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Publishing in the Republic of Letters: The  
Menage-Grævius-Wetstein Correspondence, 1679-1692 (review)

Anna E. C. Simoni

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revisions of the various companies is puzzling; though complete in its sheets it is incomplete in its annotations, which curiously contain part of the material from four of the companies.

Editorial revision of KJB took place as early as in the Cambridge folios of 1629 and 1638, but subsequently it was subject to the textual corruption to be expected in any frequently reprinted text. Comprehensive revision, involving correction, normalization, modernization, and the provision of additional marginal notes, was finally undertaken in the 1760s, by F. S. Parris in 1762 at Cambridge and by Benjamin Blayney in 1769 at Oxford. Blayney's has been regarded as the standard text of KJB ever since, and what we read today is essentially 1611 as modified by Blayney.

The first of Norton's two overriding editorial principles is 'that the text should be that of the translators, not that of subsequent revisers, and that the text of the translators is the first edition [...]. No attempt should be made to correct perceived errors of scholarship' (p. 131). This principle is based on an assumption that 'the text of the KJB should present the translators' understanding of the originals as they meant to express it' (p. 29), purged of 'mechanical errors', but, given the inability to determine with certainty the translators' precise intentions, it can be implemented with confidence only intermittently.

The second principle is 'that the text should be modernised [...]. The basic elements of the modernisation are spelling and punctuation' (p. 131). This principle acknowledges that 'for the most part, neither of these involve deliberate intentions of the translators and so do not demand respect and reverence in the way that the readings do' (p. 131). Despite the apparent simplicity of this principle it is no easier of implementation. Readers will agonize along with Norton in his effort on several fronts to make a principle of inconsistency.

Fundamentally Norton is concerned with readings, divorced from settings: there is little, for example, to suggest that he has used the evidence of settings to establish priority where variants exist within 1611. In general the argument is weak in matters broadly bibliographical, such as in assuming that apprentices distributed type and were therefore ultimately responsible for instances of 'foule case' that found their way into print (p. 54), or in even entertaining the possibility that Barker printed a 'fair copy', which Bilson and Smith, who prepared the text for printing, could have annotated to create printer's copy for 1611 (pp. 24–25). And rather than 'a possible way of abbreviating "Acts" that turned out to be pointless because it saved no space' (p. 167) 'A&s' is surely no more than a confusion with a 'ct' ligature. But none of these is ultimately of much consequence in establishing the text.

Melbourne

B. J. McMULLIN

*Publishing in the Republic of Letters: The Ménage-Grævius-Wetstein Correspondence, 1679–1692.* Ed. by RICHARD G. MABER. (Studies in the History of Ideas in the Low Countries.) Amsterdam: Rodopi. 2005. ix + 174 pp. €40. ISBN 90 420 1685 x.

IN HIS ARTICLE ON DIOGENES LAERTIUS in the *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur du livre* (vol. 2, col. 720) Brunet describes the 1692 Amsterdam edition, brought out by Henricus Wetstein, as 'Édition la plus complète et la plus belle que l'on eût alors de cet écrivain [...] généralement estimée'. This is the edition based on the text

originally edited by Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini in the sixteenth century, but now emended by Marcus Meibomius and accompanied by his new Latin translation and the mighty commentary of Ægidius Menagius (Gilles Ménage). It was Ménage who was behind this edition, his second of Diogenes Laertius's book on the lives of the Greek philosophers. The first edition had appeared in London in 1664, published by Octavian Pulleyn, but its many misprints and some other failings had caused Ménage much distress. He therefore wanted the new edition to be published elsewhere. The new edition would of course allow other improvements as well, and did.

'Vive Monsr. Menage', wrote Wetstein in his last letter to Ménage, dated 8 May 1692, in reply to what must have been the latter's confirmation of having at last received the two complete copies of the book, sent by circuitous routes from Amsterdam to Paris. He also says in this letter that everyone who had seen the book in Amsterdam had praised it and that he only regretted both the difficulties preventing direct posting of the work to Paris and his failure to add Ménage's portrait to the book, a failure Richard Maber has made good in the edition of the correspondence that is the concern of the work under review.

In his address to the studious reader Henricus Wetstein explains the genesis of the edition, the sources used for text and translation, and the choice of editor, and so comes to the authors of the notes and commentaries and above all to Ægidius Menagius whom he calls 'Vir eruditione æque ac annis gravis, Galliæ suæ decus'.

