

# A Year's Work in the Seventies

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The year's work may be considered as a motto of our Association. I doubt whether it would be approved as a motto to be inscribed on a coat-of-arms, if we ever cared to have one. Since our claim is to be both modern and humane, I think we can rely on our motto being sanctioned by the thirty-two volumes of the *Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*, as well as by the forty-four volumes of the *Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature* and by our latest venture, the *Yearbook of English Studies*.

I would not call the presidency of the Association a year's work, though it certainly is a yearly distinction. I must confess that when such a distinction unexpectedly befell me and I consequently found myself blown into mid-air by the presidential wind, like a barren leaf, wondering where I would land, the motto of the Association came to my mind at once. It reminded me of my humble, though possibly rightful origins, namely of my very small contribution to the *Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* some twenty years ago, and it seemed to inspire me with a much needed sense of purpose and hope in my search of a worthy subject for a presidential address. Why not a year's work in the early seventies? Of course not in the nineteen-seventies. It is not for the president to foresee, much less to influence the work of the Association. Apart from constitutional niceties, it is the privilege as well as the curse of age that one should become blind to the present. Like the damned souls in Dante's Hell, old people are normally long-sighted. Thanks to God, we are not long-sighted in respect of the future, as the damned souls seem to be. We are, up to a point, in respect of the past, which increasingly dominates us, whether we like it or not. Personally, as a veteran student of the Italian Renaissance, I should have chosen the early seventies of either the fourteenth century, say the last years of both Petrarch and Boccaccio, or the fifteenth century, say the first steps of Lorenzo de' Medici as a ruler of Florence, or even better the sixteenth century, say 1571-2, the year of the battle of Lepanto, where a great Spaniard, Cervantes, fought, and of the night of Saint Bartholomew, where a prominent French scholar, Ramus, was killed. The trouble was that such places were familiar to me because I had been working there in a different capacity throughout my life: they were my worm-holes. In fact there could be no doubt as to where I should land as a falling leaf: it ought to be in the early eighteen-seventies.

As president of a scholarly association I may be expected to give an account of what I stand for. That simply means where I come from. My Italian predecessors, Benedetto Croce, President of the Association in 1923-4, and Professor Migliorini, President in 1956, both of whom I revere as masters, will exempt me from answering a personal question. As a student of literature, Croce succeeded Francesco De Sanctis, the greatest nineteenth-century Italian critic. Similarly, as a student of language, Professor Migliorini would certainly acknowledge Graziadio Ascoli, the founder of Italian Philology, as his master. De Sanctis's fundamental history of

Italian literature was published in 1870-1. Ascoli's periodical, the *Archivio glottologico italiano* appeared in 1873, but the introductory article was dated 10 September 1872, and the first issue had on its front page a dedicatory inscription to Friedrich Diez, the German founder of Romance philology, for the fifteenth anniversary of his doctorate, 30 December 1871.

De Sanctis and Ascoli were as far apart as the poles. A third sample, midway between Naples and Milan, and between literary criticism and pure philology, will give us a more balanced view of Italian scholarship in the early eighteen-seventies. Domenico Comparetti, a younger contemporary of Ascoli's, was professor of Greek in the University of Pisa. The extraordinary range of his interests and the contemptuous ease with which he could master the most abstruse subjects in all languages made concentration difficult. He never wrote anything irrelevant, but he only once managed to strike the main road beyond the wood. Comparetti's fundamental study of the literary and legendary survival of Virgil during the Middle Ages up to Dante inclusive appeared in 1872.

De Sanctis, Ascoli, and Comparetti were primarily responsible for laying the foundations of modern Italian scholarship. The question is whether the fact that they accomplished their task at approximately the same moment in the early seventies should be considered as a fortuitous coincidence. My submission is that it was not, and that the question cannot be answered within the limits of the Italian scene. Admittedly the conquest of Rome in 1870 was a turning point in the history of modern Italy. A major problem which had embittered the first decade of the new Kingdom was solved. There were no major problems looming ahead, except of course the internal one of raising a backward and exhausted country to the average standard of nineteenth-century Europe. It is understandable that Italian scholars should have been spurred into action. Europe, however, was constantly in front of them both as a model and as a goal. What kind of Europe? That was the question weighing upon everybody's mind in the early eighteen-seventies. The critical condition of Europe as a result of the military and political events of 1870-1 in France was a fact which no Italian scholar, however entrenched he might be in his own field of research, could underestimate, not to say ignore.

