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Introduction to Translation of

“L’Édition française dans la tourmente de la Seconde Guerre mondiale,”

by Jean-Yves Mollier

Although he is less well-known in the Anglophone world than his fellow cultural historians of France Roger Chartier and Robert Darnton, Jean-Yves Mollier was a major pioneer in the field of book history. Through his publication of countless books and essays as well as his active participation in SHARP and generous mentoring of generations of students (including myself), he has over the last three-plus decades bequeathed to us a broad picture of the production, distribution, and reception of the book, broadly defined, in the two centuries after what Chartier termed the “Second Printing Revolution” of the early nineteenth century, especially in France but also internationally.

Born in 1947, Jean-Yves Mollier earned a doctorate in French literature (3^{ème} cycle) from the Université de Paris I in 1978, for a thesis on nineteenth-century republican journalist and politician Noël Parfait. Eight years later, in 1986, he earned a doctorate in letters and human sciences (thèse d’état) from the Université de Paris III. After four years of teaching at the Université de Paris X – Nanterre, in 1992 he obtained a post as professor at the Université de Versailles, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, which he holds to this day. Helping to make this “new” university a center of research and teaching in cultural history, he directed the Centre d’histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines from 1998 to 2005 and then the Ecole doctorale “Cultures, Organisations, Législations” from 2005 to 2007. At UVSQ, Mollier has long taught a graduate seminar in “Histoire de l’édition, du livre et de la lecture du XVIII^e au XX^e siècle” (History of Publishing, the Book, and Reading from the 18th to the 20th Century) and directed hundreds of theses on cultural history, from the advanced undergraduate to the doctoral level.

Mollier’s own research has been impressively wide-ranging, temporally as well as topically. Not limiting himself to one political regime in French history, he has written about the political culture of the Restoration (1815-1830), the revolutions of 1848, the Second Empire, the Belle Époque, particularly the Panama Scandal of 1892,¹ and, more recently, the first half of the twentieth century. Beginning in the mid-1980s, he forged a new research path into the history of publishing in nineteenth-century France, with his seminal and exhaustive study of the shift over the course of the long nineteenth century from small individually-owned houses to bigger partnerships and joint-stock corporations, *L’argent et les lettres: Histoire du capitalisme d’édition, 1880-1920* [Money and Literature: History of Capitalist Publishing, 1880-1920] (Paris: Fayard, 1988), as well as definitive biographies of the three most important publishers in that time and place, Pierre Larousse, Michel and Calmann Lévy, and Louis Hachette.² Taking a “global” interdisciplinary approach to print history,³ Mollier has authored and edited numerous articles, essays, and books on the history of popular literature, bookselling, peddlers and *camelots* (newsboys), reading, censorship, and the press. More recently, he has turned

his attention to print in the twentieth century, with books on the relationship between the press and the state (*Édition, presse et pouvoir en France au XXe siècle* [Paris: Fayard, 2008]) and on a Catholic campaign to influence publishing (*La mise au pas des écrivains: L'impossible mission de l'abbé Bethléem au XXe siècle* [Paris: Fayard, 2014]). While most of these projects have focused on France, in collaboration with colleagues abroad, especially in SHARP, he has also lectured and written extensively on inter- and trans-national models and networks in print history, pushing the field beyond its original national framework.⁴ Demonstrating the international significance of his research, some of Mollier's works have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese. Up to now, however, his publications have not reached the broad English-speaking audience they deserve.

One of the first pieces by Jean-Yves Mollier to be translated into English, the following article places the actions of publishers in France under Nazi occupation in the context of their long submission to state authority, dating back to the guild tradition of the Old Regime. Employing previously inaccessible archives of the publishing giant Hachette as well as the professional organization the Syndicat des Editeurs, it argues that, well before the infamous Otto List, French publishers were volunteering to help the Nazis censor literary offerings as well as purge radicals and Jews from the profession. This article, as well as the longer book (*Édition, presse et pouvoir en France au XXe siècle*) from which it is derived, revolutionizes our understanding not just of book history but of the broader cultural and political history of World War II and its aftermath. It is of relevance not only for members of SHARP but for anyone interested in twentieth-century European history.

1 Jean-Yves Mollier, *Le Scandale de Panama* (Paris: Fayard, 1991).

2 Jean-Yves Mollier, *Michel et Calmann Lévy, ou la naissance de l'édition moderne, 1836-1891* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1984); idem, *Louis Hachette, 1800-1864: Le fondateur d'un empire* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); and, with Pascal Ory, *Pierre Larousse et son temps* (Paris: Larousse, 1995).

3 This methodological approach was described in his essay "L'Histoire de l'édition, une histoire à vocation globalisante," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, vol. 43, no. 2 (April 1996): 329-348.

4 See especially, the volume edited by Jean-Yves Mollier and Jacques Michon, *Les mutations du livre et de l'édition dans le monde du XVIIIe siècle à l'an 2000: Actes du colloque international* (Sainte-Foy, Québec: Presses de l'Université de Laval; Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001).