

GOETHE'S URFAUST AND FAUST, EIN FRAGMENT - Edited by L. A. Willoughby

Basil Blackwell, Oxford - 1946

INTRODUCTION - I. THE GENESIS OF THE Urfaust - page xi

"My Faust took shape with my Werther," Goethe told Eckermann in 1829, "and I brought it with me to Weimar in 1775." Over one hundred years later this early form of the drama was discovered by a lucky chance among the papers of one of the Duchess of Weimar's ladies-in-waiting. It had been read, as was Goethe's wont, to an intimate circle of the court, and Fräulein von Göchhausen had borrowed the manuscript. Her transcript--she was probably only given complete scenes to copy--was printed by its finder, Erich Schmidt, at Weimar, in 1887, as Goethes Faust in ursprünglicher Gestalt, a title somewhat misleading in so far as it represents early, but not necessarily the earliest, material. But the modern reader is obviously in a better position to follow the progress of Goethe's life work than were most of his contemporaries, who had to wait until 1790 for the appearance of an even more incomplete version."