Book Reviews

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Jean-Louis G. Picherit, ed. and trans. *The Journey of Charlemagne to Jerusalem and Constantinople. [Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople].* Birmingham, AL: Summa Publications, 1984. x + 92 pp.

Since Jean-Louis G. Picherit has produced not only a translation but a new edition of this *chanson de geste,* a brief sketch of its textual history is in order.

The *Voyage de Charlemagne* is sui generis. Although complete (i.e., having a beginning and an end), it is very short (870 vv.). Even though it probably dates from c. 1200,[1] it is composed in alexandrines. In spite of the fact that it deals with serious epic matter, its prevailing tone is certainly humorous. Granted that in all probability it is continental in origin, its only manuscript was copied by an Anglo-Norman scribe who was certainly unfamiliar with the continental rules concerning assonance and, above all, isosyllabism. None of the texts of Old French epic songs has a history as interesting and as "dramatic" as the *Voyage.* Its extraordinary character and fate have created an extraordinarily complicated editorial situation.

The poem was preserved in a single (probably thirteenth-century) manuscript (King's Library 16.E.VIII.) housed in the British Museum until 1879 or 1880, when it disappeared. Some forty years before that, Francisque Michel prepared an *editio*

[1] But the dating, like practically everything else concerning this poem, has been the subject of ongoing debate. To simplify, various scholars have dated the poem from as early as the second half of the eleventh century (Eduard Koschwitz) to 1150 (Jules Horrent) or even as late as 1250 (Guide Favati).

princeps of this MS: *Charlemagne, an Anglo-Norman Poem of the Twelfth Century* ... (London, 1836).

Eduard Koschwitz published the text several times, constantly amending and correcting it in the light of comments and suggestions by other scholars: *Karls des Grossen Reise nach Jerusalem und Constantinopel* (Heilbronn, later Leipzig) 1879[1], 1883[2], 1895[3], 1900[4], 1907[5]. The fourth is the last edition published during the life of Koschwitz. The sixth and the seventh (1923) give the text of the fifth (prepared for publication by Gustav Thurau). Koschwitz did not see 16.E.VIII. He used as his "basic MS" the text of Michel's edition corrected by R. P. Wulcker against 16.E.VIII. He also had at his disposal something like a diplomatic copy of that MS made by an Anglo-Norman specialist, John Koch. In addition, the text of Koschwitz's first edition was apparently collated with 16.E.VIII. by the reviewer of the edition, H. Nicol, who, in 1881, brought out some minute emendations. Koschwitz printed the diplomatic text on the pages of the left-hand side with his "critical" (i.e., emended) text opposite.

Koschwitz's diplomatic transcription, apparently agreed upon by Wulcker, Koch, and Nicol, should give us a text as trustworthy as any real medieval MS, but as Madeleine Tyssens (in *Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à Constantinople: Traduction critique,* Ghent, 1978) rightly stated: "L'impossiblilité de recourir au manuscrit laisse ... planer le doute sur quelques leçons ou quelques hypothèses" (viii). These doubts have certainly created a situation in which the facsimile of the original text, that is, the diplomatic version, arrived at collectively, has been treated with less "respect" than is usually accorded a medieval MS.

We now have several editions besides Koschwitz's: Carl Voretzsch used the text of our poem in his *Einführung in das Studiun der altfranzösischen Sprache* ..., Halle, 1901 (the 1951 and 1955 editions were prepared by Gerhard Rohlfs). In 1965 Guide Favati published his *Il Voyage de Charlemagne: Edizione critica* (Biblioteca degli Studi Mediolatini e Volgari, 4, Bologna) and also in the same year Paul Æbischer's widely used "school" edition appeared: *Le Voyage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et à*

Constantinople (TLF 115, Geneva-Paris). Both these editions take considerable and different liberties with the diplomatic text.[2]

In addition, there exist several modern translations of the poem. Anna J. Cooper published Koschwitz's text with its modern French translation followed by an English glossary *(Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne publié avec un glossaire,* Paris, 1925). M. Sherwood, *The Merry Pilgrimage* (New York, 1927) is a popular (and incomplète) translation into English. Ehrard Lommatzsch, *Die Pilgerfahrt Karls des Grossen,* in *Kleinere Schriften zur romanischen Philologie* (Berlin, 1954 pp. 203-23) is a free German translation. Most important is the already mentioned "critical translation" prepared by Tyssens (see the review of it by Barbara Nelson Sargent-Baur in *Olifant* 6 [1978]: 141-3). Tyssens's translation into modern French of 29 pages is accompanied by 54 pages of texto-critical notes. She thus continues a tradition established by Koschwitz.

