. Zimmer's researches were decisive in this change of opinion. According to Zimmer the names of the Arthurian heroes were Armorican and could not have originated among the insular Celts; see Zimmer, "Bretonische Elemente in der Arthursage des Gottfried von Monmouth," Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur [ZfSL], XII. (1890), 231-36, and "Beiträge zur Namenforschung in den altfranzösischen Arthurepen," ZfSL, XIII (1891), 1-117.

Cf. note 50.

"Beiträge zur Namenforschung," 69ff.

"Revue de Paris (April 15, 1894), 138-79.


"Observations de M. d'Arbois de Jubainville sur l'amour dans Tristan et Iseut," Romania, XXIV (1895), 154.

"Etudes sur la provenance du cycle arthurien (Suite) III," Romania, XXV (1896), 32.

"Seitdem erschienen eine Reihe von Aufsätzen von F. Lot in der Romania, die sich zwar entschieden für die G. Paris'sche Hypothese aussprachen, ohne aber je einen beweisenden Grund beibringen zu können . . . bis derselbe in kühner Weise die anglonormannische und kontinentale Theorie (so bezeichne ich unsere entgegengesetzte Ansicht) zusammenschweist [sic] und die Artussage ebenso gut von Armorika, also durch kontinentale Dichter, als von Wales, also durch anglonormannische Dichter, bearbeitet werden lässt," Karrenritter, p. CVII.

Foerster wrote in 1899: "Einen unerwarteten Bundesgenossen ... hatte ich inzwischen in dem Germanisten W. Golther gefunden, der ganz unabhängig von uns auf anderem Wege zu demselben Ergebnis gelangt war und die Frage wiederholt behandelt hat," Karrenritter, p. CVI.


Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte, III (1890), 211-19.


Tristan und Isolde in den Dichtungen des Mittelalters und der neuen Zeit (Leipzig, 1907).


Bédier, op. cit. (note 57), pp. 168-319. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations from Bédier are taken from this volume.

Golther, op. cit. (note 79), pp. 37-75.

Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut (Paris, 1900).


Kölbing, op. cit. (note 84), and Zweiter Teil: "Sir Tristrem" (Heilbronn, 1882).

"La Folie Tristan du manuscrit de Berne," Romania, XV (1886), 558-74.

Le Roman de Tristan par Béroul et un anonyme, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 48 (Paris, 1903).

Le roman en prose de Tristan, le roman de Palamède et la composition de Rusticien de Pise, analyse critique d'après les manuscrits de Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Études, Sciences philologiques et historiques, fasc. 82 (Paris, 1890).

Michel, op. cit. (note 39).

Röttiger, op. cit. (note 48), pp. 25ff.

"La Mort de Tristan et d'Iseut, d'après le manuscrit fr. 103 de la Bibliothèque Nationale, comparé au poème allemand d'Eilhart d'Oberg," Romania, XV (1886), 481-510. The chart is on p. 483.
Muret, in "Der heutige Stand der Tristanforschung von Dr. Wilhelm Rüttiger," *Romania*, XXVII (1898), 619 drew up the following table:

![Image of a family tree diagram]

The theory of the archetypal romance is far more pronounced in Golther's table ("Bemerkungen," 23):
Bédier, "The legend of Tristan and Isolt," trans. Susan H. Taber, *International Quarterly*, IX (March and June, 1904), 127. All quotations from Bédier in English are taken from this article.


Contributions à l'Étude des Romans de la Table Ronde (Paris, 1912).

Journal des Savants (June, 1902), 301, note 2; see also note 57.


"Die Tristansage und das persische Epos Wîs und Râmîn," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, N.S. XI (1961), 1-44. See also note 112.

For Schoepperle’s criticism of the Persian theory see "Die Tristansage und das persische Epos von Wîs und Râmîn’ von R. Zenker; ‘Untersuchungen zur Tristansage’ von Jakob Kelemina," *Romania*, XL (1911), 114-19. Parenthetical page references in our text are to Schoepperle’s major contribution to origin research (which was first published in 1913), namely Tristan and Isolt. A Study of the sources of the romance, 2nd ed. (New York, 1960).

Tristan und Isold, Bücher des Mittelalters (Munich, 1925), p. 269: "Kurz vor dem Kriege hat dann die der Wissenschaft und ihren Freunden allzufrüh entrissene Deutschamerikanerin Gertrude Schoepperle, deren Gedächtnis dies Buch geweiht ist, mit umfassender Gelehrsamkeit und feinem Gefühl für das Wesentliche des Tristanromans, das Liebesproblem, unsere Erkenntnis dieser Vorgeschichte um ein gutes Stück gefördert."

108. Italian scholars have recently made several contributions to origin research, but on the whole have been too closely bound to the methods of previous scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to make any significant statement on this subject. See notes 110-11.


110. La leggenda di Tristano e Isotta, Biblioteca dell’ Archivum Romanicum,” 32 (Florence, 1951), p. 56. Panvini based this hypothesis on the allusions to Latin texts in works such as the lais of Marie de France and the roman en prose. Influenced by Ezio Levi’s "I lais bretoni e la leggenda di Tristano," Studi romanzi, XIV (1917), 113-246, he sought to discredit the commonly accepted notion of a Tristan archetype by reviving the Liedertheorie. The general tone of this book marks Panvini as a modern representative of the Insular School.

