

DUVAL, Frédéric. 2021. *La tradition manuscrite du Lai de l'Ombre de Joseph Bédier, ou la critique textuelle en question*. Édition critique et commentaires. Paris: Champion [Textes critiques français, 4]. Pp. 292. ISBN 978-2745355058. \$71.96.

BELTRAMI, Pietro. 2021. *À quoi sert une édition critique ? Lire les textes de la littérature romane médiévale*. Traduction de Jean-Pierre CHAMBON, Yan GREUB et Marjolaine RAGUIN. Paris: Classiques Garnier [Medieval Literary Research, 30]. Pp. 233. ISBN 978-2-406-11340-9, Paper \$24.00.

TROVATO, Paolo. 2019. *Sguardi da un altro pianeta. Nove esercizi di filologia (Lai de l'ombre, Libro de buen amor, Lazarillo, fonti storiche e musicali)*. Padova: libreriauniversitaria.it [Storie e linguaggi, 33]. Pp. 318. ISBN 978-8833591766, Paper \$39.95.

BAKER, Craig, Marcello BARBATO, Mattia CAVAGNA, Yan GREUB, eds. 2018. *L'Ombre de Joseph Bédier: théorie et pratique éditoriales au xx^e siècle*. Strasbourg: ELiPhi [Travaux de littérature romane]. Pp. 380. ISBN 978-2-3727-6022-5, Paper €45.

TROVATO, Paolo. 2017. *Everything you always wanted to know about Lachmann's method. A non-standard handbook of genealogical textual criticism in the age of post-structuralism, cladistics, and copy-text*. Revised edition. Foreword by Michael D. REEVE. Padova: libreriauniversitaria.it [Storie e linguaggi, 7]. Pp. 362. ISBN 978-8862928601, Paper \$45.96.

It can undoubtedly be said, without fear of contradiction, that the publication of Joseph Bédier's essay devoted to the manuscript tradition of the *Lai de l'Ombre* represented the greatest "schism" in the "relatively peaceful world of textual scholars" (TROVATO 2017, 78). The echo of the telluric shock caused by that "formidable and almost destructive double attack (1913, 1928) on the method of common errors advocated and applied in an exemplary way for the times by his master Gaston Paris" (TROVATO 2019, 9)¹ does not cease to reverberate in ecdotic practices and methodological debates. This rupture affected not so much the field of classical philology as that of Romance philology. Composed in the first quarter of the thirteenth

1. Unless otherwise specified, the translation of the texts in Italian and French is ours.

century, the *Lai de l'Ombre* has been transmitted by seven manuscripts, all of which are at least sixty years later than its composition. In 1890, Bédier arrived at a two-branched *stemma*. That same year, Bédier's *maître*, Gaston Paris, proposed an alternative *stemma* in his review of the *Lai*. In 1913, Bédier repropoed the same classification of 1890, but the relevant errors were partially different. In the introduction, after pointing out that Lachmann's method almost invariably produces bipartite *stemmata*, Bédier expresses serious reservations about its scientific nature.² In 1928–1929, Bédier proposed, in reaction and with greater vigor, a return to the editorial practice of the *bon manuscript*, adducing several other *stemmata* “that he said were just as likely” (TROVATO 2019, 22). Bédier's legacy dominates especially in the French school — where Romanists have accepted the master's lesson, rejecting the common-error method — and in North America, while in Italy a tradition based on the genealogical method continues to dominate. The Italian neo-Lachmannism was able to amend the mechanistic application of the stemmatic method, taking into account some of Bédier's objections (DUVAL 2015, 7). Frédéric Duval has recently published a critical and annotated edition of Bédier's 1928–1929 essay.

The initiative can be rightly inscribed in a series of essays and publications in which Duval reasons about Bédier's legacy, questions of method, the need to delimit and define the main issues that pivot on the edition of the text, specifically the medieval text; the opportunity, finally, to bring back into the spotlight the founding texts of the scientific debate on textual criticism: texts that, as in the case of Bédier's essay, are often unknown to scholars. This is the intent that animates the publication of the proceedings (DUVAL 2006) of the conference day *Pratiques philologiques en Europe* (Paris, École des Chartes, September 23, 2005): to measure the impact of academic tradition, language, corpus, and even historical-political events on editors' choices, “to compare different linguistic fields in order to understand, on a European scale, which philological questions were national traditions or debates and which were more commonly shared” (DUVAL 2006, 5–20). The volume constitutes an ideal recap in which each essay-framework introduces the philology of a country and a language, in order to provide a panorama of publishing practices³ and philological orienta-

2. “[E]lle signifie que l'on est en présence non point de faits réels de l'histoire de la transmission des textes, mais à l'ordinaire de phénomènes qui se passent dans l'esprit des éditeurs de textes” (BÉDIER 1913; see TROVATO 2017, 21).