Koschwitz noted not only the textual problems pertaining directly to the establishment of his texts, but, especially in his later editions, he cited the suggestions for solutions of certain textual problems made by various scholars. This practice was followed by Favati and, most scrupulously, by Tyssens. Besides the editors and translators already mentioned, the textual problems have been examined by several scholars. The most important of these textual commentators is the late Jules Horrent, especially in *Le Pèlerinage*

2 Also in 1965 *(annum mirabile!),* a Serbien scholar gave us a critical edition accompanied by a modern translation: V. Draskovic; [Drachkovitch], *Putovanje Karla Velikog u Jerusalim i Carigrad* (Belgrade University Press). The story of the critical editions of this text is characterized by two strange occurrences: in the mid 1880s, Konrad Hofmann (the first editor of *Ami et Amile* and *Jourdain de Blaye)* completed his edition accompanied by a Welsh version. His edition was not put on the market. Alfredo Cavalière, *Il Pellerinagio di Carlomagno a Gerusalemme e a Constantinopoli: Introduzione, traduzione, note. Testo seconda la 4a edizione di E. Koschwitz* (Venice, 1964), has apparently not been published, although Tyssens consulted its numerous notes and cited some of its suggestions for the emendations of Koschwitz's text. I suspect that the strange textual situation of *Le Voyage* and the inherent difficulties of the text were at the bottom of these hesitations to publish.

de Charlemagne: Essai d'explication littéraire avec des notes de critique textuelle (Paris, 1961).

The modern critic thus has at his disposal: 1) a diplomatic text, reasonably "good," if not completely reliable; and 2) a series of rejected readings, emendations and new lections, suggested by editors and/or commentators. This situation resembles to some extent the more usual editorial situation in which the editor is confronted with the "best MS" (=Koschwitz's diplomatic text) and a great number of variant readings taken from other "less good" MSS (=emendations and suggestions). Most importantly, however, the modern textual emendations and suggestions for emendations represent a kind of ever-growing *mouvance* of the text.

As in any good critical edition in which is possible to distinguish the "best MS" and its variants, acceptance of this or that reading is dictated by the general interpretation of the text. In Tyssens's words: "l'interprétation générale règle l'interprétation des passages ambigus ou obscurcis" (vi). The general sense of the poem influences the treatment of the minutiae of the text and, inversely, the minutiae justify and reinforce the sense of the poem. Æbischer, for example, was quite free with the diplomatic text chiefly because of his conviction that the real spirit of the story was kept in the later Scandinavian versions. He corrected several passages of the text in light of the Scandinavian materials. Similarly, Favati chose certain readings of the contested passages because he believed in the Provençal origin of the song and its relative modernity.

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Picherit is thus following a rich textual and editorial tradition. First, for the title of the song, he has chosen *The Journey of Charlemagne* chiefly because 16.E.VIII. bore an *incipit: Ci commence le Uvre cwnment Charles de Frounce voiet in Jerusalem et pur paroles so feme a Constantinnoble pur ver ray Hugon.* There are no other titular indications in the text. Like Æbischer, Favati and Tyssens before him, Picherit is quite justified in choosing this title, but he gives too much weight to the *incipit* produced by a rubricator in a MS transcribed in the late thirteenth or the early fourteenth century. If the title is to reflect the general sense of the work, its problem is more complex. The verb *voiet* (what is it, Francien pres.

ind. or Provençal past def.?) indeed suggests *voyage.* But in Old French the semantic distinction between *voyage* and *pelerinage* was less sharply felt: both could mean "voyage," "pilgrimage," "crusade." For us, however, what matters is our sense of the poem. Here the perfectly "logical" solution would be to call it *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne à Jérusalem et son voyage à Constantinople. I* do not propose this awkward title seriously, but I believe that (aside from the fact that scholars in France have traditionally used the term *pèlerinage)* a good case for *Le Pèlerinage* can and should be made, even if it is finally rejected in favor of the more polyvalent *voyage.* There is a serious component of pilgrimage in this epic. The pious journey to Jerusalem, with its relics and its miracles, cannot be anything else but a pilgrimage in our sense of the word.