111. La leggenda di Tristano nei più antichi poemi francesi, 2nd ed. (Florence, 1951), pp. 226 ff. Crocetti, who gleaned his main ideas from Bédier, Golther, and also from Nicola Zingarelli's "Tristano e Isotta," in Scritti di varia letteratura (Milan, 1935), clearly belonged to the Continental School. In his view those critics who insisted that the ultimate source of the love-theme was to be found in Celtic antiquity were groping in mud where they believed to have found a limpid source: "Coloro che hanno cercato di resalire a nebulosi tradizioni celtiche continuano ancora a brancolare nel buio, con l’illusione di vedere tutto limpio e chiaro. Lo spunto e la genesi della fatale vicenda d’amore vanno ricercati nella fantasia dell’ antico poeta che ha sentito la suggestione d’un violento dramma di passione cui ha trasfuso la vita della grande poesia," p. 113.

CHAPTER TWO: NOTES


2 Zürich, 1779; p. 16.

3 "Von den Gedichten Twein und Tristran," Deutsches Museum, I (April, 1780), 342. It is uncertain whether or not the Strassburg MS. to which Bodmer referred was the fifteenth-century MS. owned by J. G. Scherz in Strassburg, and from which Scherz gave several quotations in the Glossarium germanicum medii aevi, ed. J. J. Oberlin (Strassburg, 1781-84). The existence of this MS was noted by von der Hagen and Büsching in their Literarischer Grundriss zur Geschichte der Deutschen Poesie von der ältesten Zeit bis in das sechzehnte Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1812), when they made brief mention of all the then known MSS of Gottfried's Tristan (pp. 123-24). Although Scherz' codex has been lost, a copy was made in 1722 by Z. C. von Uffenbach. This later copy, usually referred to as S (Hamburg), was lost during the Second World War (see Appendix A).

4 See von der Hagen and Büsching, op. cit., p. 123. When Bernhard Docen discussed this MS in his Miscellaneen zur Geschichte der teutschen Litteratur (Munich, 1807), II, 300 he identified the hitherto unknown continuator as Ulrich von Türheim: "Es war zu voreilig, den Auctor dieser fast nur summarisch zusammengezogenen Fortsetzung des Tristan . . . einen unbekannten Verfasser zu nennen. Ich las diese Fortsetzung nicht eher zu Ende, bis ich mit dem Werk des Heinrich von Friberc fertig war, und wurde nun durch die Entdeckung überrascht, dass sie von einem bisher noch wenig bekannt geworden 'Uolrich von Türheim' herrühre."


6 See Chapter One, note 1. For the reaction of Frederick the Great see Richard Benz, op. cit. (Chapter One, note 25), p. 253.

7 Miscellaneen, II, 300. Docen was employed from 1803 at the Hofbibliothek in Munich, where the libraries of Bavarian cloisters were being absorbed. "Docen was probably the most painstaking student of MHG literature of all the early Romantics, but he was unable to pursue a single goal in his studies, and the wealth of ms. material in the Munich library quite suffocated his efforts. Until about 1819, Docen was regarded as one of the leading authorities in the field, but his inability to organize more material than could be presented in a short article soon lost him that eminent position"; Joos and Whitesell, op. cit., p. 259.

Nachrichten von altdeutschen Gedichten, welche aus der Heidelbergischen Bibliothek in die Vatikanische gekommen sind (Königsberg, 1796), pp. 26-7.

Friedrich Wilken, Geschichte der Bildung, Beraubung und Vernichtung der alten Heidelbergerischen Büchersammlungen (Heidelberg, 1817), pp. 440-41. It is of interest to note Wilken's warning (p. 263) concerning the future use and possible abuse of the recovered MSS: "Mögen die nach Heidelberg durch eine merkwürdige Verkettung von unerwarteten Umständen zurück-gekehrten wissenschaftlichen Schätze von heilbringenden Folgen für die deutsche Litteratur und insbesondere für unsere Lehranstalt seyn; mögen insbesondere die Denkmäler der alten deutschen Poesie emsig benutzt werden für eine würdige Geschichte unserer Sprache und Dichtkunst und die gerechte Schätzung der verdienstlichen Bestrebungen unserer Vorfahren; mögen diese gegen vornehme Herabwürdigung eben so sehr bewahrt werden, als gegen thörichte Überschätzung und phantastischen Misbrauch!"


Docen, Miscellaneen, II, 102.


Von der Hagen later discussed the preparatory work undertaken for the edition of Gottfried's romance in his Minnesinger (see Chapter One, note 41), IV, 611, note 1. His collation of F was published by Reinhold Bechstein: "Gottfried-Studien I: Von der Hagens Collation der Florentiner Tristan-Handschrift," Germania, XXXV (1890), 35-45.


24. "Kritische Beiträge zu Gottfrieds von Strassburg Tristan: Inaugural-dissertation (Göttingen) von Theodor von Hagen," Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie [ZfdPh.], II (1870), 228. Jänicke, who planned to make a new edition of Tristan, went to Florence in 1870 to collate F. His death in 1874 prevented the completion of this project. A. Reifferscheid was given Jänicke’s preliminary notes in order to finish the work, but failed to produce an edition; nor did he respond to Marold’s request when the latter repeatedly asked whether he might see this material to aid him in his own work on a new edition. Hermann Paul, who had made extensive studies of the MSS, heard that Marold had undertaken this project, and withdrew his own plans for a critical edition. See Marold, op. cit. (above, note 11), pp. VI-VII.

25. Gottfried’s von Strassburg Tristan, Deutsche Classiker des Mittelalters, 7-8 (Leipzig, 1869-70). Quotations in our text are taken from the introduction written by Bechstein for the 3rd ed. (1890-91), as reprinted unchanged in the 5th ed. (Leipzig, 1930).