What Richard Maber has done is to bring together the surviving letters, which are a rare testimony to the advance of this particular edition from manuscript to print. The dates given in the title show how long it took to publish this learned book in its two fat tomes. It cannot be a typical example, at any rate let us hope that it was not typical, although it may not have been unique in each and every feature of its painfully slow progress. In his exemplary introduction, which tells the reader everything he needs to know in concise and clear words and is exactly what the introduction to a collection of letters should be, Dr Maber sets the scene.

The author, Gilles Ménage, in Paris, not sure where to get the new edition of Diogenes Laertius published, whether in Leipzig or in Holland, approaches Johann Georg Grævius, professor in Utrecht, whom he knows indirectly, and asks for advice and help. After some exchanges Grævius brings Henrik Wetstein into the picture. Wetstein is a printer-publisher in the old tradition, no mean scholar himself. The correspondence consists of letters from Ménage to Grævius and from Wetstein to Ménage, with a very few odd ones from one or other of them to somebody else. There are no letters from Grævius or to Wetstein, but they are not too difficult to imagine. In addition, Maber in his editorial capacity, while keeping his comments to a minimum, illuminates the contents very clearly and the reader can easily follow developments — or the lack of them.

And what a story it is! To depend on the post is always a doubtful enterprise, especially when letters and parcels are sent abroad; it was very much so in the late seventeenth century. It was even more so when the two countries, France and the Dutch Republic, were at war. Among other perils the edition encountered, a parcel of proofs Wetstein sent — the first, for which Ménage was waiting anxiously — was intercepted at Lille and retained there for many months before it could be reclaimed. Other messages got lost completely, friends who were asked to take sheets through Switzerland gave up the attempt, and a trusted Swiss friend kept a book for a year.

Bad weather prevented printing and stopped the production of paper or of printer's ink, and all the time everyone got older and their health no better. Ménage, already elderly, suffered an accident that greatly impeded him in his movements. He also suffered the loss of friends very dear to him, which upset him enough to stop him working for a time on the book. Meibomius was a sore trial to both Ménage and Wetstein, especially the latter, who complains bitterly though often in humorous language about his dilatoriness, selfishness, eccentricity, and stubbornness. 'Mr. Meib.'s' residence in Leipzig did not exactly help, either.

Ménage lived just long enough to receive the first two large-paper copies of the book. He was happy with the result, as Wetstein had predicted he would be. With this, the correspondence abruptly ends. It is a note of triumph and yet one is left somehow sad. Yes, all the effort, all the scholarship had achieved the desired end. The edition stood the test of time for nearly two centuries before a new one took its place, and as for attractiveness it can still hold its own. Now, with the publication of this correspondence, the modern scholar knows more about it than about most other editions of the classics. Various indexes complete the edition of the letters and assist the reader in retracing steps where desired.

Perhaps the note of sadness I certainly felt on reaching the end has nothing to do with the story of the Diogenes Laertius edition itself, though leaving these characters behind was sad enough, but rather with the end of the Republic of Letters it so vividly illustrates. For in these letters, and always well delineated in the notes, references abound to mutual acquaintances, scholars who live in various places, who travel and carry greetings, whose well-being or otherwise and whose studies are discussed, who form one great company, and who, on the whole, wish each other well. Ménage himself was instrumental in gaining public recognition and financial support for fellow scholars in France and abroad if he could do so, and nowhere is there a sign of jealousy or rivalry or gossip about such feelings in others. Catholics and Protestants may privately regret each other's religious differences, but they are friends and help each other if possible when in need. This picture, perhaps too rosy to be absolutely true, arises from the fascinating collection of letters with which Mabier has greatly enlarged our knowledge of the vicissitudes one particular book could undergo in order to see the light of day.

There is one error (p. 60, letter 11, n. 2) that Mabier could have avoided had he transcribed the whole imprint of *Theodori Bezae Vezelii poemata varia* as he found it on the title-page in Latin, i.e. including 'Hanoviae'. In attempting to modernize the place-name, he has picked up a spurious 'r' to add to it, but this is of course not Hanover but Hanau near Frankfurt am Main, where Guilielmus Antonius, whom he happily does not modernize, was a very busy publisher.

Gillingham, Dorset

ANNA E. C. SIMONI