If Picherit assigned to himself the tasks of translator and editor, he has, generally speaking, succeeded in the first. He has given us, like Tyssens in French, a line by line English version. This rendering is an inevitable compromise (not always a happy one) between a literal and a literary translation. It is clear and easy to follow, but it certainly retains the flavor of an old and exotic text (e.g.: *Ma dame la reïne folie dist et tord; I Mult par est Karles ber pur demener esforz: / Ja ne vendrum en terre nostre ne seit li los* ("My lady the Queen spoke nonsense and wrong; / Charles is surely a warrior to lead great forces: / We shall enter no land where fame will not be ours" [vv. 813-5]). But it is easy to criticize any translation of a "classic," and it is easy to object to some of Picherit's translated passages: v. 106: *en Romanic*—"in Romany," read "in the (Greek) Empire;" v. 136: *me ferai baptizer et lever*—"to be baptized and cleansed," read "raised to the font and baptized;" v. 161: *(porterai en France [les reliques]) qu'en voil enluminer*—"which I wish to enlighten," for "to enlighten" read "to be resplendent."

But the more problematic translations result, like practically everything else in *Le Voyage,* from texto-critical difficulties. Sometimes Picherit's translation follows the readings which he himself did not choose. Thus *si* in v. 218, *si ai mult demurret,* was emended by *Æ*bischer into *ci.* Picherit has kept *si* but translated "I have tarried *here* too long." Sometimes he translated the lections that he has rejected: v. 479 (listed among those which Picherit emended himself, p.x.): *K'il ne perde la barbe, les gernuns en brulant*—"Without having the hairs of his beard burned off." This

translation is correct, but only if the editor keeps *de la barbe les gernuns* (in the diplomatic text, in Koschwitz, Favati and Æbischer). Without *de* the line should read "Without having the beard [and] the sideburns burned off." More important, for it involves the ideology of courtly love displayed (or not displayed) by Oliver, is v. 719; Picherit gives: *De vus mes volentez aamplir quier a veir* (diplomatic text: *De vus mes volentez aamplir ço ne quier avier).* Picherit states in a note that he "concur[s] with Horrent's understanding and correction of this faulty line" (81). But he does not offer here any of Horrent's readings. In fact, v. 719 is listed correctly among the lines emended by Picherit himself. Horrent proposed first: *De vus mes volentez aamplir qier aveir:* "I wish to have from you [the authorization] to carry out my desires," and later: *De vus mes volentez aamplir quier en veir,* which should mean, "I truly wish to carry out my desires of you." Picherit's version (which is really Favati's) cannot mean "I truly wish that you allow me to carry it out." This translation has as a source either Horrent's first version, or, better, Tyssens's suggested readings (72): *De vus, mes volenters, ço quier self.* "Je sollicite de vous, mais sans contrainte, qu'il puisse être accompli," or: *Mes de vus volentez ço quier …* or De *vostre volentet ço quier ...,* both meaning "Mais c'est avec votre accord que je veux l'accomplir," or, finally *Mes de vus volentez nel quier aamplir, veir:* "Je ne veux pas l'accomplir au delà de ce que vous voudrez." I believe that Picherit's translation of the idea of v. 719 is correct (that is, it is in conformity with the certain courtliness of Oliver), but it does not correspond to his own text. The translator is here in conflict with the editor.

The conflict, I believe, is inherent in this work: Picherit's translation is designed primarily, as he says in his foreword, for uninitiated readers, advanced undergraduate or graduate students (I would add, those not specializing in Old French). Picherit's introduction is clearly intended to answer the needs of such students. He devotes some ten pages to explaining the general nature of French *chansons de geste,* the specific qualities of *Le Voyage,* its sources and its close relationship to the Abbey of St. Denis. Picherit is careful about the dating (sometime between 1109 and 1205). He rightly believes that the poem, although serious in its piety and interest in relics, is fundamentally entertaining. But his critical text cannot be deemed to be destined for the audience of his introduction.