27. These "popular" editions (with their extensive glosses and paraphrases in the footnotes) can be contrasted with the austere "scholarly" editions of MHG texts as prepared by the "Lachmannschule": the appearance of popular editions such as these reflected the growing opposition to the "Lachmannschule." The opposition rallied behind Franz Pfeiffer and later Karl Bartsch, and expressed its views in Pfeiffer’s Germania, while the organ of expression for the other group was Haupt’s Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum. MHG classics were edited by the opposition party "so that a beginner could read ... without stirring from his armchair to consult grammars, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and the like. ... The Pfeiffer-Bartsch series (Deutsche Klassiker des Mittelalters) introduced thousands
to the study of MHG who would otherwise never have survived the rigours of reading carefully a strictly scholarly edition. Compromise between the austere scholarly editions, and the popular editions, has never been effected, and both continue to be reprinted, and re-edited, along the old lines"; Joos and Whitesell, op. cit., p. 272.

28 For details of the newly-found fragments see the following:


Mention of MS. E was first made in 1840, but the poet of the Tristan romance was not identified: "Die erste Nachricht von der Hs. brachte F. Böhmer in einem Briefe an Pertz . . . im Jahre 1840" (Marold, p. XLV). In 1879 Elias Steinmeyer clarified this point: "Sichere Auskunft gewährt . . . nun eine Mitteilung meines Freundes Vollmüller. In der Tat enthält die Hs. . . . Gottfrieds Tristan"; see "Eine neue Tristanhandschrift," ZfdA, XXIII (1879), 112.

MS. P was recovered from the Meusebach collection, as was noted by Franz Lichtenstein in 1877 (see Chapter One, note 3, pp. XVI-XVII).

29 Marold, op. cit. (note 11), p. VI.

30 See note 11.

31 Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstage Oskar Schade dargebracht von seinen Schülern und Verehrern (Königsberg, 1896), pp. 177-86.


34 See note 33.
Chapter II notes, cont.  218


This and three other fragments have been found in the twentieth century. For details see the following:


Cf. also p. 98 of the dissertation Die Sprache der Heidelberger Handschrift (H) von Gottfried von Strassburgs Tristan (Breslau, 1934), by Ranke's pupil Frederick P. Pickering: "Die Kollationsbeziehungen, die Ranke zwischen den Haupthss. vermutet (ZfdA. 55, S. 416), sprechen dafür, dass Abschriften des Tristan nur in Strassburg selbst angefertigt werden konnten. Nichts würde dagegen sprechen, dass unser Schreiber von seinem Auftraggeber nach Strassburg geschickt wurde, was auch von den übrigen Schreibern gegolten haben mag."


Kottenkamp, op. cit. (note 23), p. 5.

For further details of the editions and MSS see Appendix A ("Location of Complete Manuscripts of Gottfried's Tristan") and Appendix B ("Comparison of Editions of Gottfried's Tristan").
CHAPTER THREE: NOTES


2. See Thorp, Nibelungenlied (cf. Chapter One, note 50).

3. In this episode Isolde is tried by ordeal for adultery. She makes an ambiguous oath, and the red-hot iron leaves her hand unscathed. In 11. 15733-50 Gottfried comments on the outcome of the ordeal in the following words: "Thus it was made manifest and confirmed to all the world that Christ in His great virtue is pliant as a wind-blown sleeve. He falls into place and clings, whichever way you try Him, closely and smoothly, as He is bound to do. He is at the beck of every heart for honest deeds or fraud. Be it deadly earnest or a game, He is just as you would have Him. This was amply revealed in the facile Queen. She was saved by her guile and by the doctored oath that went flying up to God, with the result that she redeemed her honour" (quoted from Gottfried from Strassburg: "Tristan," translated entire for the first time, by A. T. Hatto, Penguin Classics, 198 [Edinburgh, 1960], p. 248). The poet's observations have been variously assessed by scholars, and have been regarded most frequently as blasphemy and/or overt criticism of Church customs.

4. See Chapter One, note 31.

5. See Chapter One, note 35.

6. See Chapter One, note 32, p. 293.

7. See Chapter One, note 36.

8. Thorp, Nibelungenlied, p. 23.


12 Parenthetical page references in our text are to volume one of the 4th ed. (Leipzig, 1853).

13 Among the deprecatory remarks about Gervinus' literary history made by Heinrich Laube were the following: "Mit einer vorherrschenden Bildung, welche nur Eindrücke aus den Griechen aufgenommen . . . prügelt er in unsere Literatur hinein, sich viel damit wissend, dass sein Stock mannigfach mit Gelehrsamkeit umwunden ist. . . . Es kann ihm [dem Mittelalter] kein schreienderes Unrecht widerfahren, als sich mit einem alten Maasstabe gemessen zu sehn"; Geschichte der deutschen Literatur (Stuttgart, 1839), I, 96-7.

14 Laube, Geschichte, I, 113.


16 Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur (Basle, 1851-55), I (1851).


Heinrich Kurz in his *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1853), gave the following interpretation of Tristan-love: "Er [Gottfried] will sie [die hüfische Minne] aber dadurch veredeln und von der Gemeinheit und Umwahrheit der ritterlich-höfischen Auffassung befreien, welche freilich die Gesetze der Sittlichkeit und der bürgerlichen Einrichtungen nicht weniger verletzt, als jene blos auf sinnlichen Genuss gerichtete Minne der andern Dichter, aber doch auch darin ihre Entschuldigung, ja ihre Berechtigung findet, dass sie die Äusserung eines in der Menschenbrust gelegten Gefühls ist, welches älter und ursprünglicher ist, als alle von den Menschen gegebenen Gesetze und von der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft eingeführten Einrichtungen. Allerdings verletzt die weitere Entwicklung der Geschichte unser besseres Gefühl, aber nicht, weil Tristan und Isolt von jener mächtigen Leidenschaft ergriffen sind, sondern weil sie sich zu unwürdigen Täuschungen und gemeinen Betrügereien hinreissen lassen, weil sie von der Höhe des echten Gefühls zur alltäglichen hüfischen Minne herabsinken" (I, 386-87).