'L'année terrible', which appeared as the title of a book of poems written by Hugo from August 1870 to July 1871, still appears to us as an apt definition of that fateful year. No one who has been lucky enough to witness and survive the events of the first half of our own century can fail to see how strikingly they resemble the ones first rehearsed in 1870-1. The rehearsal included the German Blitzkrieg, the invasion, a chaotic *guerrilla*, the resistance, the starvation of a besieged town during an icy winter, the international war turned into a civil war, the political and social struggle turned into a merciless feud, the street-to-street fighting, the massacre of hostages and prisoners. To relieve the impact of a haunting list I may point out that the winter of 1870-1 was the coldest since 1829 according to French records, and that the myth of the Resistance first developed into a visual form thanks to a Parisian artist stationed on the ramparts during the siege. His statue of the Resistance is known to us from literary evidence. The original could not be preserved because it was made out of snow. The weather was torrid in May 1871 when Paris was burning, as Banville said, 'comme une allumette', and when the remnants of the Commune who were taken to their final trial in Versailles inspired the old Gautier to write the best of his *Tableaux de siège*, the last sketch of a master hand.

As soon as the 'année terrible' was over, the spectacle of French recovery attracted everybody's eyes. We may add the French miracle of 1871-2 to the list of recurring events which have become familiar to us. Hence, inevitably, something else we have experienced far too well in our lifetime, in Germany, in France, everywhere, namely the *Schuldfrage*, a searching inquiry into collective responsibilities. No one would accept political and military incompetence as being solely responsible for the total and sudden breakdown of a country as vigorous as France. Similarly no one would credit Bismarck and Moltke with being solely responsible for German predominance over Europe. There must have been a hidden weakness on one side as there certainly had been a hidden or rather a misjudged source of strength on the other. That was the way by which literature and scholarship came under the fire of a critical inquiry in respect of both their merits and their mutual relationship. We will not be detained by the literary trial as exemplified, on neutral ground, by a Belgian scholar, Charles Potvin, whose book *De la corruption littéraire en France* appeared in 1872. Whatever its corruption and waste, French literature had been since 1830 and still was incomparably superior to its counterpart on the other side of the Rhine. Since Goethe's death in 1832, no German writer had achieved undisputed international popularity except the one, Heine, who had rebelled against his own country and who had spent in Paris the last twenty-five years of his life. French men of letters were justified in claiming that the German victory could not be considered the result of a superior civilization in so far as creative literature could be taken as a measure of it. Philosophy too, which had been a German preserve up to the eighteen-forties, could hardly be considered any more a decisive factor of German predominance. Saint-René Taillandier, who was not a philosopher, but who had specialized in modern and contemporary German history and literature, maintained that the ruthless and unscrupulous way by which Germany had conquered France could be traced back to the kind of philosophy which students were taught in German universities: hence a ruling class 'niant Dieu, niant le droit, rejetant tout principe, ne reconnaissant que la nature et la force'. That was his view of the problem in 1874, when he produced his last book, *Dix ans de l'histoire d'Allemagne*. The trouble was that his denunciation of German philosophy, as represented by his *Études sur la révolution en Allemagne* published in 1853, was meant to prove the opposite, namely that the roots of French socialism and generally of all revolutionary movements were there: it was 'l'exécrable foyer d'impiedades où la démagogie européenne allait forger ses armes'. It was hard to believe that the same *foyer* had been used by Bismarck and Moltke.