As can be seen from the examples of vv. 479 and 719, the text that Picherit has produced could certainly baffle an uninitiated but inquisitive reader. Although his introduction prepares the reader for the riches of critical literature and the variety of interpretations offered, it does not explain sufficiently the "composite" character of the critical text and the fact of its *mouvance.* Furthermore, Picherit gives himself carte blanche in accepting this or that emended or proposed lection:

> [V]arious editions of the poem . . . offer corrections and emendations that are sometimes at considerable variance. For this reason we have selected readings from all existing editions in order to produce the new text. Also of great use were M. Tyssens' comments (1978), and J. Horrent's textual notes (1961). (ix-x)

Since Picherit does not justify all the lections which differ from the "MS," his method of choosing from editors and commentators, often at odds with each other as to the general sense of the poem, is not really acceptable. It can produce a new "composite MS," but not a new critical edition.

Picherit does offer the rejected readings in the footnotes. He also supplies endnotes which contain commentaries on the meaning of certain terms and medieval usages necessary for his translation ("[a]n oliphant is an ivory horn," [80]). But his notes dealing with the purely textual problems are too complex and baffling for the uninitiated, and too sparse for the specialist. The compromise between the demands of a "practical" translation on the one hand and the exigencies of a critical edition on the other is, of course, difficult to achieve. Here lies the main problem of Picherit's undertaking. While his adopted text and his purely textual notes are sufficient for his kind of translation, they are not so for a critical edition of this problematic and much commented text.

Picherit claims to have made only eleven of his own readings and emendations. Let us examine them briefly. The emendation of v. 479 has been already mentioned. V. 288 has been well emended by Picherit. He published a note on it in *ZRPh* 99 (1983): 512-3. V. 193 (second hemistich) *set anz out ke ne se mut* is hypermetric. Picherit prints: *set anz out ke ne mut.* He does not explain this emendation. But readings of previous critics—*s. a. ne se mut,* or *s.*

a. o. ke nes mut—are really better, for they respect the "deep" syntax of the text and its archaic (or archaistic) nature. The same applies to vv. 273, 676, 820, 822, 852. In v. 273, without explaining, Picherit suppresses the article in the second hemistich: *et ount les cors avenanz.* Favati's and Æbischer's *ount les c. a.* and Koschwitz's *s'ount les c. a.* are better. In v. 676, *Ne gobez mes hume ço te cumandet Christus,* Picherit "modernized" the second hemistich by suppressing *ço: Ne gabes james huime, te cumandet Ch.* (Other critics's readings are more archaic and better: *ço te mandet Ch., çot cumandet Ch.)* Picherit does not justify his emendation. In v. 820, Picherit's modernization is even more obvious: *Que preisat barnet si ben cum la nostre.* Picherit alone adds the subject *ele: Qu'ele preisat b.* Since the subject *la re'ine ele dist mult quefole* is present in the preceding verse, the addition of another *ele* seems to me most problematic. V. 822, *La femme lu rei hug',* and v. 852, *La fille lu rei hug',* present a common problem: 16.E.VIII. abbreviates the name of the Greek emperor *hug'.* In the object case it is *Hugun* (often written out thus). This form is also used for the subject case (Picherit cites several examples in his note to v. 310, p. 79). *Hug'* when the subject has been transcribed as *Hugue,* when the object as *Hugun.* In vv. 822 and 852, Picherit alone creates a new object form: *La femme (fille) lu rei Hugue* (Koschwitz's, Voretsch's and Æbischer's reading, as well as Horrent's recommendation, *La f. al rei Hugun* is simply more authentic). The emendation in v. 314 creates a problem of another kind. In the laisse in *-ié* the diplomatic version reads: *Tant vus durrai or et argent et aveir truss.* Without justifying it, Picherit offers: *T. v. d. argent, or et aveir trousset* (i.e., assonance in *-é).* We know that the copyist of 16.E.VIII. did not respect the continental interdiction of assonancing *-é* with *-ié.* For this reason, this line has been emended previously so as to contain the final *deniers.* Picherit's emendation is really not acceptable. It is one thing to tolerate Anglo-Norman assonances, but in order to create new ones the critic must believe that the text was originally insular. Picherit does not. V. 315 is well emended: Picherit changes *Tant en porterunt Franceis cum* to *K'en porterunt F,* yet he does not comment upon his emendation and does not state that Tyssens's critical translation has already suggested it. The case of v. 466, *Refols fud li reis,* is different, for Picherit does not emend the text here, but keeps the *Refois* of the diplomatic text (accepted by Favati and Horrent). He comments in his note that "Greimas ... lists this adjective, with an example taken from a twelfth century text" (80).