3. In its preference for the concept of “practice” over that of “method” or “theory”, the title pays homage to LECOY 1978.

tions in Europe, beyond prejudices, since “the Italians are not all strictly Lachmannian, and the French are not unanimously Bédierists” (DUVAL 2006, 6). As for the German tradition, it “cannot be reduced to Lachmann and opposed to Bédier, when Friedrich-Heinrich von der Hagen, a contemporary of the Grimms, had already given up the reconstruction of an archetype in order to choose the best manuscript” (DUVAL 2006, 6). Nevertheless, Duval points out, no philologist can escape the tradition that formed him, and this observation “also concerns the terminology used to speak of philology” (DUVAL 2006, 12).

Precisely, the volume published by Duval in 2015, *Les mots de l'édition des textes*, is dedicated to the taxonomy gravitating around philological practices. The words of the textual edition crystallize “centuries-old, sometimes multi-thousand-year-old reflections” (DUVAL 2015, 7); the scholar notes among French editors — at least among medievalists — a lesser mastery of technical textual lexicon, which, moreover, is much reduced in French compared to German, Italian, and Spanish manuals. This is mainly due to the French rejection of the “Lachmann method”, which closely follows Bédier’s attacks (DUVAL 2015, 6): the rejection of the method would have entailed the rejection of concepts, and consequently, “of the words that verbalize” these concepts (DUVAL 2015, 6). Making his own the words of Alphonse Dain, Duval invokes the absolute necessity for the text editor to “adopt a reflexive and non-hereditary approach” (DUVAL 2015, 8), showing that certain concepts “*a priori* linked to one community (antiquists, medievalists, philologists of the printed text, or geneticists) can stimulate the theoretical or methodological reflection of another, beyond prejudice” (DUVAL 2015, 9). The reflection on the taxonomy of textual criticism had already found an outlet in the presentation made by the scholar at the colloquium organized at the Free University of Brussels on the centenary of the famous edition of *Lai de l'Ombre* by Joseph Bédier. The colloquium proceedings have recently been published in a volume entitled *L'Ombre de Joseph Bédier: théorie et pratique éditoriales au xx^e siècle* (BAKER, BARBATO, CAVAGNA, GREUB 2018).

In his contribution, emblematically titled “À la recherche des bédieristes et de leurs avatars”, instead of presenting the evolution of practices chronologically, Duval chooses to assume (as in the case of *Les mots de l'édition des textes*) the role of an ideal lexicographer, grappling with the definition of the numerous deanthroponymic derivatives of Bédier, starting with “bédierisme” (DUVAL 2018, 182), whose semantic evolution, alongside that of “bédierism” and “bedierismo” varies from one academic tradition to another, making a diachronic approach much difficult. The question is

far from being minor, if one considers that Bédier himself “was less bedierist than one might expect” (VARVARO 1999, 54).⁴ In the contribution devoted to Bédier’s deanthroponyms, the lexicographic perspective allows Duval to highlight the paradox of the so-called Bedierist school. Despite the existence of a “bedierist doctrine” being admitted by scholars such as Cesare Segre or Gian Battista Speroni (1991, 46) Bédier did not entrust his ideas to general, organic, and extensive theoretical studies, but rather to reflections tied to certain case studies, in particular those dedicated to the *Lai de l’Ombre* and to the *Chanson de Roland*. If a bedierist academic school can really be identified, it seems rather to be defined by his disciples (DUVAL 2018, 184), among whom Mario Roques and Félix Lecoy stand out. However, they applied the principles of so-called bedierism much more rigidly than their master.

Today, no one refers to himself as a bedierist *tout-court*, preferring appellations such as “neo-bedierist” or “post-bedierist”: behind this choice lies “a semantic inaccuracy inherent to bedierism” (DUVAL 2018, 198). If Bédier’s legacy can be summarized in two main axes — the choice of a good manuscript and the minimal intervention of the editor — each of them is “accompanied by a gray area that Bédier did not eliminate, or at least not sufficiently: his reflections are not explicit either on the criteria for choosing the manuscript to be edited, or on the definition of ‘evident errors’” (DUVAL 2018, 198). It is precisely the desire to bring back into the spotlight Bédier’s genuine reflections that animates the recent publication of “*La tradition manuscrite du Lai de l’Ombre de Joseph Bédier*” ou la critique textuelle en question. *Édition critique et commentaires*, a publication whereby Duval addresses a wide audience, potentially composed of specialists and non-specialists alike. If the collective work *L’Ombre de Joseph Bédier*, focusing on the reception of Bédier’s philological reflections and their contextualization, addressed a specialist audience, the volume published by Champion can also be handled by a non-expert reader. Rereading Bédier, according to Duval, is now more necessary than ever, since he is the “tutelary figure of French philological practice for more than a century, despite being unknown by most editors” (DUVAL 2021, 11). Indirect knowledge of Bédier has inevitably led to an oversimplification of his observations, “often summarized in a few formulas, beyond any reference to his philologi-

