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De Carné, Damien, and Christine Ferlampin-Acher, eds. *La Tradition manuscrite du Tristan en prose: Bilan et perspectives*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021. 323 pp. Notes, references, and index. €68.00. (hb). 9782406122005; €29.00. (pb). ISBN 9782406121992.

Review by Keith Busby, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

When I published my first article on the character of Gauvain in the Prose *Tristan* (1977!), study of the romance was in its infancy.[1] The only access to this long and complex work was through the summaries of Eilert Løseth (1891, etc.) [2] or the manuscripts themselves. Emmanuèle Baumgartner had just published her important thesis in 1975,[3] which offered some insight into the plethora of redactions and versions, but editions were generally wanting. The opening of the romance had been published by Renée Curtis in 1963, but the subsequent two volumes of her edition of the incomplete manuscript, Carpentras, Bibl. Inguimbertaine 404, were not published until 1976 and 1985 respectively.[4] Two complete versions were edited and published by teams coordinated by Philippe Ménard in 1987-1997 and 1997-2007.[5] Despite a growing number of articles, it could be argued that the inner workings of the Prose *Tristan* were not properly understood until Damien de Carné's *Sur l'Organisation du Tristan en prose*, which demonstrated convincingly that the *Tristan* essentially functioned as a chronological expansion of the Arthurian world, turning on a comparison and contrast between Tristan and Lancelot (as he appears in the Prose *Lancelot*).[6] De Carné's work also got to grips with a textual transmission even more complex than Løseth, Curtis, Baumgartner, and Ménard had suspected. This collection of essays presents a more nuanced, albeit admittedly not definitive, view of how the Prose *Tristan* has come down to us in over a hundred complete manuscripts and fragments.

The problem with editing the *Tristan* (and prose romance generally) is that it cannot be done by the traditional method of choosing a base manuscript and giving variants--the divergences between the redactions are simply too great, even within discernible "families" of manuscripts. Choices therefore have to be made. One of the recurrent themes in many of these essays is that Renée Curtis did not choose well and may not have had a good grasp of the complexities of the manuscript tradition. Baumgartner's conclusions did not sit well with Curtis, who replied indignantly, but unconvincingly, in a 1981 article.[7] If subsequent scholarship has shown the weaknesses in Curtis's work, Damien de Carné is quick to point out that, at the very least, it had the merit of presenting a readable text of much of the early part of the romance. During the two decades after the appearance of Curtis's first volume, the *Tristan* had to fight the headwind of Chrétien de Troyes, whose lure for scholars of Arthurian romance was still proving irresistible. Half a century later, however, the scholarly landscape has changed beyond recognition, our insights into the mechanics of prose romance and its manuscript transmission putting study of it

on a sound footing. Chrétien has been neglected to such an extent that it may soon be time to reinvent him.

I shall not offer a detailed commentary on all of the essays in this volume, but rather highlight what seem to me the most significant points made by each contributor. Damien de Carné reviews the evolution of scholarship on the Prose *Tristan* over the last century and a half, providing an indispensable introduction to anyone approaching the romance for the first time. Pointing out both the shortcomings and virtues of Curtis's classification of the manuscripts of the prehistory of Tristan, Dominik Hess argues in favor of a fresh review of the textual transmission of the whole romance. Richard Trachsler has been one of the prime movers in the rehabilitation of Arthurian prose romance in recent years. In his ingenious essay, he suggests that a close textual examination of the lyric insertions in the romance could generate an efficient schematic of relationships between the manuscripts. Huw Grange shows how the presence and absence of episodes from the so-called *Agravain* (the last part of the Prose *Lancelot*) in manuscripts of the *Tristan* might also indicate relationships between them. The provisional moral to be drawn from these three essays is that relationships between manuscripts and redactions should be examined at different points in the romance and will likely produce different results.

In an impeccably rigorous study of the language of BnF, fr. 99, Nathalie Bragantini-Maillard argues that its scribe, Michel Gonnot (writing for Jacques d'Armagnac in 1463), uses a classic, perhaps nostalgic, *scripta* lightly colored with Picardisms. The results of examinations such as this could well indicate the literal and codicological *mouvance* of the texts in time and space. Damien de Carné puts theory into practice (almost) by outlining a method for editing the adventures of Brunor ("le Chevalier à la Cotte Mal Taillée") which appear only in Curtis's Carpentras 404, BnF, fr. 750 and 12599. The article includes a close comparison between the latter two copies and once again questions Curtis's conclusions.

Philippe Ménard, whose coordination of the two editions of V.I and V.II (versions one and two) of the Prose *Tristan* has done so much to stimulate study of the romance, looks at insertions of the *Queste del saint Graal* into the *Tristan*, respectfully questioning the validity of the late Fanni Bogdanow's reconstruction of a so-called "Post-Vulgate" Arthurian cycle. Nicola Morato is a prominent member of the "Gruppo *Guiron*," a team of mainly Italian and Swiss scholars led by Lino Leonardi and Richard Trachsler, whose extraordinary edition of the last remaining unpublished Arthurian prose romance is nearing completion. No one is better qualified than Morato to consider the cyclical relationships and contacts between the *Tristan*, the *Guiron*, the Prose *Lancelot*, and the *Prophéties de Merlin*. The marginally Arthurian *Artus de Bretagne* (first redaction, 1276) has only recently been edited by Christine Ferlampin-Acher, [8] whose essay is devoted to illustrating the reception of the *Tristan* in the continuation of *Artus* as found in Paris, BnF, fr. 19163. This is achieved mainly by a comparative study of the versions of the dragon-combat episode.