Picherit's quoting the authority of the *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français* here (and elsewhere) is inappropriate. Greimas should ne seen, but not cited. As Tyssens says: "Quant à Fa[vati], il veut voir dans le *Re* initial un préfixe intensif, mais dans toutes les occurrences du préfixe fournies par T.-L. . . . il a une valeur itérative ou distributive; d'autre part il est toujours uni à un verbe, jamais à un adjectif" (58). In order to emend Koschwitz's "MS" *(Que fols f. l. r.)* or Æbischer's *(Fols fud I. r. Hugon),* one should have thoroughly verified the *refol* cited by Greimas.[3]

Sporadically Picherit explains the emendations accepted by him from other critics, for example, v. 81: MS. *E funt ferrer les desires de très et de uvant* emended to: *N'i funt ferrer destrés ne detrés ne deuvant,* on which he comments as follows: "The meter of this line is erroneous. It is clear that the Frenchmen are going on a pilgrimage and they do not need war-horses" (76) (the title!). Picherit credits Horrent for this opinion and adds that v. 79 "also points to the adopted emendation" *(N'i unt escuz ne lances ne espees trenchaunz).* But some very important editorial decisions are dealt with in too terse a manner, hiding the real problematics of the text. Thus, v. 8 ends in *a reisuner* in a laisse in *-ié.* Picherit comments:

> In the poem assonances are generally correct. But here and in a few other instances the usual distinction between assonances in *-é* and in *-ié* is not maintained. We agree with Horrent (p. 49, n. 1) that this may be a case of poetic license and, consequently, we have not corrected the endings involved (lines 63, 238, 305, 306, 308, 313, 314, 459, 541, 562, 589, 682, 778,832,868). (76)

For the uninitiated this note is mysterious, because the graphic distinctions between *-é* and *-ié* are usually hidden by the systematically Anglo-Norman copyist. The verses referred to here by Picherit belong to eleven different laisses (six in *-é,* five in *-ié),* none of them containing *ie* spellings . For the initiated reader of a critical edition, that is, for most of the readers of *Olifant,* far more important are the general implications of this note. If our text does

3 This form is supposed to have been used in *Le Chastoiement d'un père à son fils,* one of the Old French adaptations of Petrus Alphonsus, *Disciplina clericalis.*

not respect the Bartsch law sixteen times, then its Anglo-Norman character could very well be more pronounced than has been assumed by critics in their practice. They have corrected numerous lines, regularizing the meter, because the Anglo-Norman copyist did not understand the continental scansion system. But if the text of 16.E.VIII. has been "Anglo-Normanized," not only on the surface, so to speak, but also in its deeper structure (as the confusion *-é / -ié* could suggest), then such metrical régularisation should very well come again under closer scrutiny. Picherit, as an editor, should have addressed himself to such problems.

My main objection to Picherit's method is that he does not explain what his own general principles are in accepting this or that emendation from the poem's rich texto-critical tradition. Thus, v. 442 reads in the diplomatic text: *Li carbuncles art que bien i poet home veer.* Koschwitz emended it to: *Et li c. art, bien i poet hom veïr, Æ*bischer (ignoring the assonance) to: *Et li c. art que bien poet hom veer;* Favati (staying very close to the "original" and ignoring the meter: cesura after *que)* to: *Li c. art que bien i poet home veïr;* finally, Horrent suggests the following: *Li c. art bien qu'i poet home veir.* Now Picherit prints a combination of a modified Koschwitz and a modified Horrent: *Li c. art bien, qu'i pöet hom veïr. Hom* is, of course, more archaic than *home* (as a subject case). Koschwitz believed in the archaic character of the poem. But Picherit accepts a date of composition which could be as late as 1200. Furthermore, the monosyllabic *hom* forces him to adopt the *disyllabic pöet,* which creates yet another problem in the continuing *mouvance* of this important text, because such a disyllabic form does not seem to exist elsewhere.