Octave d'Assailly, in his "Les Minnesinger du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle. Deuxième partie: Godefroid de Strasbourg, Ulrich de Lichtenstein," *Le Correspondant*, I (1859), 303-39, expressed views which ran counter to those held by Heinrich Kurz, for he regarded Gottfried as a true Minnesinger who displayed "fidelité d'un jour à une souveraine inconstante" (312). This critic's obvious desire to view the whole romance through tinted lenses was evident in his plot-summary where he failed to mention that Tristan was originally Isolde's enemy, and that Isolde embarked on the voyage in order to become Marke's wife. Nor did he discuss all the trickery and deceit (including the Judgment of God episode) practised by the lovers. Instead, he concentrated on "la grande passion" and the fidelity of the lovers—totally ignoring of course Tristan’s encounter with Isolde Whitehand. He added that the sentimental German attachment to the Rhine was indirectly responsible for the conception of Gottfried’s masterpiece: "Le Rhin a toujours été cher aux Allemands. Une tendresse filiale les attire invinciblement sur ses bords.... Godefroid ressent profondément cet enthousiasme patriotique.... Tant de scènes variées, tant de puissantes harmonies devaient le ravir impétueusement vers l'infini. Au milieu de cette nature émouvante, un jour qu'il feuilletait un manuscrit, son front s'illumina d'un feu subit; il poussa un cri de passion qui devint un poème: Tristan et Isolde" (311-12).

Deutsches Museum (1865), XXXIX, 457-72; XL, 497-514.

See p. 17 and Chapter One, note 40.

One here anticipated a trend in twentieth-century Tristan interpretation which prevailed during the Nazi era. See our discussion of Hans Naumann, pp. 149-50.
Chapter III notes, cont.

22 Tristan is discussed in vol. 3 of the Shakespeare study (to which we refer parenthetically as Quellen). References to the 1st ed. of the translation (Tristan und Isolde von Gottfried von Strassburg [Leipzig, 1855]) are given in Arabic numerals, those to the 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1875) in Roman numerals.

25 See Chapter One, note 41.

26 See Chapter One, note 42.

27 Franz Pfeiffer, refuting this hypothesis in the article "Über Gottfried von Strassburg," Germania, III (1858), 59-80, wrote: "Ich habe, so verlockend es wäre, keine Lust, dem Verfasser in das Reich seiner luftigen Phantasien zu folgen, sondern werde . . . seiner Hypothese einfach die Grundlage unter den Füssen wegziehen, indem ich darthue, dass Gottfried weder den Lobgesang noch das Lied von der Armuth gedichtet hat" (61); submitting to a careful analysis the verse and rhyme forms in Tristan and the hymns he then concluded that, had Gottfried indeed composed these last, "müsstemit dem sündigen Menschen zugleich auch den Dichter ausgezogen" (76). Pfeiffer made full use of this opportunity to launch an attack on his academic adversary, Karl Lachmann (cf. Chapter Two, note 27), for his harsh criticism of Gottfried's command of rhyme and metre. That Gottfried wrote neither of these hymns is now commonly accepted by Tristan scholars, see Weber, Gottfried von Strassburg, pp. 7-10.

28 Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien, XIX (1868), 533-63.

29 Dünninger, op. cit. (see note 11), col. 185.


31 Germania, XV (1870), 207-36, 322-45. This biographical study first appeared in the Wochenausgabe der Augsburger Allgemeinen Zeitung, 2 Jahrgang, XXIII-XXV, XXXI-XXXIII and XXXV (1868). Quotations in our text are from the 1870 publication. Hermann Kurz' name appears here spelt differently from the form given in his Tristan translation (Chapter One, note 42).

Scherer reduced the course of German literary history to a simple scheme in which the three culminating points of development were each followed by the lowest ebbs in literary culture. The three troughs were separated from each other by 600 years, as were the three crests. He contrived in addition a regular pattern in which he placed certain medieval poets: Eilhart von Oberge, Heinrich von Veldeke, Hartmann von Aue and Gottfried von Strassburg formed a complete series, embracing the four decades from 1170 to 1210, and marking a constant progress towards clearness and grace of diction. See Scherer, "Epochen" (cf. note 15).

Reinhold Bechstein, Tristan und Isolt in deutschen Dichtungen der Neuzeit (Leipzig, 1876), p. 218. Oskar Walzel made the following comments on "Stoffwahl" and originality: "Die Geschichte der bildenden Kunst und der Dichtung kann durch Jahrtausende verfolgen, wie ein Künstler oder ein Dichter aufnimmt, was ein anderer vor ihm schon geformt hatte, und es neu zu gestalten sucht. Er tut es meist, weil er meint, dem Stoff seines Vorgängers eine neue Wendung leihen zu können. . . . Sicherlich meinte Euripides, wenn er den vorgeformten Stoff seiner Bearbeitung unterwarf, es nicht anders als im Mittelalter Gottfried von Strassburg. Am Anfang von Gottfrieds Werk (Vers 131 ff.) stehen die stolzen Worte:

Ich weiz wol, ir ist vil gewesen,
die von Tristande hant gelesen;
und ist ir doch niht vil gewesen,
die von im rehte haben gelesen.