Alexandra Ilina looks at the presentation of King Mark and Dinadan in the marginal illustrations of Paris, BnF, fr. 776 (*Tristan* V.II, end of the thirteenth century). Her consideration of the relationship between text and image is stimulating, if inconclusive. The death of the lovers is of paramount importance in the overall narrative of the story of Tristan and Iseut. In her comparison between Antoine Vérard's 1496 illustrated Prose *Tristan* on vellum (Châteauroux, Médiathèque Équinoxe, Inc. 6) and the illuminated manuscripts of the German verse texts, Irene Fabry-Tehranchi shows how the choice of scenes for illustration can suggest different readings

of the text. Alison Stones has devoted much of her career to the study of secular illumination and she is able to tease out serious conclusions about the provenance of three small fragments still in a private collection. She attributes them to the circle of the Master Hospitaller who worked in both Paris and the Holy Land.

The book includes a useful inventory of architectural details, ivory caskets, and manuscripts containing Tristanian iconography. The essays of Fabry-Theranchi and Stones are accompanied by illustrations, but they are sadly lacking in that of Ilina. Each essay in this volume is richly annotated and has its own bibliography appended. There is a catalogue of manuscripts of the Prose *Tristan* and an index of scholars. The volume closes with abstracts of the articles.

Whereas it is possible to read and analyse, say, Arthurian romances in the verse tradition with a good critical edition alone, this is not the case with late prose romances such as the *Tristan* and the *Guiron le Courtois* cycle. The textual transmission of these latter not only requires a different ecdotic approach, but also demands reading prefaced by a volume such as this or the *Prolégomènes* to the *Guiron* edited by Luca Cadioli and Sophie Lecomte.[9] Scholars of medieval literature have become acutely aware over the last few decades of the importance of reading texts in their manuscript context, as well as in critical editions, and this is vital for the *Tristan*, for which this reliable guide to the manuscript corpus is indispensable. Damien de Carné and Christine Ferlampin-Acher have greatly facilitated our task as readers of the Prose *Tristan*. We should willingly and enthusiastically accept the challenge they have laid down before us.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Damien de Carné, “Introduction: ‘Dans le labyrinthe du *Tristan*’ (G. Paris), cent cinquante ans de philologie tristanienne”

Dominik Hess, “La tradition manuscrite de la préhistoire de Tristan. Une question réglée?”

Richard Trachsler, “Pièces lyriques et traditions textuelles. Exemples et impasses dans le *Tristan en prose*”

Huw Grange, “Interpolation, dés-interpolation, ré-interpolation. Le *Tristan en prose* et l’*Agravain*”

Nathalie Bragantini-Maillard, “Variations diatopiques et diachroniques au sein de la tradition de la version IV du *Tristan en prose*”

Damien de Carné, “Prolégomènes à une édition des aventures de Brunor d’après les mss BnF fr. 750 et 12599”

Philippe Ménard, “La *Queste* de la *Post-Vulgate* et le *Tristan en prose*”

Nicola Morato, “Tristan et Guiron dans le tourbillon cyclique. Écarts et contacts entre récits et traditions textuelles”

Christine Ferlampin-Acher, “*Artus de Bretagne* et la circulation du *Tristan en prose*”

Alexandre Ilina, “Enjeux des images dans les marges du manuscrit BnF fr. 776 du *Tristan en prose*”

Irène Fabry-Tehranchi, “L’illustration de la mort des amants. L’édition imprimée sur vélin de Vérard (1496) et les manuscrits des *Tristan en vers allemands*”

Alison Stones, “Un nouveau fragment du *Roman de Tristan* en prose et la production des manuscrits vernaculaires entre Paris et Terre Sainte”

NOTES

[1] Keith Busby, “The Character of Gauvain in the Prose *Tristan*,” *Tristania* 2:2 (1977): 12-28.

[2] Eilert Løseth, *Le roman en prose de Tristan, le Roman de Palamède et la compilation de Rusticien de Pise. Analyse critique d’après les manuscrits de Paris* (Paris: Bouillon, 1891); *Le Tristan et le Palamède des manuscrits français du British Museum (Videnskabs-selskabets skrifter II. Hist.-filos. Klasse no. 4)* (1905); *Le Tristan et le Palamède des manuscrits de Rome et de Florence (Videnskabs-selskabets skrifter II. Hist.-filos. Klasse, no. 3)* (Oslo: J. Dybwad, 1924).

[3] Emmanuèle Baumgartner, *Le Tristan en prose. Essai d’interprétation d’un roman médiéval* (Genève: Droz, 1975).

[4] Renée Curtis, ed., *Le roman de Tristan en prose*, vol. 1 (Munich: Hueber, 1963); vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1976); vol. 3 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985).

[5] Philippe Ménard et al., eds., *Le roman de Tristan en prose (V2)*, 9 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1987-1997); Philippe Ménard et al., eds., *Le roman de Tristan en prose (V1)*, 5 vols (Paris: Champion, 1997-2007).

[6] Damien de Carné, *Sur l’organisation du Tristan en prose* (Paris: Champion, 2010).

[7] Renée Curtis, “Pour une édition définitive du *Tristan en prose*,” *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 24 (1981): 91-99.

[8] Christine Ferlampin-Acher, ed., *Artus de Bretagne, roman en prose de la fin du XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 2017).

[9] Luca Cadioli and Sophie Lecomte, eds., *Le Cycle de Guiron le Courtois. Prolégomènes à l’édition intégrale du corpus* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018).

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