The argument about German philosophy could not lead to any firm conclusion, whether it was upheld by a right-wing man like Saint-René Taillandier, or by a far greater scholar like Quinet, politically a representative of the opposite side. Quinet had first discussed the subject in his admirable book *Allemagne et Italie: philosophie et poésie*, which appeared in 1839, but his conclusive views were included in his last book *L'esprit nouveau*, which was prefaced and published in exactly the same years as Taillandier's last book, 1874-5. Irrespective of philosophy, German universities commanded attention. Since 1866 the German educational system had been loudly praised for its vital contribution to the cohesion and effectiveness of the Prussian army. Frenchmen were understandably puzzled by something which had no equivalent in their own educational system. In 1835 Lerminier, who was professor of Jurisprudence at the Collège de France, made a survey of German

universities, pointing out that in order of precedence their subjects of teaching and research could be listed as follows: philology, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, religion and literature. Lerminier's conclusion was: 'les universités allemandes sont aujourd'hui les premières de l'Europe'. In exactly the same year, 1835, a brilliant professor of literature at the Sorbonne, Saint-Marc Girardin, in his *Notices politiques et littéraires sur l'Allemagne*, stressed the peculiar relationship between army and university at Berlin: 'On a dit de la Prusse que c'était une caserne; c'est une caserne, mais c'est aussi une école . . . Tel est l'emblème de la Prusse: l'université et l'arsenal, les canons et les études, les étudiants et les soldats.' Needless to say that such remarks were motivated by a genuine interest in a country which was still considered as a potential ally, not as a rival, even less as an enemy. The underlying idea was that Prussia and Germany would eventually side with France to counter-balance the block of the two eastern empires, Russia and Austria. Intellectually France and Germany were complementary to each other, and Goethe's idea of a *Weltliteratur* would suit them both: industrious Germany would provide the material, genial France would provide the form. No one in Europe would labour to read a German text if he could have the gist of it in crystal-clear French.

Such views which were popular in France up to the eighteen-forties should have been considered out of date in the fifties, after the resurrection of the Napoleonic empire. In fact they survived while the little Napoleon was still playing with the Eastern and the Italian problems. Anyhow France was so exuberant and self-confident that German predominance in scholarly matters would seem negligible even to competent and interested observers. Since literature and philosophy had obviously declined in Germany during the forties, one could assume that scholarship too would eventually lose its grip. The idea of a peaceful and co-operative relationship between France and Germany was still popular in the middle sixties. In 1865 a teacher of German at the Lycée Louis le Grand in Paris published a pamphlet on the teaching of modern languages in French schools. He was alarmed by the fact that according to his estimate there could be no more than one thousand German-speaking Frenchmen as against one hundred thousand French-speaking Germans, but his argument for the better teaching of English and German in French schools was based on the assumption that 'aujourd'hui toute la terre n'est plus, pour ainsi dire, qu'un seul pays, l'Europe une grande cité, dont la France et l'Allemagne forment différents quartiers'. As to the scholarly relationship between the two countries, Sainte-Beuve's essay on Littré is worth reading, as Sainte-Beuve always is. The essay appeared in 1863 to mark the publication of Littré's history of the French language and of the first issue of his monumental dictionary. Sainte-Beuve pointed out that a few scholars, some of them German, had been working on medieval French just before and concurrently with Littré, and he jokingly referred to the French medievalist Édélestand du Méril who 'seul en France, était parfaitement au courant, mais il l'était au point de paraître un homme d'outre-Rhin lui-même'. Sainte-Beuve relished the improbable anecdote that when Littré published his French translation of Strauss's famous life of Jesus, more copies were sold in Germany than in France: 'Ce livre allemand, traduit en français et tamisé à travers notre langue, à travers l'esprit exact et ferme du traducteur, a paru, même au de là du Rhin, plus clair que l'original.'