Er meinte, die Geschichte von Tristan besser verstehen und deuten zu können als die andern. Darum erzählte er neu, was andere vor ihm schon erzählt hatten," and gave also the following quotation from Goethe: "Was da ist, das ist mein . . . , und ob ich es aus dem Leben oder aus dem Buche genommen, das ist gleichviel, es kam blos darauf an, dass ich es recht gebrauchte": see Walzel, Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters, 2nd ed., Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft (Darmstadt, 1957) pp. 166-69.

See Chapter One, note 39.

ZfdA, XIV (1869), 272-447. See also Chapter One, note 50, for a discussion of the Liedertheorie.

"Gottfrieds von Strassburg Tristan und seine Quelle," Germania, XXIII (1878), 223.
Chapter III notes, cont.  224

38 Saga af Tristram ok Isodd, Annaler for nordisk Oldkyndighed, Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab (Copenhagen, 1851). Brynjúfsson’s edition of the complete Saga appeared in 1878 [Saga af Tristram ok Isönd samt Mótuls saga, Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab (Copenhagen, 1878)] simultaneously with that prepared by Eugen Kübling (Chapter One, note 84).

39 See Chapter One, note 97.


41 See Chapter One, notes 84 and 87. Quotations are taken from the 1878 publication.

42 Otto Glüde, overlooking the fact that Gottfried’s status as an aesthetcian was not called into doubt by Kübling, published a polemical article in defence of Gottfried: "Der nordische Tristanroman und die ästhetische Würdigung Gottfrieds von Strassburg," Germania, XXXIII (1888), 17-27. Kübling defended his position the following year: "Zur Tristansage," Germania, XXXIV (1889), 187-94, and was then challenged once more by Glüde in his "Noch einmal zur Tristansage: Eine Entgegnung auf Küblings Artikel 'Zur Tristansage,'" Germania, XXXV (1890), 344-45. To this last article Kübling did not respond.

43 Programm des grossherzoglichen Friedrich-Franz-Gymnasiums zu Parchim, 561 (Parchim, 1881).


45 ZfdA, XXXIV (1890), 81-114.

46 Annales de l'Université de Lyon, N.S., II, Droit-Lettres, fasc. 8 (Paris and Lyons, 1901).

47 Bédier, Thomas: Introduction (see Chapter One, note 57), p. 80.

48 L'originalité de Gottfried de Strasbourg dans son poème de "Tristan et Isolde": Étude de littérature comparée, Travaux et mémoires de l'Université de Lille, N.S., I, Droit-Lettres, fasc. 5 (Lille, 1905).

49 See Chapter One, note 72.

2. The term "wechselseitige Erhellung der Künste" was first used in 1917 by Oskar Walzel who developed this idea from his two mentors, Wilhelm Dilthey and Heinrich Wölfflin. The latter had formulated five pairs of concepts which illustrated the development in art history from the Renaissance to the Baroque (Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Das Problem der Stil-Entwicklung in der neueren Kunst [Munich, 1915]) and had foreseen the possibilities of applying this technique in music and literature. Walzel, recognizing that art and literature were "sister-arts," propagated the "wechselseitige Erhellung eines Forschungsgebietes durch das andere" in his Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters (See Chapter Three, note 34), p. 14.


5. See Chapter Three, note 48.


9. Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung (1906), edition used: 14th ed. (Göttingen, 1965); "Die ritterliche Dichtung und das nationale Epos" (manuscripts dated 1907-1908) in Von deutscher Dichtung und Musik, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1957). Unless otherwise stated, page references in our text are to this latter work.

10. See also the "political" interpretations by Friedrich Heer and Wolfgang Spiewok (pp. 175 ff.); cf. also Georg Keferstein (pp. 146 ff.) and Max Wehrli (note 67).


13 Marburger Akademische Reden, 20 (Marburg, 1909).

14 See Klaus Speckenbach, Studium zum Begriff "edelez herze" im Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg, Medium Aevum, 6 (Munich, 1965), for a review of studies treating this topic. The prologue (in which the term first occurs) has been variously interpreted in the course of twentieth-century criticism; for a summary of the results obtained see Harold D. Dickerson, Jr, "A Survey of Critical Commentary on Gottfried's Tristan" (diss. Ohio State University, 1967), pp. 64-100 and Edith G. Reinnagel, "Gottfried-Forschung im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert" (diss. Graz, 1967), pp. 59-81.

15 Geschichte (see Chapter Three, note 33), p. 169.


18 Piquet stated that "... il y a certitude absolue de l'originalité de Gottfried pour une part considérable des interprétations du poème allemand, celles relatives à des objets qui n'existent pas dans la grotte du Tristan français, et il y a plus que probabilité pour l'ensemble du morceau. Au défaut de preuve matérielle irréfutable, le faisceau d'arguments réunis plus haut paraît suffire à imposer la conviction" (p. 285). The arguments given on pp. 284-85 of his work (i) compare the allegory to Gottfried's other digressions, all of which are original; (ii) note that Gottfried does not refer to the maere or his source, but rather excuses himself for introducing the allegory; and (iii) point out that Thomas' grotto was not so ornate, for it lacked the crystal bed, marble floor, bronze door, and windows.


20 Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse, 2 (Berlin, 1925).