4. The article originally appeared as “La ‘New Philology’ nella prospettiva italiana” (VARVARO 1997). In the same year, Alain Corbellari wrote that “Bédier was not immediately bedierist; and it is not certain that he would have approved of all those who today refer to him” (CORBELLARI 1997, 505).

cal work and the publishing practices of the first third of the twentieth century” (DUVAL 2021, 11). The annotated edition aims at guiding the reader, by situating the reflections in a broader context of writing and reception, underlining the issues and defining key concepts. The reading guide is composed of three moments: the critical notes, which punctually intervene where the text could prove difficult to understand; a commentary, divided into fourteen sections, dedicated to the most important methodological points developed by Bédier; and, three analytical chapters, which inscribe Bédier’s essay in the long trajectory of philological reflection, setting the editorial context, and drawing a balance of direct and indirect influence on editorial practices. Duval does not fail to address the epistemological and philosophical problem of truth, at the root of different editorial practices.

The annotated edition of Bédier’s essay can be considered as the latest act of an articulated path. We must credit Duval for this extremely refined and meticulous operation that brought back the attention and illuminated with new light the reflections of a master so rich in disciples as little known, especially by new generations. The same spirit seems to animate some of Paolo Trovato’s recent publications, in particular the first of the philological exercises collected in *Sguardi da un altro pianeta* (“Glances from another planet”). *Nove esercizi di filologia (Lai de l’ombre, Libro de buen amor, Lazarillo, fonti storiche e musicali)* (TROVATO 2019). This essay is dedicated to Jean Renart’s work, whose edition by Bédier marked the famous “schism”. In the essay, emblematically entitled “La tradizione manoscritta del *Lai de l’ombre*. Riflessioni sulle tecniche d’edizione primonovecentesche” (“The manuscript tradition of the *Lai de l’ombre*. Reflections on early twentieth century’s editorial techniques”), Trovato examines the tradition and proposes an alternative classification, “that is, an interpretation”, of the few witnesses “(*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*) that, today, preserve the *Lai*.” (TROVATO 2019, 16). If the long shadow (*l’ombre*) of Bédier (that same shadow to which the volume was dedicated on the occasion of the centenary) has indelibly marked the philological practices and schools of the twentieth century and even today, Trovato emphasizes how the shadow of the French master “has inhibited the many twentieth-century editors of the *Lai*, often anything but philologically unprepared, from attempting any solution other than those proposed by Bédier himself (the editions after 1929 are invariably conducted on the ms. A or on E rather than on the whole tradition)” (TROVATO 2019, 15). Five main criteria are adhered to by Trovato: first, the screening of agreements in innovation, with special attention to the risk of polygenetic, “weakly conjunctive” convergences (TROVATO 2019, 24); then, the different density among the witnesses of variously inclusive

or technical rhymes, sparingly used by Jean Renart; and also the high risk of contamination, with the consequent obscuring of vertical genealogical relationships, due to the relative popularity of the work. Finally, the two criteria that are considered the most important by Trovato: Variants that fall into the typology of the error of anticipation or repetition and are disproved by the rest of the tradition are considered erroneous, “in the technical sense of ‘unoriginal, secondary’” (TROVATO 2019, 26), whereas flagrant quotations from other poems by Jean Renart are considered original, as opposed to variants that dilute the rate of intertextuality, by virtue of what Giorgio Pasquali called “allusive art”: the density of quotations and *loci paralleli* between the *Lai de l’Ombre* and Jean Renart’s other works.⁵