Unquestionably, Littré was a great man as well as a great scholar. When he produced his history and his dictionary of the French language, he knew that he

was doing something parallel to, but substantially different from what Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm had done in Germany. The results proved the difference. The Grimms' work was fundamental not only in respect of German philology but also of Linguistics generally. Both Franz Bopp and Friedrich Diez were directly and decisively influenced by Jakob Grimm. Littré's work was fundamental in respect of French literature, not of French philology. Once again there was no real competition between the two countries. Gradually, however, French scholars were changing their attitude to Germany during the sixties. Some of them, young men in their twenties, were inclined to consider a confrontation inevitable. They hated the self-confidence of old men like Sainte-Beuve and Littré; they would rather face the problem of German scholarly predominance openly. In 1863 a French translation appeared of the introductory section of Diez's Grammar of romance languages. The translation and, in front of it, a most impressive preface were by Gaston Paris, born in 1839, who had been a student at Bonn, in 1856. In 1866 a French translation appeared of the first volume of Bopp's monumental grammar of Indo-European languages. The translator, Michel Bréal, born in 1832, had been a pupil of Bopp's at Berlin. As a result of his translation he was promoted from 'Chargé des cours' to a professorship at the Collège de France in the same year. Two more volumes of the translation appeared in 1868 and in 1869, each one with a substantial preface. Meanwhile, from 1866 onwards a new weekly periodical, *Revue critique d'histoire et littérature*, had regularly appeared in Paris. It was edited by Paul Meyer, Charles Morel, Gaston Paris, and Hermann Zotenberg. The latter, who resigned in 1867, was a German expert in oriental languages, Morel a young classicist, Meyer and Paris were for ever paired by their common interest in medieval philology. The new periodical ostentatiously departed from the traditional line of French scholarship. History and literature, as advertised by the title, had no connexions with modern and contemporary history and literature: they were a reflection of scholarly research on remote subjects. No attempt was made to popularize the results of research. There were no articles except a short address to the readers at the beginning of each year. The reviews, mostly short and in a trenchant style were conceived as a verdict and as an additional contribution to research on the subject: 'Nous écrivons pour les travailleurs déjà avancés au courant des méthodes scientifiques et qui savent de quoi on leur parle.' The emphasis was on the scientific aspect of historical and literary research, as practised in Germany. When a new periodical, called *Revue des questions historiques*, appeared in the same year, 1866, the *Revue critique* cuttingly dismissed it as an ill-timed attempt to rival Sybel's *Historische Zeitschrift*: there could be no historical questions unless the facts had been first set down in a scientific way.

As to the questions hanging over the future of France and Europe, the essential facts were unequivocally set down in 1866. Not everybody in France could be as foresighted as Prévost-Paradol who in 1866 succeeded Ampère as a member of the French Academy and who published two years later his startling book *La France nouvelle*, based on an appreciation of Germany so utterly different from that of his predecessor. No one, however, could fail to see that a confrontation with Germany was becoming inevitable. It is not surprising that a scholarly mobilization should have taken place in exactly the same period in which a last-minute and ill-fated effort was made to reorganize the French army. A new *École des Hautes Études* was founded in 1868, which, unlike the *École des Chartes* and the *École Normale*,

was meant to encourage and pursue scientific research through Seminars, according to the German system. Bréal, Gaston Paris and Morel were among the first appointed members of staff. The first volume of a *Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études*, which appeared in 1869, was entirely devoted to a French translation of philological papers by Max Müller and Curtius.

In 1870, immediately after the French defeat, Max Müller, who was professor of comparative philology at Oxford, loudly contributed to the German propaganda in England, while another even more famous German scholar, Mommsen, was doing the same in respect of Italy. A third one, Strauss, openly challenged his junior opposite number in France, Renan. As could be expected, scholars were far more conspicuous than professional writers on the German side during the war. What could not be expected, however, was the fact that the war itself seemed to be waged by the Germans in a scholarly way. Frenchmen immediately realized that their defeat was not only due to the incompetence of their generals: it was primarily due to the fact that the traditional art of war exemplified by the great Napoleon had been superseded by a totally different one. Science had taken the place of literature. The charge of the light brigade had become mere folly: no self-respecting poet would be inspired by the French charge at Reichshoffen. The seventy-year-old Moltke was a scholar sitting at his desk miles away from the battlefield. Théodore de Banville, not the greatest, but undoubtedly the most sparkling French poet in that critical period, wrote a number of satirical poems during the siege of Paris. In one of them he represented the three German villains, King William, Bismarck, and Moltke, discussing future operations. In fact there is no discussion: the King is inevitably silent and Moltke is totally immersed in his calculations. Bismarck outlines the plan which will enable Germany to conquer the whole of Europe and the whole world. At the end of his torrential speech Bismarck resentfully wakes to the stolid attitude of his silent partners. What else are they waiting for? 'On ne peut pas prendre la lune . . . Si, dit alors de Moltke, J'ai / fait mes calculs: on peut la prendre'. We are now reading Banville's poem in the light of our own experiences and finding it more significant than the poet himself thought. Historically, however, there cannot be any doubt that science generally and a scientific approach to literature emerged from the 1870 war as the main test applied to any country faced with German predominance.