Heinz G. Jantsch, disagreeing that the allegory bestowed a religious honour ("Ehre") on the grotto, levelled the following criticism at Ranke in his *Studien zum Symbolischen in Frühmittelhochdeutscher Literatur* (Tübingen, 1959): "Eine 'Ehre' wird Motiven nicht dadurch zuteil, dass sie ausgelegt werden, sondern weil sie 'Ehre' haben. . . . Für das Kristallene des Minnelagers, für Höhe und Werte eines Raumes, etwa der Grotte, [ist es] kaum besonders 'ehrenhaft,' zu poetischer Veranschaulichung benützt zu werden. . . . Ich möchte also das Gewicht nicht auf den Modus der allegorischen Auslegung legen. . . . Gewisse ehrende Wertungen werden nicht durch ihn erteilt" (pp. 355-56). Jantsch distinguished between the grotto, deliberately invented in Gottfried's poetic imagination for the sake of the allegorical interpretation, and the cathedral, which existed in its own right prior to the theological interpretations imposed upon it: "Die' Minnegrotte Gottfrieds jedoch ist mehr als einzelne Motivübereinstimmungen, mehr als der allegorische Sprechmodus überhaupt, mehr als nur ausgedeutetes Seiendes: Sie ist dichterische Ausdrucksgestalt, ist in ihrer Gesamtkonzeption das Werk Gottfrieds, im Einzelnen seine Konstruktion. Sie ist von ihm auf die beabsichtigte Aussage Uber Minne hin angelegt. Nur so ist ihre Qualität als dichterische Gestaltung richtig zu erfassen" (p. 359).

See Chapter One, note 106.

Thomas und Gottfried: Ihre konstruktiven Sprachformen (Groningen-Batavia, 1935).

Tristan und Isolde. Ursprung und Entwicklung der Tristansage des Mittelalters (Mainz, 1949).

In 1959 F. C. Tubach wrote: "The direction given by Ranke's excellent analysis . . . resulted in too great an emphasis upon the medieval Christian ideas and literary traditions to the exclusion of his considerable indebtedness to middle Latin and classical literary patterns. In the recent treatments of the Tristan, such works as Wilhelm Hoffa, 'Antike Elemente bei Gottfried von Strasburg,' Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, LII (1910) and Stanislaw Sawicki, 'Gottfried von Strasburg und die poetik des Mittelalters,' Germanische Studien, CXXIV (1932) have received scant attention, because they emphasize Gottfried's dependence upon classical poetry and rhetoric. . . . A reevaluation of Gottfried's Tristan seems completely justified"; quoted from Tubach, "On the Recent Evaluations of the Tristan of Gottfried von Strasburg," Modern Language Notes, LXXIV (1959), 535-36.

This lecture, "Gottfrid von Strassburg," was printed in the Elsass-Lothringisches Jahrbuch, VI (1927), 136-48.


Heldendichtung (see note 17), pp. 325-26.

Königsberger Deutsche Forschungen, 1 (Königsberg, 1927).


Dennis H. Green, criticizing this usage of the term "Hochgotik," wrote in his "Konrads Trojanerkrieg und Gottfrieds Tristan: Vorstudien zum Gotischen Stil in der Dichtung" (diss. Basle, 1949), pp. 85-6: "Hier soll aber ausdrücklich betont werden, dass wir das Wort 'Gotik' ausschliesslich als Stilbegriff verwenden, nicht als Ausdruck einer neuen Welt- und Gottesanschauung, wie es vor allem Gottfried Weber zu begründen versucht, denn keine Klassifizierung eines mittelhochdeutschen Werkes nur nach seiner geistesgeschichtlichen Stellung kann wissenschaftliche Geltung gewinnen, solange die Grundfrage noch umstritten ist, was eigentlich den weltanschaulichen Gehalt eines 'romanischen' oder 'gotischen' Kunstwerks ausmache. Solange diese Frage nicht befriedigend beantwortet ist, fehlt es jedem solchen Versuch an der nötigen terminologischen Schärfe. Dass aber das neue Stilwollen möglicherweise auch mit einer neuen Einstellung zu Gott und zur Welt zusammenhängen könnte, wollen wir damit keineswegs leugnen."


36. Ehrismann found that the poem offered an excellent example of the "höfische Moralsystem" and that the position of the Christian religion within that system was quite secure. Ranke's discovery, relegated to a brief footnote, was of no consequence for Ehrismann's interpretation. See *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters, zweiter Teil: Die mittelhochdeutsche Literatur, II: Blütezeit, erste Hälfte* (Munich, 1927; reprinted 1965), pp. 297 ff.


39. Quotations in our text are taken from the revised edition as translated by Montgomery Belgion, entitled *Love in the Western World* (New York, 1956).

40. Whether Tristan and Isolde were in love before or after drinking the potion in Gottfried's version has been debated by interpreters, and recently this topic has been studied in detail by H. Furstner, "Der Beginn der Liebe bei Tristan und Isolde in Gottfrieds Epos," *Neophilologus*, XLI (1957), 25-58, and A. T. Hatto, "Der minnen vederspil Isot," *Euphorion*, LI (1957), 302-307. See Dickerson, op. cit. (note 14) for a review of these and other theories on "Tristanminne as Fated Love."

41. De Rougemont proceeded to develop an elaborate thesis that passionate love became popularized and profaned in Western culture when European man vulgarized and exploited the secular aspects of the myth of passionate love without thought of its origins and implications. "The passion which novels and films have now popularized is nothing else than a lawless invasion and flowing back into our lives of a spiritual heresy the key to which we have lost" (p. 137). He demonstrated further how the death-wish of erotic love and the passion myth were active in orthodox mysticism with its erotic metaphors, in European literature, and in war in Europe.


See note 25.

Tubach, op. cit. (note 27), 534.


Ernst-Alfred Jauch adopted Maurer’s method of examining the key terms in the epic as an aid to interpretation ("Untersuchungen der Begriffe tugent, saelde, triuwe und edelez herze im Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg" [diss. Freiburg, 1951]). With Maurer, he concluded that a conflict arose between the demands of Minne and those of courtly society. The lovers continued to recognize and respect the conventional social values of tugent, saelde and triuwe even after these terms had been endowed with a new ethical meaning in the context of their love.