The volume in which the essay on the manuscript tradition of the *Lai de l’Ombre* finds its place consists precisely of an anthology of exercises in textual criticism and is proposed as a sort of ideal path that winds through autopsy examinations of some case studies. These examinations are aimed to “understand with what adaptations and with what limitations the Neo-Lachmannian method of common errors can be profitably applied to multiple tradition texts of some complexity” (TROVATO 2019, 11), thus testing the tightness of the philology to which Trovato adheres, namely “the adjective-free philology of Maas and Pasquali” (TROVATO 2019, 10). The anthology closes with some thoughts on recent handbooks, including Trovato’s own, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Lachmann’s Method. A non-standard handbook of genealogical textual criticism in the age of post-structuralism, cladistics, and copy-text*, edited in 2014 and published again in 2017, in a revised and corrected edition. Placing the moment of theoretical reflection alongside that of practice is more than an opportunity: it is a necessity, for, according to Trovato, as in “any self-respecting science”, the work of “incessant revision and verification must never stop” (TROVATO 2019, 313). The impulse to write a manual came to Trovato in 2006–2007, when he was a visiting professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As he was teaching the course dedicated to “Textual criticism”, Trovato was able to appreciate the gratitude of his students “for having given them the keys to a kingdom that had been unknown to them, but whose existence they had suspected or caught glimpses of” (TROVATO 2017, 17). Just as Duval noted that far too often one has only indirect knowledge of Bédier, so Trovato records, on the opposite side, “a little familiarity with the genealogical or common-error method”. Scholars adhering to New Philology often cite

5. See LIMENTANI 2020, 4: Limentani refers to the “viscosity” of Jean Renart’s poetic language as “one of his most representative features”.

only “a few late-nineteenth or early-twentieth century works, or elementary and at least unwittingly tendentious generalizations” (TROVATO 2017, 22); this can lead to the danger of “discrediting the genealogical method by caricaturing it and blaming it for shortcomings that are non-exhaustive or have been overcome or have lost importance over a long and undeniable history of success” (TROVATO 2017, 22). Finally, Trovato invokes the need to cleanse terminology of ambiguity — a need, as we have seen, shared by Duval — in contrast with the tendency of some philologists to rename certain key terms in genealogical theory, such as “error” or *stemma*. To this purpose, the handbook is articulated through the examination of some of the fundamental questions and issues that feed the debate on textual criticism, from Bédier’s schism to the paradox of two-branched *stemmata* of medieval traditions (see TROVATO 2005), from archetype to guiding errors.

The issues that we have brought to the attention in this brief review appear as pieces of a mosaic whose design emerges more and more in focus. On one hand, the refined operation of Frédéric Duval, holder of the chair of Romance philology at the École des Chartes, an operation that — through the instrumentation of textual criticism itself — brings the focus back to the examination of Bédier’s reflections, as they were written and published, black on white, clear of the subsequent metacritical speculation. This operation is in turn articulated in an *accessus* to that essay addressed to a potentially wide audience, and in the brilliant expedient of the synchronic gaze of the lexicographer, who anatomizes the taxonomic corpus of textual criticism. Through that same lexicographic examination and a screening of deanthroponyms, he reconstructs the evolution of an academic school “without doctrine”. The latter analysis, as we have seen, is part of the wider context of a collective work destined to bring back to the anatomopathologist’s table the long shadow of Bédier’s legacy (BAKER, BARBATO, CAVAGNA, GREUB 2018). On the other hand, there is the equally refined operation of an Italian philologist belonging to the school that is traditionally opposed to Bedierism. This operation intentionally aims to challenge that same *stemma* of the *Lai de l’Ombre*, which is at the origin of the Bedierist “schism”, and to re-examine the classification of the witnesses, in full coherence with the neo-Lachmannian spirit of the Italian critical tradition. Finally, we would like to draw attention to the fine and valuable initiative of two linguists of the caliber of Jean-Pierre Chambon and Yan Greub, who, together with the Romanist Marjolaine Raguin, have made accessible to the French-speaking public — and more generally to the scientific community — a text dense with methodical reflections. The French translation of Beltrami’s handbook, *A che serve un’edizione critica? Leggere*

I testi della letteratura romanza medievale (“What is the use of a critical edition? Reading the Texts of Medieval Romance Literature”) will certainly prove to be an indispensable tool even for those who do not master Italian, a language now “little read, even among educated people” (TROVATO 2019, 312).⁶ This initiative ideally follows the French translation — also edited by Chambon and Greub — of the work of one of the greatest philologists, Alberto Varvaro (*Prima lezione di filologia*, “First lesson of philology”), in the belief that the questions posed in the essay “are addressed not only to the philologist and his practice, but also to the linguist and, more generally, to society as a whole, regarding the place that philology should occupy in it” (CHAMBON, GREUB 2015, 636). As Beltrami reminds us, philology is not only a doctrine or a method, but also a “mental habit”, “a sort of mental hygiene against carelessness and indifference to facts [. . .] and the degeneration of information, whatever the cause: bad faith, ignorance, accidents, chance, intrinsic defects in transmission, or simply time. In this, philology is a profoundly educational discipline” (BELTRAMI 2010, 12).

Elena Muzzolon
University of Padua

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6. Significantly, the publishing operation coordinated by Chambon, Greub, and Raguin came out only a few days (March 31, 2021) after Duval's edition of Bédier's text for Champion (March 25, 2021).

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