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— Thereafter, the prevailing view of the Iliad was that it had formed by "accretion," with a short poem, "The Wrath of Achilles" gradually accumulating additional material in the course of several centuries (cf. George Grote's History of Greece (1856), <sup>which</sup> reflects this view). ✓

*excessive literary*

Another work which came under the scrutiny of ~~higher~~ criticism was Beowulf, the oldest known Germanic epic. This work survived to modern times in only a single manuscript (now lost), written in Anglo-Saxon. During the 19th century, critics, following the example of Wolf, decided that Beowulf was the work of six authors, the earlier ones pagan and the later ones Christian. Again, it was thought that the material was compiled rather <sup>haphazardly</sup> informally. ✓

Likewise, Piers Plowman, an English work dating back to the 14th century, was ~~said~~ to be the work of five writers. J.A. Manley wrote an article in support of this view early in the 20th century, which may still be found in the most recently revised edition of the Cambridge History of <sup>English</sup> Literature. ✓

A somewhat similar situation developed in the study of medieval ballads. The Grimm brothers (of fairy tale fame) advanced a theory for the communal origin of folk songs and ballads. These works, they claimed, were produced spontaneously by the people during folk dances and similar festive occasions. This view came to be summarized in the phrase, "das Volk dichtet (the <sup>community</sup> ~~common~~ people composes poetry)." ✓

Another important area which was <sup>affected</sup> ~~treated~~ by "higher <sup>excessive literary</sup> criticism" was Shakespearean literature. The ~~group of~~ plays