"Gottfried’s Tristan," Germanic Review, XXIX (1954), 8; our italics. As can be seen in the numerous reviews of the interpretation given by Weber, it has evoked a strong reaction among scholars, and has been criticized from many different standpoints. Dickerson, op. cit. (note 14), pp. 157 ff. has selected pertinent details from the criticisms by Hans Eggers, Rainer Gruenter, Eduard Neumann, Maria Bindschedler, and Hans Fromm. In his brief review of the work in German Life and Letters, VII (1954), 155 August Closs deplored the "often unbearable style" and the "glaring neglect of important foreign scholarship," and noted that "much which cannot be read in Gottfried’s romance itself, is boldly read into it." Cambridge, op. cit. (note 29), p. 111 wrote: "Es kommt mir gefährlich vor, für Gottfried ein restlos ausgebautes, nicht christliches Glaubenssystem ausarbeiten zu wollen, obgleich ich die Ansätze zu einer nichtharmonischen Weltauflussung bei ihm durchaus anerkenne und ihre Aufdeckung für einen wichtigen Wendepunkt in der
Gottfried-Deutung halte"; Speckenbach, op. cit. (note 14), p. 116 objected to certain amplified translations of passages in Tristan "die nur aus der Weberschen Intention verständlich werden, Gottfried als bewussten Haretiker nachzuweisen." The most stringent criticism was made by Jean Fourquet, who rejected Weber's interpretation in its entirety. Under the heading "Littérature courtoise et théologie" (Études Germaniques, XII [1957]) he wrote: "Nous ne cacherons pas notre sentiment que toute cette science a été inutile, parce que l'auteur a fondé son travail sur une série de postulats qu'il n'a pas explicités, dont il semble même n'avoir pas eu pleinement conscience. Ce qu'il trouve à la fin de sa vaste enquête, il l'a introduit au début, par ces postulats inavoués" (35).


53 Meissburger wrote: "Die Gleichstellung ist indes keine Blasphemie, denn Isolde mit dem goldenen Haar als die Königin aller edlen Herzen, als--im Sinnbild--der schmale Weg, der allein zum wahren Leben führt, kann nur an einem heiligen Ort und in religiöser Andacht das Höchste feiern, was Gottfried kennt, ihre und Tristans Vereinigung mit ihrem Gott, das heisst: die Liebeserfüllung unter dem Zeichen einer absoluten und frommen Liebe, der Liebe an sich" (p. 124).

54 These articles were published respectively in Der Deutschunterricht, VI, v (1954), 65-76 and Beiträge, LXXVI (1954-55), 1-38. Quotations in our text are from the former.


59 See also Jackson's article "Tristan the artist in Gottfried's poem," PMLA, LXXVII (1962), 364-72.
Chapter IV notes, cont. 232

60 "Der Begriff edelez herze im Tristan Gottfrieds von Strassburg," Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift, XXXIII (1959), 389-413.

61 Tristan, trans. Hatto (see Chapter Three, note 3).

62 Cf. de Rougemont's thesis that the lovers not only require but deliberately seek out the obstacles to their love (see p. 162).

63 The results obtained by Jackson in his study "The Rôle of Brangaene in Gottfried's Tristan," Germanic Review, XXVIII (1953), 290-96 encouraged Tax to adopt this method. By examining the manner in which Gottfried characterized Brangaene on two distinct levels, Jackson concluded that on the narrative level she was the faithful confidante, working for the lovers' benefit. On the symbolic level, she worked only superficially for their welfare, and was in fact working against their best interests.

64 According to Tax, "Tristan und Isolde sind keine Heiligen, auch keine 'Minneheiligen,' aber sie sollen es werden" (p. 191). For other views on the "saintliness" of the lovers see de Boor, op. cit. (note 42) and Combridge, op. cit. (note 29), p. 136, where she wrote : "Das Liebesleben ist bei Gottfried die Hauptsache. Aber er ist kein Schwärmer. Träume träumt er wohl, wie die Episode der Minnegrotte, aber seine Helden stellen keine schon vollendeten Liebesheiligen dar. Die Untersuchung der rechtlichen Beziehungen Riwalins und Tristans zu Morgan und die Erläuterung des Kommentars zum Gottesurteil mit Hilfe der Gottesurteilliturgien hat dies unterstrichen."

65 See, e.g., the works by Hoffa and Sawicki (cf. note 27).

66 Die Tragödie des Heiligen Reiches (Vienna and Zürich, 1952).


68 Diss. Greifswald, 1963. Quotations in our text are from Spiewok's dissertation abstract as it appeared in the Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität Greifswald, XII (1963), Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe, Heft 2, 277-82.
Spiewok felt that Gottfried's motives were indicated already in his choice of material for epic treatment: "Gottfried von Strassburg ergriff also einen Stoff, dessen Aussagekern die Gestaltung des Konfliktes zwischen individueller Gefühlsbindung und den Moralgesetzen der herrschenden Klasse umfasst" (278). In his redaction Gottfried intensified the conflict present already in Thomas' version. Gottfried's continuators, on the other hand, reacted to the strong anti-feudal message in the work, and judged it by the standards of moral theology and feudal ideology; "Sie zeigen damit, dass die Gefährlichkeit des im Gottfriedschen Tristan angeschlagenen Themas erkannt worden ist" (280).

