

## CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Preface . . . . .   | ix  |
| I. TRADITION IN MEDIAEVAL POETRY. <i>The approach to mediaeval literature. The poet re-works an authoritative source. The 'laws' of his art observed in the whole corpus of his poetry.</i> . . . . .   | 1   |
| II. THE RESPECT FOR WRITTEN AUTHORITY. <i>Authorities derived from books of antiquity. Respect for the past and rejection of novelty: no innovation but re-novatio. Truth established from written authority. Harmonization of authorities a cultural stimulus.</i> . . . . .           | 10  |
| III. THE CLERICAL TRADITION. <i>Clerics follow written sources, fear their corruption. 12th century clerical narratives for lay audiences. Clerical interest in chansons de geste; 'good' and 'bad' jongleurs. Clerics shape courtly literature in formative period.</i> . . . . .      | 19  |
| IV. THE HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRADITION. <i>The poet's material allegedly history. Historians care for style and significance. Poet's characters really lived, his truth the veritas historiae.</i> . . . . .   | 35  |
| V. THE GERMAN POET AND HIS SOURCE. <i>German poet translates for a patron, entertains and instructs a court. The patron's influence. Poet's quest for true source. Rival versions condemned. The invention of sources. Responsibility rests with transmitters of sources.</i> . . . . . | 48  |
| VI. THE AUTHORITATIVE SUBSTANCE. <i>Commitment to substance, freedom in presentation and explanation of sense. Substance not added or omitted. Sequence of events preserved. Errors corrected. The tale transformed. Freedom of literary translator.</i> . . . . .                      | 67  |
| VII. THE POETIC ART. <i>Poets praised or blamed for treatment of substance. Poetic theory and courtly poetry. Poetic rivalry with the source.</i> . . . . .   | 88  |
| VIII. THE GERMAN POET'S FREEDOM. <i>Freedom in description, speeches, style, structure, motivation and credibility, characterization, idealization, comment, interpretation of the significance. German poems longer than sources.</i> . . . . .  | 103 |
| IX. THE CLASSICAL PERIOD IN GERMANY. <i>Historicism of early poets. Veldeke's courtly ideals and poetic standards. Hartmann introduces Arthurian matter; formal excellence and contemporary relevance. Didacticism. The 'higher' truth found in the stories.</i> . . . . .              | 121 |

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| X. | THE DECLINE OF SOURCE AUTHORITY. <i>Reason and probability as criteria of truth. Autopsy and experience. Fact less important than truth. Fiction points moral truth, historicism not essential. New fictional narratives. Chaucer and Cervantes.</i> . . . . . | 134 |
|    | Conclusion . . . . .   | 146 |
|    | Select Bibliography . . . . .  | 149 |
|    | Index . . . . .  | 154 |