We are not concerned here with the impressive revival of French literature after the 1870 war. Any one can see how explosive the revival was, the explosion being represented by Rimbaud, how poetry and prose differentiated on increasingly diverging lines, the difference being represented on the one side by Banville's *Petit traité de poésie française* published in 1872, and on the other by Zola's first and second volumes of the *Rougon-Macquart*, published in 1871-2. We are here concerned with the work of our predecessors in the field of research on modern languages and literatures.

French scholars immediately realized that they ought to repress their resentment against Germany. Some of them had not been taken by surprise. As we have seen, they had done their best to catch up with German scholarship long before the war. They simply had to go on learning and striving to the bitter end. There was no point in indulging in the exclusive patriotism aroused by the war. It was their duty to contribute to the recovery of France by meeting the challenge on the enemy's own ground. They could not profitably cover the whole ground. Strategy,

as shown by Moltke during the war, applied to a scholarly as well as to a military confrontation. On subjects like classical philology and general linguistics the German position was impregnable. Michel Bréal, who joined the editorial committee of the *Revue Critique* in 1872 when the periodical was resumed after the break of the war, duly completed his translation of Bopp's Grammar. His preface to the fourth and final volume which appeared in 1872 does not include any reference to the latest events. There was little else he could do, besides writing a very remarkable and successful book on the French educational system from primary schools to universities. Bréal knew his own limitations as well as those of the French School of Oriental Studies which had never recovered from the loss of Eugène Burnouf in 1852. The position was different in Romance Philology, the very subject in which French scholars could be expected to take the initiative. Gaston Paris who had pledged himself to translate the whole Grammar of his master Diez, accomplished his task with the help of Auguste Branchet and Alfred Morel-Fatio. The three volumes of the translation appeared in 1873-6. In his Grammar Diez acknowledged his debt to the French scholar Raynouard, whom he considered the founder of Romance Philology. In fact everybody knew that Diez was the real founder as well as the still active master of all students of the subject. Chronologically, research on the subject having been started jointly by French and German scholars at the very beginning of the century, Romance Philology had some claim to priority. Research in other subjects, however, had subsequently taken a definite precedence. Understandably German philology was priding itself on its achievements in both the national field of Germanic philology and the general field of Linguistics. German pride was amply justified by two volumes in the München series of the History of German scholarship, Theodor Benfey's *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft und orientalischen Philologie in Deutschland* and Rudolf von Raumer's *Geschichte der germanischen Philologie*, which appeared in 1869 and 1870. Raumer could still include in his preface a spirited eulogy of the victorious German army.

Meanwhile Romance Philology had quietly developed. Friedrich Diez was a self-effacing man exclusively devoted to his teaching and research. In 1822 he had settled in Bonn as a University lecturer; he became a professor in 1830 and retired shortly before his death in 1876. No wife, no memorable friendship, no outside interests, no travelling except for research during the vacations, no sick-leave, no sabbatical term. He apparently used to sell at once all books which he deemed irrelevant to his work. Unopened letters piled up on his desk. Towards the end of his life he exceptionally expressed his satisfaction at being awarded the *Ordre pour la mérite* because he could not help feeling that he had some merits and that the very title of the German distinction was congruous with his own achievements. It is not surprising that the influence of such a man should have spread all over Germany and up to Vienna on one side, Paris on the other, without ever catching the eye of a wide academic audience. Academically, Romance Philology had not yet been recognized as an independent subject. It still appeared as a secondary and optional section of modern philology. The first periodical exclusively devoted to modern philology, the still existing *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, was launched in 1846 by Herrig, a student of English literature, and Viehoff, a Germanist. It still represented the original attitude to the subject as developed during the romantic period. The emphasis was on German and English, and on the