In his review of this Marxist interpretation Hans-Hugo Steinhoff, in "Gottfried von Strassburg in 'marxistischer' Sicht. Bemerkungen zu einer neuen Tristan-Interpretation," Wirkendes Wort, XVII (1967), 105-13, wrote: "Spiewoks Absicht, den Tristan auf Grund der 'Klassenposition' seines Dichters als Markstein auf dem Weg zum sozialistischen Fortschritt zu deuten und für die Nationalkultur der revolutionären Arbeiterbewegung zu reklamieren, ist seiner Interpretation im ganzen wie im einzelnen zum Verhängnis geworden" (113). In his view Spiewok's work was "vulgärmarxistisch" (107). But it should be noted that Steinhoff did venture the opinion that, in the hands of a more able Marxist scholar, the romance could potentially receive a more valid and valuable interpretation: "Man müsste es bedauern, wenn dadurch ein legitimer literatursoziologischer Ansatz in Misskredit geriete. Es bleibt zu hoffen, dass der durch die Quellenlage freilich ausserordentlich erschwerte Versuch, einer Dichtung des deutschen Mittelalters von einer gesellschaftshistorischen Fragestellung her nahezukommen, noch einmal neu und mit einer an den Arbeiten von Georg Lukács und vor allem Lucien Goldmann geschulten Differenzierung unternommen wird" (113).
CHAPTER FIVE: NOTES

1 Weber, Gottfried von Strassburg, p. 77.

2 Warton, History of English Poetry, I, 116. Subsequent parenthetical page references are to this volume.


4 Eichendorff, Geschichte, p. 76. Our italics.


6 As quoted by Dünninger, "Geschichte," col. 179.


8 See Viëtor, op. cit. (Chapter Four, note 1), 900.

9 Hermand, Literaturwissenschaft, p. 29.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

I Primary Sources


Buch der Liebe. Das Buch der Liebe / inhaltennd herrliche schöne Historien allerley alten und neuen Exempl / darausz menniglich zu vernemen / beyde was recht ehrliche dargegen auch was vnordentliche bulerische Lieb sey. Frankfurt, 1578.


II Secondary Sources


Atkins, Henry G. German Literature through Nazi Eyes. London, 1941.


Tristan und Isolt in deutschen Dichtungen der Neuzeit. Leipzig, 1876.


Bodmer, Johann J. Litterarische Denkmale von verschiedenen Verfassern. Zürich, 1779.


Crocetti, Camillo Guerrieri. La leggenda di Tristano nei più antichi poemi francesi. 2nd ed. Florence, 1951.


"Zur Tristansage," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, XII (1888), 348-64.


---


---


---


---


Joos, Martin and Whitesell, Frederick R. Middle High German Courtly Reader. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1958.


Lobedanz, Emil. Das französische Element in Gottfried’s von Strassburg Tristan. Schwerin, 1878.


"Le Cornwall et le roman de Tristan," Revue Celtique, XXXIII (1912), 258-310.


Nash, David W. Taliesin; or, the Bards and Druids of Britain. London, 1858.


. "Études sur les romans de la Table Ronde," Romania, X (1881), 465-96.

. "Note sur les romans relatifs à Tristan," Romania, XV (1886), 597-602.


Percy, Thomas. Reliques of Ancient English Poetry: consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and other pieces of our earlier poets; together with some few of later date. 3 vols. Edinburgh, 1858.


Oeuvres de M. Guillaume Schlegel écrites en français, ed. E. Böcking. Leipzig, 1846.


---


---


---


---


---


---


---


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LOCATION OF COMPLETE MANUSCRIPTS OF GOTTFRIED'S TRISTAN

1) M - Munich (Hof- und Staatsbibliothek: Cgm. 4° 51). Parchment, 13th century.


3) F - Florence (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale: Cod. magliabechianus germ. 4° VII-9-33). Parchment, 14th century.


5) B - Cologne (Historisches Archiv: 8° 88). Parchment, 14th century.


7) N - Berlin (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, früher Preussische Staatsbibliothek: Ms. germ. 4° 284). Parchment, 14th century.


11) S - [Hamburg (In a letter of November 30, 1965 G. Alexander, the director of the manuscript department, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hamburg, wrote that this manuscript "während des letzten Krieges ausgelagert wurde, und seit Kriegsende verschollen ist.") Paper, 18th century.]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EDITOR</th>
<th>MSS</th>
<th>VARIANTS</th>
<th>SPECIAL FEATURES</th>
<th>CONTINUATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Myller</td>
<td>(F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>von Groote</td>
<td>HBNOR(F)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>introduction glossary frontispiece from MS. R &quot;Schriftproben&quot; few footnotes</td>
<td>Ulrich von Türheim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>von der Hagen</td>
<td>RNBSOFMHW</td>
<td></td>
<td>introduction glossary frontispiece: modern copperplate</td>
<td>both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Massmann</td>
<td>HMWFBNOR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869-70</td>
<td>Bechstein</td>
<td>(HMNORFW)</td>
<td></td>
<td>introduction register of names explanatory notes glossary (line refs. summaries no trans.)</td>
<td>both given partially, with prose-summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Golther</td>
<td>(MHWFNO)</td>
<td></td>
<td>introduction register of names explanatory notes</td>
<td>both given partially, with prose-summaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Marold</td>
<td>FHWMBONER</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>introduction register of names</td>
<td>two facsimiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Ranke²</td>
<td>HMWBNOPS(F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Parentheses indicate that, although the editor did not view the MS, he did use a copy or collation of it. Italics indicate the MS or MSS favoured by the editor, if known.

²It is not known which MSS Ranke used for his edition; those listed above are the MSS which he studied when conducting research into the transmission (published in 1917).