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Valérie Tesnière, *Le Quadrige: Un Siècle d'édition universitaire, 1860-1968*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001. 492 pp. Sources, bibliography, and index. 38.00 € (pb). ISBN 2-13-051-727-7.

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For the past four decades, the question of the conditions of the production of knowledge has moved to the centre of scholarship in the human sciences in France and elsewhere. This question more or less defined the post-structuralist wave that, through the work of figures such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, first made discourse a legitimate object of study for scholars in a broad range of disciplines. Dominant theoretical perspectives on this issue began to shift in the 1980s. A sociology of knowledge inspired by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and using key Bourdieusian concepts such as social capital and intellectual field, arose to counterbalance what many (including Bourdieu), saw as the materially and institutionally disembodied approach of post-structuralism. The works of Jean-Louis Fabiani and Christophe Charle (among others), have revealed the rich potential of this perspective, particularly as concerns the intellectual history of the French Third Republic.^[1] Coincident with these developments, Roger Chartier's and Henri-Jean Martin's massive history of publishing in France spurred new historical concern with this topic.^[2]

Valérie Tesnière's *Le Quadrige* is situated at the intersection of these two impulses. As a history of the alliance of publishing houses that became, in the 1920s, the Presses Universitaires Françaises (PUF), it is an important addition to the history of publishing in France, especially to the extent that at least by the outset of the Fourth Republic PUF had become the central institution for the publication of work by and for university intellectuals across the scientific and human scientific disciplines. Yet it is also a history, presented in a more or less Bourdieusian way, of the networks of sociability (p. 15) that endured from the outset of the Third Republic and that linked university intellectuals, political figures, and editors.

The central figure in Tesnière's account is Felix Alcan. A *normalien* in the 1860s, by the 1870s he was literary director for and subsequently (in 1877) the partner of Gustave-Germer Baillière. Baillière had entered the family trade by launching his own house in 1863. By this time, however, his republican convictions were leading him away from business into the world of politics. Alcan had assumed the leading role in the direction of the house and when, in 1882, the association with Baillière broke down and Alcan formed his own house, he had free rein to expand and solidify the editorial policy begun under Baillière, something that Tesnière calls *alcanisme*.

As Tesnière is quick to point out, alcanism built upon foundations laid by Baillière. Most important was the alliance between the Maison Baillière and the university. Baillière's links to the university began in the 1860s with the launch of the *Revue des cours littéraires* and the *Revue des cours scientifiques*, as well as the series *Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine* and *Bibliothèque d'histoire contemporaine*. Under Baillière, and still during the late Second Empire, these journals and catalogues provided an outlet not only for the latest research from the university field but also (of more interest to Baillière) for

republican-inspired criticisms of the Empire. Under Alcan (both in his role as literary director for Baillière and as the director of his own house) these links were extended, through, for example, the launch of the *Revue philosophique* and the *Revue historique*. What made Alcan's policy distinct, however, was his willingness to surrender editorial autonomy of these reviews, and of specialized elements of the catalogue, to university intellectuals themselves. Both as a business strategy and as the foundation of a social network this element of alcanism was critical. Through this strategy the university became both a source of authors and editors but also a market at a time of expanding enrollments. By devolving editorial control Alcan's house also became the practical focal point of a broader network of *universitaires* and *normaliens*, one which transcended the academy and reached into politics. Of course, the fact that Alcan was a *normalien* himself, rather than merely an entrepreneur as Baillière had been, put him personally within this network.

Alcan built, too, upon the strong republican foundations laid by Baillière. As in so many aspects of the history of the Third Republic, the Dreyfus Affair was crucial in this regard. For Alcan, the Affair demonstrated the absolute necessity not merely of defending the liberal foundations of the Republic but, more so, of countering tradition with innovation. From the time of the Affair, the Alcan catalogue reflected a desire to present the latest innovations in scholarship, both French and foreign. As Tesnière argues, though, Dreyfusism itself became a kind of cement that deepened the link between a large majority, if not all, of the house's authors with their editor (p. 129). Indeed, Dreyfusism in combination with alcanism played a role in the broader transformation that led to the appearance of the figure of the intellectual; a figure far different from the professor-as-state-functionary that applied in the Napoleonic model of the university that in many ways still held at the outset of the Third Republic.

As noted above, alcanism is the central theme of this book, consisting as it does in both a particular editorial policy that endured from the 1860s under Baillière to the end of the 1960s, and as a central mechanism of the social network linking editors, intellectuals, and politicians in the Third Republic and beyond. The durability of alcanism remains the focus for Tesnière. Put to the test by war, depression, occupation, and reconstruction (as well as by the transformations of the economic and business context within which these houses operated), the system lasted until the 1960s. At that point, as noted elsewhere, the figure of the intellectual that had been so important to the university, and consequently to alcanism, found itself challenged by a radicalism that went far beyond anything republicans like Alcan had foreseen.[3] Thus while the PUF continued, as policy and as network a moribund alcanism ceased to function.

While the theoretical structure of this work is evident, it is by no means a slave to theory. On the contrary, the reader is deluged with detail (the product of extensive research in familiar as well as heretofore unexploited public and private archival sources) about the many houses that eventually became part of the PUF alliance, their editors, and the universities upon whom these houses relied as authors, journal editors, and eventually, in their mass, as a market for their books. Moreover, Tesnière skillfully sets this detail within the broader political, social, economic, and intellectual context of this period, making her work required reading for students of any branch of modern French history.

At times, however, the detail becomes overwhelming and Tesnière's account becomes a mere concatenation of portraits of the leading figures in this history, obscuring her more important sociological and historical points. Similarly, one wonders whether the book and its central thrust is well served by the broad and, to me, irreconcilable diversity of questions she proposes to answer. For instance, beyond the central and historically provocative questions: What is an editorial policy? and What is a catalogue? she also delves into matters of business history and the forms of capitalization and organization.

The larger question a reading of Tesnière's work provokes, however, is one that has to do with the very concept of social networks. While the common institutional, social, and political background of the

many authors and editors surveyed here is clearly important, what stands out is just how little this work deals with the works that were published. Tesnière certainly brings to the table important evidence as to how editors and some others viewed the scholarly enterprise broadly speaking. Yet surely it would be in texts themselves that one would find, often to the surprise of their authors, the expression of their commitments to values, institutions, and roles that exceeded the more academic concerns of their disciplines (typically history and psychology). Perhaps, however, this is asking Tesnière to have written something quite different than the excellent work she has.

NOTES

[1] Jean-Louis Fabiani, *Les Philosophes de la République* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1988); Christophe Charle, *Naissance des intellectuels, 1880-1900* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990); and *La République des universitaires, 1870-1940* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

[2] Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds., *L'histoire de l'édition française*, 4 vols. (Paris: Promodis, 1982-1986).

[3] Niilo Kauppi, *French Intellectual Nobility: Institutional and Symbolic Transformations in the Post-Sartrian Era* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996).

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