teaching of modern languages in secondary schools as well as in universities. Accordingly a *Gesellschaft für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, which sounds like a German equivalent of our own Association, was founded in 1857. In 1859 a new periodical appeared in Germany, called *Jahrbuch für romanische und englische Literatur*. The editor was Adolf Ebert, a student of French and Italian literature. As shown by its title, the periodical was based on the assumption that German literature had by now become an independent subject and that a distinction should be drawn between the literatures of western Europe: English on one side, the Romance group on the other. Ebert was a friend of Diez's, but he was at the time far more interested in literature than in philology. The first periodical exclusively devoted to Romance languages was the French *Revue des langues romanes* which appeared in 1870 at Montpellier. It was a slightly misleading title. The new periodical was representative of a poetical rather than of a scholarly movement, namely of the recent and short-lived but exuberant revival of Provençal poetry which was brought up by the Felibres. Though it included a section on the old dialects of the South of France, which was the real meaning of *Langues romanes*, it was chiefly concerned with modern poetry. The last issue of the 1870 volume included Aubanel's poignant poem *La guerro*, ending with the young mother's cry 'en que sier de faire d'enfant?'

The war against France and as a result of it the establishment of a German university in Strassburg inevitably contributed to stir up interest in a subject which was chiefly French in respect of its content, while being chiefly German in respect of its scholarly establishment. In the circumstances, immediately after the war, the subject had the obvious advantage of being open to the co-operation of neutral countries like Italy and Spain. It is significant that the fiftieth anniversary of Diez's doctorate in December 1871 should have been marked by a resounding official celebration. It is even more significant that three periodicals exclusively devoted to Romance Philology should have appeared almost simultaneously in 1871-2, one in Germany, one in France, one in Italy. The German one, called *Romanische Studien*, was edited by Eduard Boehmer, professor at Halle, who moved to Strassburg in 1872. The Italian journal, *Rivista di filologia romanza*, was edited in Rome by a committee of three, one of them a German, a pupil of Diez's, later professor at Marburg. Understandably the Italian *Rivista* developed as a stunted tree, but its failure to appear at regular intervals did not affect the scholarly level of its content. The French periodical was the *Romania*, edited by Paul Meyer and Gaston Paris. The German *Archiv* was quick to point out the significance of the *Romania*, 'deren Tendenz durch den Titel hinlänglich charakterisiert wird'. In fact the title sounded antithetical to the *Germania*, the well-known German periodical devoted to 'deutsche Altertumskunde' which was edited by Karl Bartsch, the Heidelberg professor. Bartsch was the last and the most typical representative of the joint approach to both French and German medieval poetry which had been traditional in Germany from the very beginning of the century. The French approach was of course totally different, as Gaston Paris's introductory article in the first issue of the *Romania* made abundantly clear. Boehmer in his *Romanische Studien* rightly objected to the racial implications which emerged from Paris's article. Paris promptly retorted that Boehmer had misunderstood him. The feud went on, Meyer and Paris skilfully teasing Boehmer and exciting his anger without ever engaging in a formal argument. Neither side would admit that Strassburg



was the core of the matter. As to racialism, the German masters could hardly complain about the progress of their French pupils. Nationalism and racialism are inextricable from each other. While fighting on national ground for the scholarly revival of France, the *Romania* was openly and faithfully following the line of research which Diez had stressed in Germany. Specialization restricted to the romance field and to the medieval period was proving as scientifically successful as politically effective, whereas both the tendencies still favoured by German scholars — namely the joint approach to romance and germanic languages within the medieval period and the comprehensive study of modern literatures from their origins to the present — were leading to blind alleys. No one, as the indefatigable Karl Bartsch himself was regretfully bound to admit, could cope any more with the amount of previously unpublished material and with the problems arising from it.

