

nineteenth

well into the 19th century. Today, it is agreed that the poems are almost entirely Macpherson's own compositions, with only a few links to poetry he had found in the Scottish Highlands.

2. Extremes of the Wolfian School

~~About this time, "higher criticism" began to enter the field of Biblical studies with the work of Astruc and Eichhorn. In general literature, these methods began to be applied extensively by Friedrich Augustus Wolf (1759-1824) and his followers. Wolf carried scepticism toward ancient writings to an extreme, not trusting any statement he found in them, unless supported by other evidence. Working especially with the writings of Homer, he published his Prolegomena ad Homerum in 1795. In it, he claimed that Homer did not write the Iliad or the Odyssey; instead, they grew up by a natural process, being a collection of songs sung by wandering Greek minstrels. Goethe was very much impressed by Wolf's thesis at first. Later, however, Goethe concluded that works of this caliber could not have been the result of a haphazard process of collection.~~

With the first flush of success

excessively

Iliad and the Odyssey

Prolegomena ad Homerum

Wolf

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~~Karl Lachmann followed Wolf, dividing the German epic poem Nibelungenlied into twenty short lays which he felt were written much later than their setting would suggest. Lachmann felt these lays had been combined almost accidentally to form the epic. Later, Lachmann wrote Reflections on Homer's Iliad, in which he divided that poem into eighteen separate lays, some of which were supposed to have been intertwined when they were combined.~~

Karl following Wolf

Homer's Iliad

✓