Finally, Picherit's edition presents some problems belonging to the humblest of editorial tasks, namely, the "grooming" of the text. In this respect again, *Le Voyage* has had its own curious history. Perhaps because it has been treated as a very old and a "problem-ridden" text, its *toilette de texte* did not seem to be deemed as important as other textual problems. There is no valid reason that the text of *Le Voyage* should not be "groomed" according to the general rules governing continental texts restated by the Société des Anciens Textes Français in 1926; or, better still, according to the solid, common-sense advice offered by Alfred Foulet and Mary B. Speer in *On Editing Old French Texts* (Lawrence, KA, 1979). The graphy of the text is, of course, heavily "Anglo-Normanized."

Picherit has rightly kept it so. For this reason *çoisit* 738, *çoisit* 763, *mesçoisi* 692 should be spelled *çoisit, çoisit, mescoisi.* On the other hand, Picherit is among those critics who believe that the text *of Le Voyage* should be emended so as to conform to a regular ("continental") twelve-syllable line. Since the meter is the decisive factor in the establishment of the text, the use of the *tréma* to indicate diaeresis should be made regular. It is not always so in Picherit's text. Thus for *crient* 243 read *crïent;* for *dient* 656 read *di'ent.* But the *tréma* in *roes* 285 and *roe,* as well as in the above-mentioned *pöet* 442, *or pöent* 388, is not necessary, since the following *-e(s), -e(n)t* are unstressed. This brings us to the stress mark. Picherit leaves the ending *-ez* as such, and rightly so, because it is always stressed. He writes *-é* and *-és* to indicate the stressed syllable. Our text, however, is peculiar in that it preserves the *-t* (or, more rarely, the *-d)* of the third person singular and of the descendents of *-ATEM* and, at the same time, confuses *-et* with-ez.[4] Thus *turnet* 132 stands for modern *tourné, cunget* 844 for *congé, aset* 242 for *assez, gardet* 509 for *gardez,* but *esgardet* 360 means *(it) regarde* and *s'en afied* 700, *s'en fie.* Picherit follows the editorial tradition *of Le Voyage* and does not indicate the stress in the words ending in *-et* and *-ed.* This, as well as keeping *-et* when it often stands for *-ez,* makes the reading of the text more difficult for the uninitiated reader for whom the work is destined.

In sum: the important aspect of Picherit's work is not his new edition but his translation. He has decided to present another critical edition and not merely to translate Koschwitz's text of the fourth edition corrected by Horrent. But Picherit has not given us a better edition than his predecessors. He has, however, reopened the discussion on many problems of this remarkable text. Indirectly, he has brought back to our attention the question of a desirable new edition of this important *chanson de geste.* For this we should be grateful.

What would be the requirements of such a new critical edition *of Le Voyage de Charlemagne?* I believe that it must meet at least seven requirements: 1) an introduction should give a detailed

4 Picherit states that "the final z is often used for *t*" (x). I think that he meant "the final *t* is used for z," for I did not find any graphies *-ez* standing for the unstressed *-e.*

account of the editorial and critical history of the text; 2) the editor should state and justify as clearly as possible his own ideological stance as to the origin, the date, and the general nature of the text; 3) the edition must give a very good idea of what the diplomatic text is, that is, it should list the rejected readings of the text (or, better still, offer a facing diplomatic text); 4) the notes should sum up all the discussions of problematic passages, citing all serious suggestions made by previous critics; here Tyssens's notes can serve as a model; 5) the editor should justify as much as possible every variant lection adopted; 6) the edition should have an index of proper names and a glossary of all difficult words in which the emended forms should be distinguished from those of the MS; and 7) the text should be groomed according to contemporary rules governing continental works, and principles adopted in the *toilette du texte* should be thoroughly discussed in the introduction.

Such a new edition would be quite cumbersome in its *apparatus criticus.* But in view of the editorial and textual history of *Le Voyage,* no other kind of critical edition is really necessary.

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