The breaking up of Europe into fiercely competitive national units resulted in growing specialization of scholarly research. Romance philology, *Romania* versus *Germania*, was gradually prevailing on such wider and more ambitious subjects as general linguistics and Indo-European philology which had reached their climax when German scholarship was still developing independently from, though concurrently with, the political and military power of Germany. General linguistics was giving way to the study of dialects; Indo-European philology was submitting to the pressure of European colonialism. No wonder, though it is a wonderful event, that while the Italian Ascoli was entrenching himself in Romance and Italian philology and concentrating on the study of dialects, a decisive challenge to German predominance in the open field of general linguistics and Indo-European philology should come in the early seventies from the other side of the Atlantic, when a splendid professor of Yale College, William Dwight Whitney, slashed the pompous garment of August Schleicher and Max Müller.

The French *Romania* soon established itself as the leading periodical in the field of Romance Philology. Boehmer's *Romanische Studien* could not keep pace with it. German scholarship was unexpectedly confronted with the new and almost incredible task of catching someone else up. A determined effort was made in 1877 when a new periodical, the *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, was founded. The very title of the periodical implied German recognition and acceptance of the French line. The *Zeitschrift* somehow managed to draw level with, not to be ahead of the *Romania*, while Gaston Paris was alive. The success of the *Romania* was due to a right move at the right moment by a small but well trained army. It was of course primarily due to the individual excellence of Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer. As to Paris, one cannot fail to ponder over the striking difference between his thesis, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*, published in 1865, which still was as readable and leisurely as traditional French criticism seemed to require, and the rigorous work he produced in the seventies. His critical edition of the *Saint Alexis* published in 1872 was considered a landmark in the history of textual criticism as applied to a Romance text. Textual criticism and its necessary complements, linguistic and metrical analysis, were becoming the main trends in Romance philology. The way had been paved by Diez with his fundamental edition of the *Altromanische Glossare*, published in 1865. Paris was decisively impressed by it, as proved by his preface to the French translation produced by one of his pupils and published during the first year of his teaching at the École des Hautes Études, 1870. Though no one could claim to be Diez's rightful successor, three men emerged as the

commanding figures in the field of Romance Philology during the seventies. They were in order of age and precedence, Adolf Mussafia, an Austrian of Italian origin, Professor at Wien; his contemporary, Adolf Tobler, a Swiss, Professor at Berlin, and Gaston Paris. None of them, not even at the end of their career, could be represented as the author of a single monumental work. Mussafia's *Handschriftliche Studien* and *Beiträge zur Geschichte der romanischen Sprachen*, the finest philological jewellery produced in that field of studies during the nineteenth century, set the style of the new school. It is at first sight surprising that German scholars should have been more hesitant and less successful than their foreign colleagues in pursuing a line of research which had been opened by Diez and which was leading Romance Philology towards a closer relationship with Classical Philology.

We have come to face a German problem, which cannot be handled *illotis manibus* by a student of Italian literature. My concluding remark will be that in 1872 a twenty-eight-year-old German classicist who had come back to his chair in the University of Basle after taking part in the war against France, published a startling book, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. I suppose that Nietzsche's first book would not fail to attract the attention of anyone competently dealing with German problems in the early seventies. Nietzsche had been a student at Bonn. In the same year, 1872, a younger German classicist, not yet a professor, Dr Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, published a slashing criticism of Nietzsche's book. Wilamowitz too had been a student at Bonn, and while he was there in 1867 he had registered among the few students who were following Diez's seminar. Wilamowitz might have been right, but the question of a *Zukunftsphilologie*, as he ironically defined it in his pamphlet, or *Afterphilologie*, as it appeared in Erwin Rohde's immediate retort in defence of Nietzsche, could not be easily solved. A crisis in the field of classical philology was indicative of the fact that the very roots of German scholarship were affected by the turmoil of events which had turned romantic Germany into a formidable empire overshadowing Europe. German literature had vanished. Philosophy too seemed to be on the wane after Schopenhauer's death in 1860. Music only had survived. Hence Nietzsche's youthful attachment for both Schopenhauer and Wagner. Maybe his philological failure in 1872 was instrumental in producing a German philosophy and a German poetry which once again would appeal to the whole of Europe.